



BlueCross
of California

PARTNERSHIP PLAN



Healthy People



Dear Member:

Did you know that Blue Cross has 10 Community Resource Centers (CRCs) across the state that have been set up just to serve you?

CRCs might look like just another office building, but they're not. When you walk through the doors of a CRC, you are greeted with a warm smile by people who want to help you get the care you need. CRC staff can:

- Help you fill out the forms for the Healthy Families Program
- Help you get to your health appointments
- Sign you up for FREE health education programs and classes
- Connect you to people who can translate into your language

To find a CRC near you, call the Customer Care Center at **1-800-407-4627**.

Wishing you the best of health,

Lakshmi Dhanvanthari

Lakshmi Dhanvanthari, MD
Medical Director

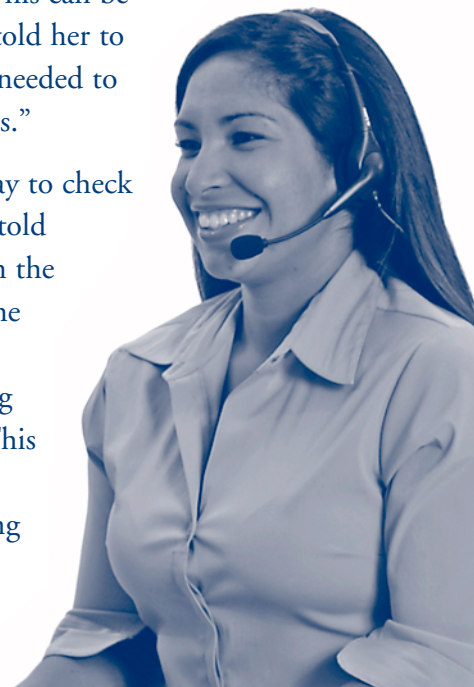
The Nurse Is "In"

One of the benefits you have as a member of Blue Cross of California Partnership Plan (Blue Cross) is MedCall®. If you have a health care question, you can call **1-800-224-0336**, 24 hours a day, and talk to a nurse for free. These calls are private and you don't have to give your name.

In one case, the MedCall® nurse knew the situation was an emergency. Marta, a nurse for 31 years, got a call from a woman who said her 18-month-old son was "breathing funny." The caller went on to say that the baby had been throwing up and had diarrhea for two days. The child had also not wet his diaper for 24 hours.

"I knew right away that this was an emergency," said Marta. "The symptoms she described sounded like dehydration (lack of water in the body). This can be fatal. As calmly as I could, I told her to call 911 right away. Her son needed to be in the hospital to get fluids."

Marta called back the next day to check up on the baby. The mother told Marta that the child stayed in the hospital for seven hours but he was doing OK now. "The mother thanked me for saving her son's life," said Marta. "This is the best part for MedCall® nurses. It's always so rewarding to help someone. We offer a great service."



Teens Have a MedCall® Line Just for Them

Young adult Blue Cross members can call a health information line just for them: **1-800-956-8336**. Calls are free and callers don't have to give their names. Teens can talk to a nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Don't Let Others Use Your Benefits Card

Did you know that your benefits card (ID card) can be taken away if it is misused or loaned out? That's the case even if you loan it to a relative or a close friend who needs to go to the emergency room (ER).

We know that sometimes friends or family might need medical help and you might want to let them use your card, but don't. It is fraud if you loan someone your card.

Here are some tips to keep in mind about your ID card:

- Keep your card in a safe place.
- Don't loan your card out to any person, even if they need to go to the ER.
- If your card is ever lost or stolen, call us right away at **1-800-407-4627**. We will send you a new card.

Depression: Help Is Available for You or Someone You Love

Maria used to take her kids to the park every day.

Even as a busy, single mom with a hard job, she would sing as she cooked dinner. She would laugh at funny jokes and read stories to her kids before bed.

Lately, though, Maria always seems sad. She sleeps a lot. She is too tired to take her kids to the park or read stories to them. She doesn't laugh or sing anymore. Maria might be depressed. Everyone feels "blue" some of the time. But if you, or someone you love, has had four or more of the signs below for more than two weeks, then set up a time to see your doctor:

- Sad, anxious, or "empty"
- Hopeless or helpless
- Guilty or worthless
- Loss of interest in things you once enjoyed
- Tired or having little energy
- Not able to focus, remember, or decide things
- Not able to sleep or sleeping too much
- Not eating and weight loss, or eating too much and weight gain
- Thoughts of death or killing yourself; trying to kill yourself
- Restless or grumpy
- Headaches or pain that won't go away
- Stomach problems

Depression can happen to anyone. Studies show it occurs more in people who work hard to make ends meet. Also, women get depressed about twice as much as men. Sometimes life is hard to handle, but it's OK to admit you are depressed and get help. You don't need to feel ashamed. Many people care about you and want you to feel better. Your doctor cares about you too.

