

# Blue Shield PPO Needles plan

## Frequently Asked Questions

Updated May 2020

If you have any questions about your health plan benefits, call your dedicated Shield Concierge team at **(855) 599-2657**. The team is available to assist you from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Pacific time, Monday through Friday. You can also go to **[blueshieldca.com/teamsters1932](https://blueshieldca.com/teamsters1932)** for information about the PPO Needles plan.

### **GENERAL**

#### **1. What is the PPO Needles plan?**

The PPO Needles plan is only offered to employees assigned to work locations in Needles, Trona, and Baker. Please check with your benefit administrator to make sure you are eligible to enroll in this plan.

With the PPO Needles plan, you can receive care from any of the physicians and hospitals within the plan's network, as well as outside of the network for covered services.

#### **Within the provider network**

Preventive care services such as a flu shot are fully covered. You pay 100% for all other services until you meet your plan-year deductible. After your deductible is met, you pay a copayment or coinsurance for covered services. PPO network providers submit their claims directly to Blue Shield, so it's convenient for you.

#### **Outside the provider network**

When you see a non-network provider, what you ultimately pay depends on fees above Blue Shield's allowable amounts. Those fees vary and can be costly. For covered services:

- You pay 100% of the amount billed until you meet your plan-year deductible.
- Only the amount allowed by Blue Shield applies to your deductible.
- After you meet your deductible, you pay a copayment or coinsurance based on Blue Shield's allowable amount, plus any charges above the allowable amount.

Non-network providers usually require you to pay the full amount at the time you receive care. You then submit a claim with an itemized doctor's bill to Blue Shield.

#### **2. What is the difference between the PPO Needles plan and the PPO Non-Needles plan?**

The PPO Needles plan is only offered to employees assigned to work locations in Needles, Trona, and Baker.

## **SHIELD CONCIERGE**

### **1. What is Shield Concierge?**

Shield Concierge makes personalized service as easy as a phone call. With Shield Concierge, you call one toll-free number – **(855) 599-2657**– for answers to all your benefit and health-related questions.

The Shield Concierge team includes registered nurses, health coaches, pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, social workers, and dedicated customer service representatives. This team provides personalized support on all aspects of your care, including benefits, claims, providers, pharmacy, health coaching, care coordination, case management, and more.

The Shield Concierge team can:

- Help you find a provider in the PPO Network
- Work with you and your doctor to coordinate care across all providers
- Help you manage a chronic condition such as asthma, diabetes, or coronary artery disease
- Connect you with a registered nurse, who can answer your health-related questions, provide health counseling, and more
- Explain pharmacy benefits coverage, including formulary use
- Assist you with claims, and much more

## **VIRTUAL CARE AND IN-PERSON HEALTHCARE VISITS**

### **1. What is Teladoc?**

With Teladoc, you can talk to board-certified doctors and pediatricians 24/7 by phone or video. These doctors can treat non-emergency medical issues such as sinus infections, stomachaches, and more. They can also prescribe medications when needed.

Before you can use Teladoc, you'll need to register and complete your medical history. This gives Teladoc doctors the information they need to make an accurate diagnosis. If you're already a PPO Needles plan member, you can set up your Teladoc account at **[blueshieldca.com/teladoc](https://blueshieldca.com/teladoc)**.

## 2. What is Heal™?

With this service, you can schedule in-person healthcare visits with Heal doctors wherever you are – at home, in the office, or even a hotel. (Heal also offers telemedicine calls.) Heal is available in many locations across California. If you are already a PPO Needles plan member, you can schedule an appointment with a Heal doctor at [heal.com](https://www.heal.com).

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS

### 1. Does the PPO Needles plan offer programs to help me live a healthier lifestyle?

Yes. Wellvolution® is our digital platform for health and well-being. It offers over 50 tested apps and programs to help you achieve your health goals – at no extra cost. You choose the areas to focus on:

- **Prevent and reverse disease** – Prevent diabetes and reverse cardiovascular disease and other conditions.
- **Eat better** – Get help with meal planning, use nutritional calculators, and lose weight.
- **Exercise more** – Get support with movement tracking, workout routines, and coaching.
- **Manage stress** – Meditate, practice mindfulness, and more.
- **Sleep better** – Track sleep patterns and enjoy relaxation exercises for better rest.
- **Quit smoking** – Get the support you need to stop smoking with nicotine replacement therapy and other methods.

