



**Care Comparison<sup>®</sup> Tool  
Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **What is the BCBSNM Care Comparison tool?**  
As part of our health care transparency initiative, BCBSNM has developed an online Care Comparison tool as a means to disclose cost ranges for common services at specified area hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) and free-standing radiology (FSR) centers for inpatient and outpatient services. This easy-to-read tool allows members to review and compare total treatment costs, both professional and facility combined, for a number of procedures performed at these designated facilities in the BCBSNM provider network.
2. **Why has BCBSNM implemented a Transparency Program?**  
We believe an educated consumer will make better health care decisions. Greater health care transparency means providing increased detail about health care trends, allowing members to make more informed decisions when choosing common medical tests, procedures and other services.
3. **Is cost the only factor being displayed in the Care Comparison tool?**  
No. The volume of services performed is also being presented.
4. **What types of procedures can be found on the Care Comparison tool? What procedures are not included?**  
The Care Comparison tool includes common medical tests, and both inpatient and outpatient procedures. Services provided in an Urgent Care Center or Emergency Room are currently not included. Additionally, certain outliers are not included.
5. **Why did BCBSNM select only certain procedures for comparison?**  
The selection was made to track commonly billed high-volume, non-emergency elective procedures at area facilities.
6. **How is BCBSNM obtaining the data for this tool?**  
The Care Comparison tool incorporates cost of care data pulled from the BCBSNM claims system for all facilities, including the professional services related to that procedure. For the next scheduled update and release in **April 2010**, each facility is asked to supply us with the volume of procedures and services performed at their facility for all payers\* from July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009. A Care Comparison Data Collection Form is available in the "News and Updates" section of our Provider Web site at [www.bcbsnm.com/provider](http://www.bcbsnm.com/provider). Provider data must be submitted via this online form by **January 29, 2010**. All updated information will then be included in the online Care Comparison tool in April 2010.
7. **What if my facility did not perform a high volume of some of the procedures listed?**  
If there is a procedure for which your facility had a low volume (less than 10) for the designated time period, the following explanation is provided: "Currently we do not have enough claim information to support cost reporting." If you do not provide the volume counts being requested, the following explanation is displayed: "Facility has not yet reported."
8. **How often will the Care Comparison tool be updated?**  
Providers will have the opportunity to update the number of services every six months. Cost estimates will also be updated approximately every six months.

9. **Can providers appeal information that is posted within the Care Comparison tool?**  
No. There is no appeal process currently. We are not at liberty to modify the methodology. Because we will be pulling the data directly from the BCBSNM claims file, we feel that the information (a range of costs for both facility and professional services combined) will accurately reflect your experience. You will have the opportunity to update the all-payer procedure count approximately every six months.
10. **Who can access the Care Comparison tool?**  
Members and providers may view the Care Comparison tool.
11. **When will the data be available to members?**  
The Care Comparison tool was implemented in September 2009, and is available now to members through Blue Access<sup>®</sup> for Members. Updated cost and volume data will be posted on our Web site in April 2010.
12. **How is BCBSNM informing members about the tool?**  
Previously, members used the Hospital Comparison tool on our Web site to research and compare individual hospital outcome data for more than 100 specific diagnoses, procedures and hospital performance factors such as mortality, length-of-stay, complications, and how frequently a hospital performs specific procedures. Cost and volume information have been merged into the existing tool and it has been renamed the Cost Comparison tool in all locations. Members will continue to be updated on this and other BCBSNM initiatives via member flyers, employer group benefit newsletters and Blue Access<sup>®</sup> for Members.
13. **How does BCBSNM expect members to use this information?**  
When members are deciding on the health care services they need, and the facilities to perform these services, we anticipate that they will use the Care Comparison tool as a guide before making a choice. We recommend that our members discuss their research results with their physician before making any treatment decisions.
14. **Where can providers find the BCBSNM Care Comparison tool?**  
For your convenience, there is a link to the Care Comparison tool on our Web site at [www.bcbsnm.com/provider](http://www.bcbsnm.com/provider) in the "Provider Tools" section. Please continue to visit the "News and Updates" section of our Provider Web site for updates and additional information on this and other BCBSNM initiatives.
15. **Whom do I call if I have any questions?**  
If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the Care Comparison tool, please contact Mike Nelson at 505-816-2139 or [michael\\_j\\_nelson@bcbsnm.com](mailto:michael_j_nelson@bcbsnm.com).

*\*Medicare, commercial insurance, self-pay, etc.*