



**BlueCross BlueShield Association**

An Association of Independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans

**Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers®  
Program Selection Criteria for 2008/2009 Designations**

Evaluation is based primarily on the facilities' responses to the Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers detailed clinical request for information (RFI) survey examining structure, process and outcome measures for complex and rare cancer services. To be considered for designation, facilities must meet all required criteria including team and volume requirements for 5 of 8 scored cancers and achieve a score of at least 65 points on the RFI. Facilities with the following designations: National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN), National Cancer Institute (NCI) Comprehensive Cancer Center, NCI Clinical Cancer Center, American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer Teaching Hospital Cancer Program (THCP) or a Community Hospital Comprehensive Program (COMP) will not be required to complete Section 3 of the survey. Additional factors may be considered by Blue Cross Blue Shield Plans and may affect the decision to invite a facility to participate in the program. Once awarded, Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers designation is contingent on each facility's ongoing compliance with Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers selection criteria, subject to thorough investigation on a case-by-case basis for any changes. All Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers facilities resubmit clinical data periodically. For more detail on the Blue Distinction® selection criteria, contact the Blue Distinction Center® administrator at [bdcadmins@bcbsa.com](mailto:bdcadmins@bcbsa.com).

CATEGORY	RFI Question #	CRITERIA DESCRIPTION	2008 CORE POINTS
<b>FACILITY CRITERIA</b>			
<b>STRUCTURE</b>			
Facility Information		Location where services are rendered and contact person responsible for completing the RFI	Required
Acute Inpatient Facility	Section III 1	Must be an acute care inpatient facility with intensive care and emergency room services	Required
Accreditation	Section I 1	Full facility accreditation by a CMS-deemed national accreditation organization	Required
Inpatient Cancer Services	Section III 3	The facility has an inpatient unit dedicated to the care of cancer patients	Required
Ambulatory Cancer Services	Section III 4	The facility has an outpatient facility dedicated to the ongoing care of cancer patients	1 point
Radiation Oncology Services	Section III 5	In close proximity to the facility radiation oncology services are provided by a team of board certified radiation oncologists	Required
Cancer Designations	Section I 4	If facility has NCCN, NCI Comprehensive, NCI Clinical Cancer Centers, THCP or COMP designations (Facilities without the above designations, must provide additional information in Section III)	6 points
Data Management	Section I 5	Facility maintains an internal registry that tracks treatment and outcomes data	Required
Data Reporting	Section I 5a	Facility registry is an American College of Surgeons' National Cancer Database	1 point
	Section I 6	Facility submits data to outside cancer registries and data bases	1 point for one registry; 2 points for ≥ 2 registries
Data Abstraction	Section I 6a	Cancer data abstraction is performed or supervised by a Certified Tumor Registrar (CTR)	1 point

*Note:* Designation as Blue Distinction Centers means that these facilities' overall experience and aggregate data met objective criteria established in collaboration with expert clinicians' and leading medical societies' recommendations. Individual outcomes may vary. To find out which services are covered under your policy at these or any other facilities, please call your local Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan.

CATEGORY	RFI Question #	CRITERIA DESCRIPTION	2008 CORE POINTS
Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)	Section I 7	Facility demonstrates a cancer specific program	Required
Leapfrog	Section I 8a	Publicly reports on the Leapfrog Group Web site vial the Leapfrog Hospital survey	1 point
Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)	Section I 8b	Participation in IHI's 5M Lives Campaign	1 point
<b>PROCESS</b>			
Clinical Trials	Section I 9	Patients are evaluated for participation in clinical trials	Informational
Advanced Directives	Section I 10	Facility requires patients to consider advance directives during care evaluation and planning	Informational
Pain Management	11	Facility has cancer specific pain management guidelines	Required
Palliative Care	12	Palliative care is available	Required or RFI Question #14
Palliative Care Screening	13	Cancer patients receive initial and ongoing screening for palliative care.	1 point
Hospice Care	14	Hospice care is available	Required or RFI Question #12
Physician Communication	15	Facility has a standard process/policy for communicating the initial treatment plan with the cancer patient's primary physician	1 point
Tumor Boards	Section II 2	Regular, subspecialized multidisciplinary tumor boards are scheduled for discussion of complex and rare cancers	Required
Treatment Guidelines	Section III 11	Standard guidelines are used in the management of cancer patients	1 point
Care Management	Section III 12	Standard practice guidelines are in place for the management of cancer patients admitted/discharged from the facility	1 point for written criteria
<b>OUTCOMES AND VOLUME</b>			
Volume	Section II 3	Facilities must meet the threshold requirements of the following: 5 of 8 of the following list of cancers must meet the criteria for: team members, specialty training, corresponding tumor board and meet minimum volumes of scored cancers	
		<i>Scored Cancers</i>	
		<b>Cancer</b>	<b>Procedure</b>
		Esophageal	Esophagectomy
			<b>Annual Case Avg</b>
			Minimum 13 cases ≥ 19 cases = 1 point
		Pancreas	Pancreatectomy
			Minimum 11 cases ≥ 16 cases = 1 point
		Gastric	Gastrectomy
			Minimum 8 cases 16 - 20 cases = 1 point ≥ 21 cases = 2 points
		Rectal	Resection
			Minimum 21 cases 26 - 37 cases = 1 point ≥ 38 cases = 2 points

*Note:* Designation as Blue Distinction Centers means that these facilities' overall experience and aggregate data met objective criteria established in collaboration with expert clinicians' and leading medical societies' recommendations. Individual outcomes may vary. To find out which services are covered under your policy at these or any other facilities, please call your local Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan.

