



Health Insurance Fraud

What You Should Know

Fraud Affects Everyone

Fraud may cost the health care industry (public and private payers) more than \$200 billion each year. As a member of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX), this fraud may cause you to face rising premiums, increased copayments and deductibles, and the elimination of certain benefits.

Don't Be a Victim

In addition to losing money through fraud, members may also experience physical and mental harm as a result of health care fraud schemes in which a provider performs unnecessary or dangerous procedures.

Identifying Fraud

Commonly identified schemes involving providers include:

- ▶ **Misrepresenting Services** – Intentionally billing procedures under different names or codes to obtain coverage for services that aren't included in a member's plan.
- ▶ **Upcoding** – Deliberately charging for more complex or more expensive services than those actually provided.
- ▶ **Non-rendered and/or "Free" Services** – Some providers intentionally bill for tests or services never provided. This can also mean that the provider offered "free" services to bill the insurance company for services not performed or needed.
- ▶ **Kickbacks, Bribes or Rebates** – Referring patients to a provider or facility where the referring provider has a financial interest.

Commonly identified member schemes include:

- ▶ **Identity Swapping** – Allowing an uninsured individual to use your insurance card.
- ▶ **Identity Theft** – Using false identification to gain employment and the health insurance benefits that come with it.
- ▶ **Non-eligible Members** – Adding someone to a policy who is not eligible or failing to remove someone when that person becomes ineligible.
- ▶ **Prescription Medicine Abuse and Diversion** – Controlled substances can be obtained through deception or dishonesty for personal use or sale "on the street." Prescription medications can be obtained through doctor shopping, visiting several emergency rooms or stealing doctors' prescription pads.

Fraud **increases costs**
and **decreases benefits.**





Fighting Fraud

BCBSTX offers these tips:

- ▶ Know your own benefits and scope of coverage.
- ▶ Review all Explanation of Benefits (EOB) forms. Make sure the exams, procedures and tests billed were the ones you actually had with the provider who treated you.
- ▶ Understand your responsibility to pay deductibles and copayments, and what you can and cannot be balance-billed for once your claim has been processed.
- ▶ Guard your health insurance card and personal insurance information. Notify BCBSTX immediately if your card or insurance information is lost or stolen.
- ▶ Sign and date only one claim form per office visit.
- ▶ Never lend your member ID card to another person.
- ▶ Don't give out insurance or personal information if services are offered as "free." Be sure you understand what is "free" and what you or your employer will be charged for.
- ▶ Ask your doctors exactly what tests or procedures they want you to have and why. Ask why the tests or procedures are necessary before you have them.
- ▶ Be sure any referrals you receive from your network provider are to other network doctors or facilities. If you're not sure, ask.
- ▶ Monitor your prescription utilization via the BCBSTX website or your Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM). Make sure the medications billed to your insurance are accurate.



Our **Special Investigations Department** is one of the most effective in the industry.

Preventing Health Care Fraud

BCBSTX created the Special Investigations Department (SID) to fight fraud and help lower health care costs. The staff includes individuals with medical, insurance and law enforcement backgrounds as well as data analysts experienced in detecting fraudulent billing schemes. The SID aggressively investigates allegations of fraud and refers appropriate cases for criminal prosecution.

Fraud Isn't Fair. Help Us Fight It.

Reducing health care fraud is a collaborative effort between BCBSTX, its providers and its members. Additional information — including a fighting fraud checklist — is available through the SID website at bcbstx.com/sid.

We also encourage you to report any suspected incidence of fraud by calling our Health Care Fraud Hotline, completing a form online or sending us a note in the mail. Suspicions of fraud can be reported to the SID anonymously.

Three Ways To Report Fraud To BCBSTX

The SID is here to help you. You can contact the SID in any of the following ways:

1. 800-543-0867

The toll-free Fraud Hotline operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can remain anonymous or provide information if you want to be contacted by a member of the SID.

2. bcbstx.com/sid/reporting

This website address links to an online fraud reporting form that can be completed and sent to the SID electronically.

3. U.S. Mail

You can write the SID at:
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas
Special Investigations Department
1001 E. Lookout Drive, Tower A-2.212
Richardson, Texas 75082

A Division of Health Care Service Corporation, a Mutual Legal Reserve Company, an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

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Medical Plan

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Are my medical records kept confidential?

A. Yes. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) is committed to keeping all specific member information confidential. Anyone who may have to review your records is required to keep your information confidential. Your medical records or claims data may have to be reviewed (for example, as part of an appeal that you request). If so, precautions are taken to keep your information confidential. In many cases, your identity will not be associated with this information.

Q. Who do I call with questions about my benefits?

A. Call the toll-free Customer Service number on the back of your ID card.

Q. How do I find a contracting network doctor or hospital?

A. Go to bcbstx.com and use the **Provider Finder**[®], or call Customer Service at the toll-free number on the back of your ID card.

Q. What do I do when I need emergency care?

A. Call 911 or seek help from any doctor or hospital. BCBSTX will coordinate your care with the emergency provider.

Q. What should I bring to my first appointment with a new doctor?

A. Your first appointment is an opportunity to share information about your health with your new doctor. Bring as much medical information as possible, including:

- **Medical records and insurance card** — If you are undergoing treatment at the time you change doctors, your medical records are important to your new doctor. Your insurance card provides information about copayments, billing and customer service phone numbers.
- **Medications** — Give your new doctor information about prescription and over-the-counter medications, including any herbal medications you take. Be sure to include the name of the medication, the dosage, how often you take it and why you take it.

- **Special needs** — Make a list of any equipment or devices you use including wheelchairs, oxygen, glucose monitors and the glucose strips. Be prepared to explain how you use them, not only to make sure you have the equipment you need, but also to make sure that there is no disruption in your care.

Q. What questions should I ask if I am selecting a new doctor?

A. In addition to preliminary questions you might ask a new doctor — such as “Are you accepting new patients?” — here are some questions to help you evaluate whether a doctor is right for you.

- What is the doctor’s experience in treating patients with the same health problems that I have?
- Where is the doctor’s office? Is there convenient and ample parking, or is it close to public transportation?
- What are the regular office hours? Does the office have drop-in hours if I have an urgent problem?
- How long should I expect to wait to see the doctor when I’m in the waiting room?
- Are routine lab tests and X-rays performed in the office, or will I have to go elsewhere?
- Which hospitals does the doctor use?
- If this is a group practice, will I always see my chosen doctor?
- How long does it usually take to get an appointment?
- How do I get in touch with the doctor after office hours?
- Can I get advice about routine medical problems over the phone or by email?
- Does the office send reminders for routine preventive tests like cholesterol checks?

Q. What if I’m already in treatment when I enroll and my provider isn’t in the network?

A. We’ll work with you to provide the most appropriate care for your medical situation, especially if you are pregnant or receiving treatment for a serious illness. You may still be able to see your out-of-network provider for a period of time. Call the toll-free Customer Service number on the back of your ID card for more information.