Get started with Wellvolution today:

1. Visit [wellvolution.com](https://www.wellvolution.com).
2. Answer a few questions about your health goals.
3. Discover the apps and programs that are right for you.

### 2. Does the PPO Needles plan offer wellness discount programs?

Yes. You can get help saving money and living healthier with a wide range of discount programs,<sup>1</sup> including Fitness Your Way™. This program gives you access to more than 800 network fitness centers in California and more than 10,000 nationwide for just \$25 per month.\* The wellness discount programs also include acupuncture and chiropractic services; therapeutic massage; and eye exams, frames, contact lenses, and LASIK surgery. Learn more at [blueshieldca.com/wellnessdiscounts](https://www.blueshieldca.com/wellnessdiscounts).

\* Taxes may apply. Individuals must be at least 18 years old to purchase a membership.

### **3. Do you offer discounts for acupuncture and other alternative care services?**

Yes. As part of the wellness discounts program described above, you can save on alternative care services such as acupuncture, chiropractic services, and therapeutic massage from specialty health care providers participating in the ChooseHealthy® program.

Just make an appointment with a participating provider. Then, show your Blue Shield member ID card at your appointment to get your discount. It's that easy!

For more information and to see a list of wellness discount vendors, go to [blueshieldca.com/wellnessdiscounts](https://blueshieldca.com/wellnessdiscounts) and select *Alternative care*.

You can also call **(888) 999-9452**, Monday through Friday, from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. Pacific time, for assistance.

Alternative care discounts include:

#### **Acupuncture services**

Members receive 25% off on services including:

- Examinations
- Acupuncture or electro-acupuncture
- Adjunctive therapeutic procedures

#### **Chiropractic services**

Members receive 25% off on services including:

- Examinations
- Manipulative treatment
- Adjunctive therapeutic procedures
- X-rays
- Supports and appliances

#### **Therapeutic massage services**

Members receive 25% off on services including a variety of techniques, such as:

- Swedish massage
- Deep muscle massage
- Deep tissue massage

## **MEDICAL BENEFITS**

### **1. Do I need to select a primary care physician?**

With a PPO plan, there is no requirement to select a primary care physician (PCP). You can choose any doctor or specialist in your plan's network and make an appointment.

While the PPO plan doesn't require you to select a PCP, building a relationship with a PCP that provides primary care has several advantages. A PCP can:

- Get to know you well and understand your healthcare needs
- Help you achieve your health and well-being goals

## **2. How can I find out if my current doctor is in the PPO network?**

To search for a network provider, go to [blueshieldca.com/pponetwork](https://blueshieldca.com/pponetwork).

## **3. What if my current doctor is not in the PPO network?**

When you see a non-network provider, what you ultimately pay depends on fees above Blue Shield's allowable amounts. Those fees vary and can be costly. For covered services:

- You pay 100% of the amount billed until you meet your plan-year deductible.
- Only the amount allowed by Blue Shield applies to your deductible.
- After you meet your deductible, you pay a copayment or coinsurance based on Blue Shield's allowable amount, plus any charges above the allowable amount.

Non-network providers usually require you to pay the full amount at the time you receive care. You then submit a claim with an itemized doctor's bill to Blue Shield.

## **4. Is there a medical office or group where I can select all the doctors for my family in one place, so I don't have to go to multiple locations? In other words, can I avoid going to one office for primary care, another office for OB/GYN, and yet another for pediatricians?**

Unlike an HMO, a PPO plan does not require you to choose doctors who belong to only one medical group. We are contracted with individual physicians as well as multi-specialty medical groups so you can get many of your healthcare needs in a single location. You can use our online Find a Doctor tool at [blueshieldca.com/pponetwork](https://blueshieldca.com/pponetwork) to look up the locations of any doctors.