If you think that you, or someone you love, might be depressed take these steps:

- Call your doctor's office. Call from a private place if you don't want others to know.

Continued from page 2

- When you call, tell the office staff you want to see your doctor for private reasons.
- Visit your doctor even if you don't feel like it. The depression might keep you from wanting to go. Go anyway – for yourself, and for your family.
- Tell the doctor you think you might be depressed. Be honest about how you feel, and ask for help.
- Follow the advice of your doctor. Take the medicine your doctor gives you.

There is help for depression. You don't have to go through it alone. You don't have to keep feeling this way. For your sake, and the sake of those who care about you, call your doctor if you think you need help.



We've Made a Few Changes to Your Member Handbook

The latest Blue Cross Member Handbook will have these changes:

- Members no longer need an OK from their main doctor to see an OB/GYN.
- Chiropractic and acupuncture benefits are only offered to members who live in Sacramento County and San Diego County.
- Learn about a new benefit we cover called "Telemedicine." This uses video and computers to access health care experts across the state.
- We have added details about how to keep getting care from some doctors who leave the Blue Cross plan. This change only affects people with certain health issues.

Call us at **1-800-407-4627**. We can send you a copy of the new handbook.

Why Generic Drugs Are as Good as Brand-name Drugs

They're safe, work the same, and are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Did you know that generic drugs work the same as brand-name drugs? The FDA makes sure of it. Generic drugs must be put through the same careful review process as brand-name drugs. Generics also need to have the same active ingredients. Your Blue Cross primary care physician (PCP) will prescribe a generic drug for you when there is one. You can be sure that it's safe. See below for answers to important questions about generic drugs.

What are generic drugs?

When a brand-name drug's patent expires, generic versions of the drug can be sold. Generic drugs are the same as brand-name drugs.

Why are generic drugs as good as brand-name drugs?

Generic drug makers must prove to the FDA that their product works the same way as the brand-name version. All generic drugs must be approved by the FDA. Generic drugs are made in the same factories as brand-name drugs. They also must be as strong, as pure, and as stable as brand-name drugs.

Why do generics look different from brand-name drugs?

Generics aren't allowed to look like brand-name drugs. But they must have the same active ingredients. Colors or flavors don't change the way generic drugs work.

Does every brand-name drug have a generic version?

No. Some brand-name drugs don't have a generic version yet. Ask your pharmacist if there is a generic form.

I want to know more!

Ask your PCP, drug store, or other health care provider about generic drugs. Or visit the FDA website at http://www.fda.gov/cder/consumerinfo/generic_info/generics_question_brochure.htm.

How to Resolve a Problem with Blue Cross

If you have a complaint about services from Blue Cross or your doctor, you can file a complaint within 180 days. Just call us at **1-800-407-4627**. We can also help translate your complaint. Or we can mail a form to you. You can mail the form back to us:

Blue Cross of California
P.O. Box 60007
Los Angeles, CA 90060

Within 30 days, we will send you a letter. This letter will tell you how we resolved the problem. You can ask Blue Cross to cover approved services while your complaint is being resolved. If your case involved a major threat to your health, we will give you our response within 3 days. The Blue Cross website is www.bluecrossca.com.

State Fair Hearing

You can file a State Fair Hearing even if you filed a complaint or appeal with Blue Cross and it has been resolved. You can file within 90 days of the incident. If you first ask for an Independent Medical Review (IMR), you can also ask for a State Fair Hearing. You can't use the IMR process if you have first asked for a State Fair Hearing. You can ask for a State Fair Hearing by calling the California Department of Social Services (DSS) Public Library and Response Unit at **1-800-952-5253**. Or write to:

California Department of Social Services
Administrative Adjudication Division
744 P Street, Mail Station 19-3733
Sacramento, CA 95814

How to File an Appeal

Call Blue Cross to file an appeal if you're unhappy with our decision. Or write to us at:

Blue Cross of California
Attn: Grievance Coordinator
P.O. Box 60007
Los Angeles, CA 90060-0007

You might have to pay for services you had while waiting for an answer.

Independent Medical Review (IMR)

You may ask for an IMR if a Notice of Action says your treatment is "not medically necessary," "experimental," or "investigational."

If your treatment is "experimental" or "investigational" or your health may be seriously harmed without it, you may ask for an IMR right away. If not, you must file a complaint with your health plan before you ask for an IMR. Ask for your IMR 30 days after you file a complaint with Blue Cross. You can also ask for an IMR as soon as your complaint is denied, if that comes sooner.

You must ask for the IMR within 6 months after your complaint has been denied.

- To ask for an IMR, call the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) at **1-888-466-2219**.

If you have trouble hearing or speaking, call **1-877-688-9891 (TDD)**. You may also call the California Relay Service at **1-800-735-2929 (TDD)** and go online to www.ip-relay.com.

- DMHC also has an Internet website with forms and instructions at <http://www.hmohelp.ca.gov>.

