



Department of Finance  
Benefits Management Division  
333 South State Street - Room 400  
Chicago, IL 60604-3978  
Benefitshelp@cityofchicago.org  
[www.cityofchicago.org/benefits](http://www.cityofchicago.org/benefits)

City of Chicago  
Richard M. Daley  
Mayor  
Steven J. Lux  
City Comptroller

# BENEFITS BULLETIN

September 16, 2009

## Precertification Update For Blue Cross PPO Medical Plan Participants

### Helping you get the Right Care at the Right Time in the Right Setting

It is often difficult to determine if medical imaging tests like CAT, MRI and PET scans are necessary when you have a health problem. Unnecessary medical care wastes time, creates health risks and disrupts your daily life. And, you may be responsible for the cost of the imaging test if it is found to be not medically necessary.

Due to the number of imaging tests being conducted, the City of Chicago has partnered with ENCOMPASS Health Management Systems to complete precertification for outpatient imaging. (This does not include imaging performed in the emergency room or during a hospital admission.)

Effective, Thursday, October 1, 2009, the following imaging tests now need to be precertified through ENCOMPASS.

- CAT SCANS
- MRI SCANS
- PET SCANS

### Does the Blue Cross Blue Shield RQI program through AIM take the place of precertification?

NO. Effective April 1, 2006, BCBSIL began requiring their PPO Providers to obtain an RQI (Radiology Quality Initiative) number when ordering a CAT, MRI and/or PET scan. This RQI number is in no way related to nor does it take the place of the Encompass medical necessity review performed for a CAT, MRI or PET scan. If your provider has questions, please refer them to their BCBS provider relations representative.

### What part do I play in the precertification process?

When your physician recommends an imaging test, ENCOMPASS should be notified. You, your physician, the hospital, or a family member or friend can reach ENCOMPASS toll free at **1-800-373-3727**. Or you can use our Internet precertification service available on the ENCOMPASS website at [www.ENCOMPASSonline.com](http://www.ENCOMPASSonline.com).

Continued On Reverse Side

### **What happens if I have an emergency?**

Imaging precertification is not required in an emergency room setting or as part of a hospital confinement.

### **What information is needed when calling ENCOMPASS?**

ENCOMPASS needs the following information to begin the precertification process (most of which can be found on member's ID card):

- Patient's first/last name, address & telephone number
- Patient's date of birth
- Insured's City of Chicago health plan ID number
- Insurance carrier: Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois
- Date and name of imaging test being requested
- Physician name, address & telephone number
- Name, address & telephone number of the facility where the test is to be performed
- Reason for the imaging test

### **What happens after ENCOMPASS is called?**

An ENCOMPASS nurse reviews the medical information provided. If the treatment appears medically appropriate, you, your doctor and the hospital (if applicable) will be notified in writing about the approval. If it appears it may not be medically appropriate, our nurse will contact a physician consultant to make a review decision. You, your doctor and when appropriate, the hospital will be notified about the physician reviewer's decision.

### **What if I disagree with ENCOMPASS' decision?**

You, the policy holder, your doctor or the hospital may appeal the review decision by calling or writing ENCOMPASS. Once ENCOMPASS receives an appeal request, your case is reexamined by an ENCOMPASS physician consultant not involved in the first decision. Following this second review, the initial recommendation is affirmed or modified. ENCOMPASS will notify you and your health care provider as soon as the second review is complete. You will then be able to file an appeal through the Benefits Management Office.

### **What if ENCOMPASS is not contacted when they should be?**

It is the responsibility of the member/patient to confirm that ENCOMPASS has been contacted. When services are not precertified, they will be denied and the member will need to request an appeal IN WRITING to the City of Chicago Benefits Management Office (BMO). The mailing address is: 333 S State St, Ste 400, Chicago IL 60604-3978.