## **5. If I need to see a specialist, do I need a referral from a provider I've visited for primary care (such as my PCP) or can I select one myself and make my own appointment?**

With a PPO plan, you do not need a referral to see a specialist. However, if you are not sure where to go, you can ask the provider you've visited for primary care for a referral.

You can make an appointment at any time with a specialist. Be sure to choose a doctor who is in your plan's network to save on costs.

In most cases, the copayment or coinsurance to see a specialist is different from a general office visit with a PCP. For more details, check your Summary of Benefits.

## **6. What is the cost for preventive care?**

You have access to services defined as routine preventive care at no additional charge and without having to pay a copayment/coinsurance or meet the plan's deductible. You can download a list of recommended screenings and immunizations at [blueshieldca.com/preventive](https://www.blueshieldca.com/preventive).

## **7. What do I do if I'm a new enrollee in the PPO Needles plan and I'm in the middle of receiving care for a medical condition from a provider that is not in the PPO network?**

As a new member, you are entitled to a medical review that may allow you to continue your current treatment plan with your prior provider for a specified time frame due to a specific diagnosis.

For example, a medical review is warranted if you or a family member:

- Are in the second or third trimester of pregnancy or a high-risk pregnancy and are currently established with an obstetrician
- Are scheduled for surgery within 3 weeks after your effective date of coverage
- Have documented follow-up care for surgery that was completed within 6 weeks prior to your effective date of coverage.
- Have complications resulting from surgery performed within the month prior to your effective date of coverage
- Are presently undergoing a course of chemotherapy or radiation therapy
- Are approved for or on a waiting list for a transplant
- Have an acute or serious chronic condition
- Are currently receiving outpatient mental health treatment or you are currently in a chemical dependency treatment program

If you have a transition of care issue, please contact Shield Concierge for assistance. Blue Shield will assign you a case manager to assist you with your specific transition of care needs.

**8. I am a new enrollee in the PPO Needles plan. I have received authorization for a medical procedure, but it takes place after my PPO Needles plan coverage goes into effect. Do I need to get a new authorization?**

Yes. If you have been scheduled for treatment that required authorization from your former doctor who is not in the PPO network, you will need new authorization from a doctor who is in the PPO network. If you have questions, please call your Shield Concierge team.

**9. Do I have coverage while traveling outside California or the United States?**

When you're outside California or out of the country, you and your family can get urgent and emergency care through the BlueCard® and Blue Shield Global Core programs. The BlueCard national network includes more than 95% of providers in the United States. The Blue Shield Global Core network includes providers in 170 countries.

To find a provider in the United States, visit [provider.bcbs.com](http://provider.bcbs.com), or call **(800) 810-BLUE (2583)**. To find a provider outside the country, visit [bcbsglobalcore.com](http://bcbsglobalcore.com), or call **(804) 673-1177** collect.

**PHARMACY BENEFITS**

**1. Do I have pharmacy benefits with Blue Shield?**

Yes. Go to the *Learn about your pharmacy benefits* section of [blueshieldca.com/teamsters1932](http://blueshieldca.com/teamsters1932) to find our drug formulary and learn about prescriptions by mail. Our Blue Shield Plus Drug Formulary is a list of our preferred brand-name and generic drugs. You may save money if your medication is a preferred prescription drug.

**2. What is a drug formulary?**

A formulary is a list of medications approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that are selected based on safety, effectiveness, and cost, and that are covered under your Blue Shield prescription drug benefit. The formulary assists doctors and members in selecting cost-effective drug therapy. A drug listed in the formulary does not guarantee it will be prescribed by your doctor.

**3. How do I know if my medication is on Blue Shield's drug formulary?**

It's easy to access the Blue Shield drug formulary to see if your medication is on the list. Just go to the *Learn about your pharmacy benefits* section of [blueshieldca.com/teamsters1932](http://blueshieldca.com/teamsters1932) and select *Plus drug formulary*.

#### **4. I am interested in using the mail service pharmacy to refill my prescriptions. How do I get started?**

If you take stabilized doses of covered maintenance medications for chronic conditions such as diabetes, it's easy to order a mail-service refill. You can receive up to a 90-day supply, depending on benefits. You may save money on your copayment, and there is no charge for shipping.

After you enroll in a Blue Shield health plan, it's easy to get started. Go to the *Learn about your pharmacy benefits* section of [blueshieldca.com/teamsters1932](https://blueshieldca.com/teamsters1932). To receive medications through the mail service pharmacy, you must first register online, by phone, or by mail to provide the information required. This includes your name, shipping address, payment method, and drug allergies. You will also need to send your prescription to the mail service pharmacy electronically, or by phone, fax, or mail.

Once your prescription is on file with the mail service pharmacy, you can order your refill prescriptions online at [caremark.com](https://caremark.com), or by phone or mail. If you have any questions, you can call the mail service pharmacy at **(866) 346-7200 (TTY: 711)**.

#### **5. What is step therapy, and why is it required for members?**

Step therapy is the practice of beginning drug therapy for a medical condition with drugs considered first-line for safety and cost-effectiveness, and then progressing to other drugs that may have more side effects or risks, or that are more costly. Blue Shield's step therapy typically requires the use of a generic drug first before covering a brand-name drug. We require step therapy to ensure that members get the safest and most cost-effective drug possible.

Step therapy requirements are based on how the FDA recommends that a drug should be used, nationally recognized treatment guidelines, medical studies, information from the drug manufacturer, and the relative cost of treatment for a condition.

Blue Shield's Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee, which includes active practicing physicians and pharmacists in the Blue Shield network, performs a rigorous clinical review of coverage policies such as step therapy.

If your doctor feels that a medication is medically necessary for you, your doctor may request an exception to the step therapy requirements. Your doctor simply needs to contact Blue Shield Pharmacy Services by phone or fax.

#### **6. What are drug tiers?**

Drugs in a formulary are typically grouped into tiers based on defined categories such as generic drugs, preferred brand-name drugs, non-preferred brand-name drugs, and specialty drugs. The tier that your medication is in determines your portion of the drug



cost. A typical drug benefit includes three or four tiers. You can find information about what you pay by drug tier in your health plan documents.

**7. I am a new enrollee in the PPO Needles plan. I have received prior authorization for a prescription drug from my previous carrier. Do I need to get authorization from Blue Shield to refill this prescription after my plan's effective date?**

The list of drugs that require prior authorization for coverage varies from one health plan carrier to another. If you are currently covered under another carrier and have enrolled in a Blue Shield health plan, your prescribing physician may need to obtain prior authorization from Blue Shield to ensure that your prescription will be covered after your plan's effective date. Be sure to ask your prescribing physician to contact Blue Shield for prior authorization to refill your prescription.

**8. I currently take a prescription drug that is listed on my current plan's specialty prescription drug list. How do I verify if this prescription drug is on Blue Shield's specialty drug list?**

To verify that your prescription drug is on Blue Shield's specialty drug list, call your Shield Concierge team.

**AFTER YOU BECOME A MEMBER**

**1. When will I receive my member ID card?**

New subscribers will receive a Blue Shield member ID card in the mail before their effective coverage date. The plastic member ID card lists the name of the subscriber on the front. Please review your new ID card carefully to make sure all the information is correct.

**2. How do I get a replacement member ID card?**

Once you have registered and logged in to **blueshieldca.com**, you can print a temporary ID card or order a new ID card and have it mailed to you. Except for the paper stock, temporary cards are identical to permanent ID cards.

If you order a replacement ID card by mail, you will receive it by U.S. mail within seven to 10 business days.

### 3. How do I register for a Blue Shield online account?

Registering for a Blue Shield online account gives you easy access to your plan benefits. This includes a personalized dashboard with an easy-to-read overview of your health plan.

With an online account, you can do the following, and more:

- **Download your ID card** – Just select *View ID Card*.
- **View or change your PCP at any time** – After you log in, scroll down the main page and you'll see your PCP's name. For further information about your PCP, select *View doctor details*. To change your PCP, select *Edit Profile*. Next, under *My health team*, select *Change primary care physician*, and then *Continue*.
- **Manage access to your dependents' health information** – Request access to your covered dependents' health information so you can view it from your online account by selecting *Manage Family Access*.
- **Learn about your pharmacy benefits** – Select *Be Well* and then *Pharmacy* to learn about your pharmacy benefits. You'll also see our drug formularies, information on the mail service pharmacy, and answers to frequently asked questions about pharmacy.

Registering is simple:

1. Go to **blueshieldca.com/register**. You can also register on our mobile app, which you can download on the App Store<sup>SM</sup> or Google Play<sup>TM</sup>.
2. When prompted, enter your new Blue Shield member ID number.

### 4. What is the Blue Shield mobile app, and what can I use it for?

The Blue Shield mobile app gives you quick and easy access to important health plan information anytime, anywhere. With the Blue Shield mobile app, you can:

- View your Blue Shield member ID card
- Find a doctor, hospital, or urgent care center
- Get benefits information\*
- View deductible and copayment year-to-date totals
- View claims
- Access NurseHelp 24/7<sup>SM</sup>
- Contact us

\* See your health plan documents or check with your company's plan administrator for your specific benefit coverage.

It's easy to get started. From your phone, download the Blue Shield of California mobile app on the App Store<sup>SM</sup> or Google Play<sup>TM</sup>. Be sure to log in with your username and

password to get the most from the app experience. Visit [blueshieldca.com/mobile](https://blueshieldca.com/mobile) for more information.

<sup>1</sup> These discount program services are not covered benefits of your Blue Shield of California, Blue Shield of California Life & Health Insurance Company (Blue Shield Life), or self-insured health plan, and none of the terms or conditions of the Blue Shield, Blue Shield Life, or self-insured health plan apply. The networks of practitioners and facilities in the discount programs are managed by the external program administrators identified below, including any screening and credentialing of providers. Blue Shield does not review the services provided by discount program providers for medical necessity or efficacy. Nor does Blue Shield make any recommendations, representations, claims, or guarantees regarding the practitioners, their availability, fees, services, or products.

Some services offered through the discount program may already be included as part of the Blue Shield plan covered benefits. Members or self-insured plan participants should access those covered services prior to using the discount program.

Members or self-insured plan participants who are not satisfied with products or services received from the discount program may use the grievance process described in their *Evidence of Coverage*, *Disclosure Form*, *Evidence of Coverage and Disclosure Form*, *Benefit Booklet*, or *Certificate of Insurance/Policy*. Blue Shield reserves the right to terminate this program at any time without notice.

Discount programs are administered by or arranged through the following independent companies:

- Alternative Care Discounts – services provided by the ChooseHealthy program, made available through ChooseHealthy, Inc., a subsidiary of American Specialty Health Incorporated (ASH)\*
- Discount Vision Program – MESVision
- Fitness facilities – Fitness Your Way™ (Tivity Health)
- LASIK – Laser Eye Care of California, LLC, QualSight, Inc.

Note: No genetic information, including family medical history, is gathered, shared, or used from these programs.

\*The alternative care discounts are available to members with a Blue Shield medical plan. You are obligated to pay for all services from those providers but will receive a discount from those participating providers for services included in the program. The ChooseHealthy program does not make any payments directly to participating providers. The ChooseHealthy program has no liability for providing or guaranteeing services and assumes no liability for the quality of services rendered. Discounts on services available through the ChooseHealthy program are subject to change. Please consult the ChooseHealthy website for current availability.

Heal is a trademark of Get Heal, Inc.

ChooseHealthy is a federal registered trademark of American Specialty Health Plans (ASH) and used with permission herein.

Tivity Health, Inc. is an independent vendor that provides solutions to improve health and well-being. Fitness Your Way and Tivity Health are trademarks or registered trademarks of Tivity Health, Inc. Tivity Health is solely responsible for the service provided above. All other brand names, product names, registered trademarks, or trademarks belong to their respective holders. © 2019 Tivity Health, Inc. All rights reserved.

App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc.

Google Play is a trademark of Google LLC.

NurseHelp 24/7 and Wellvolution are service marks or registered trademarks of Blue Shield of California. Wellvolution and all associated digital and in-person health programs, services, and offerings are managed by Solera, Inc., a health company committed to changing lives by guiding people to better health in their communities.