Your medical records will be sent to an IMR doctor outside the health plan who will decide if the treatment is needed. You will get the decision within 30 days. If your treatment is "experimental," "investigational," or your health may be seriously harmed without it, you will get it in 3 to 7 days.

DMHC makes sure all managed care health plans do what the law says they should do. You may call them with any complaints you have about us.

Department of Managed Health Care

DMHC makes sure health care service plans do what the law says they should do. If you have a complaint against Blue Cross, call us first, before you call DMHC. You can use this process and still keep your legal rights and ways to solve your complaint. Call DMHC at **1-888-HMO-2219**. The TDD line for those who have trouble hearing is **1-877-688-9891**. You can also visit their website at <http://www.hmohelp.ca.gov>.

Members Count

Blue Cross surveys its members each year to find out how you feel about us and the health care you get. It's called the Consumer Assessment of Health Plan Survey (CAHPS). We share the results with our doctors so they can give you the best health care.

The spring 2005 CAHPS results show that our overall ratings are in line with the national average. See below for details:

- Seven out of ten of you were happy with Blue Cross
- Seven out of ten of you were happy with your health care
 - 88 percent said that doctors showed respect for you
 - 83 percent said that doctors had polite and helpful office staff
 - 85 percent said doctors listened well to what you had to say
 - 88 percent did not have a problem getting an OK for care



We hope you're one of these happy members!

Each year, Blue Cross also checks to see if its members are getting the care that is recommended for a healthy life. We use a tool called Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set (HEDIS®). Our HEDIS® scores for care given in 2004 show that:

- 67 percent of you got your babies all of their vaccines by 2 years of age
- More than 50 percent of you took your babies to all six Well-Infant visits before 15 months of age
- More than 70 percent of you took your children, who were 3 to 6 years of age, to an annual Well-Child visit in 2004

Screenings for cervical and breast cancer are important for all women. Here are the scores for those visits in 2004:

- 54 percent of you got a breast cancer screening (mammogram)
- 71 percent of you got a cervical cancer screening

Take Charge of Your Health – Stay Informed

Blue Cross helps you to stay healthy with mailed reminders to see your doctor and through a flyer called the "Preventive Health Care Guidelines."

To find out more about this program, please call us at **1-800-407-4627**.



Blue Cross of California
Partnership Plan
P.O. Box 9054
Oxnard, CA 93031-9054

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This newsletter is designed to give you health education information, not medical advice. Always talk to your doctor about your medical treatment.

If You Want to Reach Us by Phone:

Customer Care Center	1-800-407-4627
TTY Line	1-888-757-6034
MedCall® – 24-Hour Nurse Line	1-800-224-0336
Teen Line	1-800-956-8336
Breastfeeding Support Line	1-800-231-2999
Community Resource Center (Call to find one near you.)	1-800-407-4627

www.bluecrossca.com

Blue Cross of California Partnership Plan is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross Association.

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If you need this translated, call the telephone number on your member ID card. English

Si necesita este material traducido, llame al número telefónico que aparece en su tarjeta de identificación. Spanish

إذا احتجت إلى ترجمة هذا النص، اتصل برقم الهاتف الموجود على بطاقة عضويتك. Arabic

Այն ձեզ հարկավոր է սրա թարգմանությունը, հեռախոսեք ձեր անդամի ինքնուրույն (ID) ստեղծված գրանցված հեռախոսահամարով: Armenian

如果您需要翻譯本簡訊，請撥打您會員 ID 卡上的電話號碼。 Chinese

اگر نیاز دارید که این مطلب ترجمه شود یا شماره تلفن روی کارت شناسایی خود تماس بگیرید. Farsi

Yog tias koj xav tau daim ntawv xov xwm no txhais ua koj yam lus, cia li hu tus naj npawb xov tooj uas muaj nyob hauv koj daim npaw qhia npe (ID). Hmong

បើអ្នកត្រូវការឱ្យប្រើប្រាស់ភាសាដទៃទៀត សូមទូរស័ព្ទមកលេខទូរស័ព្ទដែលមាននៅលើប័ណ្ណសំគាល់សមាជិក របស់អ្នក។ Khmer

번역본이 필요하시면 여러분의 ID 카드에 표시된 전화번호로 연락하십시오. Korean

Если вам требуется перевод данного текста, позвоните по телефону, указанному на вашем удостоверении. Russian

Kung kailangan ninyo itong isalin, tawagan ang numero sa inyong ID card na pang kasapi. Tagalog

Nếu quý vị cần tài liệu này phiên dịch sang ngôn ngữ khác, xin gọi số điện thoại ghi trong thẻ hội viên của quý vị. Vietnamese

We've Changed Our Name!

Blue Cross of California is now Blue Cross of California Partnership Plan (Blue Cross). We made this change to form a new company just for our Medi-Cal program. You do not have to do anything. We will still help you get the best health care.