CATEGORY	RFI Question #	CRITERIA DESCRIPTION		2008 CORE POINTS
		Liver	Resection	Minimum 12 cases 18 - 24 cases = 1 point ≥ 25 cases = 2 points
		Bladder	Cystectomy	Minimum 11 cases 18 - 33 cases = 1 point ≥ 34 cases = 2 points
		Brain Tumor	Craniotomy	Minimum 42 cases 50 - 64 cases = 1 point ≥ 65 cases = 2 points
		Acute Leukemia	Multimodal Treatment	Minimum 32 cases 50 - 99 cases = 1 point ≥ 100 cases = 2 points
		<i>Non-Scored Cancers</i>		No minimum threshold; core points only
		Primary Bone Tumor	Resection	10 - 24 cases = 1 point ≥ 25 cases = 2 points
		Soft Tissue Sarcoma	Resection	36 - 69 cases = 1 point ≥ 70 cases = 2 points
		Head and Neck	Resection	25 - 74 cases = 1 point ≥ 75 cases = 2 points
		Thyroid (Medullary and Anaplastic)	Resection	6 - 11 cases = 1 point ≥ 12 cases = 2 points
		Ocular Melanoma	Resection	5 - 9 cases = 1 point ≥ 10 cases = 2 points
Inpatient Mortality	Section III 3	Facilities report inpatient surgical mortality and report results for both esophageal and pancreatic procedures		Required
		Cancer	Procedure	
		Esophageal	Esophagectomy	≤ 6% = 1 point
		Pancreas	Pancreatectomy	≤ 4.4% = 1 point
<b>TEAM CRITERIA</b>				
<b>STRUCTURE</b>				
Cancer Program Administration	Section III 6	The program has a defined administrative structure including a dedicated Oncology Medical Director		Required
Cancer Program Oversight	Section III 7	The program has a multidisciplinary committee providing oversight of all cancer programs including strategic direction and goals.		Required
Cancer Specific Physician Teams	Section II 1 Subsections 1 - 15	Facilities will report the structure of each specialized cancer team including: Physician specialty and training. Includes: Oncology subspecialty training in medicine, surgery, radiology and pathology		Require at least 5 Group I cancer teams. Up to 5 points available for each cancer team.
Cancer Ancillary Services	Section II 1 Subsections 1 - 15	Facilities will report that appropriate support personnel (where applicable) are available for cancer care including nursing support, therapy and nutrition		Required
General Inpatient and Outpatient Cancer Facility	Section III 8	The facility is able to demonstrate the availability of specialty services for the ongoing management of		Informational

*Note:* Designation as Blue Distinction Centers means that these facilities' overall experience and aggregate data met objective criteria established in collaboration with expert clinicians' and leading medical societies' recommendations. Individual outcomes may vary. To find out which services are covered under your policy at these or any other facilities, please call your local Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan.

CATEGORY	RFI Question #	CRITERIA DESCRIPTION	2008 CORE POINTS
Services		cancer patients such as: nursing, imaging, pharmacy, psychosocial, nutrition, rehabilitative services and pastoral care.	
Home Care Services	Section III 9	Facility has available home care services directed towards cancer patients	Informational
Cancer Education	Section III 10	Cancer education is available to the patient and the community	1 point
Clinical Staff Education	Section III 13	Clinical personnel are required to attend a minimum of one annual cancer related educational program	Required
<b>BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS</b>			
Blue Cross Blue Shield Plan Contract Status	Section I 2	Facility is currently contracted with local BCBS Plan	Required
Cancer Care Provider Contracting	Section I 3	The portion of facility cancer care providers and or provider groups that have current contracts with local Blue Plan. Provider types surveyed – Diagnostic Radiologists, Pathologists, Anesthesiologists, Radiation Therapists, Medical Oncologists and Surgical Oncologists.	Informational

**Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers  
Overview of Programmatic Scoring**

	General Cancer Care (RFI Sections I and III)		Disease-Specific Cancer Care (RFI Section II)		
	Processes of Care	Comprehensive Designation	Case Volumes and Outcomes	Multidisciplinary Care Team	Tumor Board
Possible Score 100 Points	8 Points	6 Points	26 Points	60 Points	
Required Score 65 Points	Score ≥ 4 points Meet all required criteria	Score ≥ 5 points Meet all required criteria	Score ≥ 50 points Meet all required criteria for at least 5 of 8 Group I Cancers		

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><u>Group I Cancers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Esophageal</li> <li>• Pancreatic</li> <li>• Gastric</li> <li>• Rectal</li> <li>• Liver</li> <li>• Bladder</li> <li>• Primary Brain</li> <li>• Acute Leukemia</li> </ul> | <p><u>Group II Cancers (no minimum volume):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Bone</li> <li>• Soft Tissue Sarcoma</li> <li>• Head and Neck</li> <li>• Thyroid (Medullary and Anaplastic)</li> <li>• Ocular Melanoma</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

*Note:* Designation as Blue Distinction Centers means that these facilities' overall experience and aggregate data met objective criteria established in collaboration with expert clinicians' and leading medical societies' recommendations. Individual outcomes may vary. To find out which services are covered under your policy at these or any other facilities, please call your local Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan.