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The Empire Plan

REPORTING ON

CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR TRANSPLANTS



The Empire Plan Center of Excellence for Transplants Program provides a range of services for a number of different types of transplants. The centers meet stringent clinical criteria and demonstrate better overall patient outcome.



Department of Civil Service
The Empire Plan

For Empire Plan enrollees and for their enrolled dependents, COBRA enrollees with their Empire Plan benefits and Young Adult Option enrollees

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CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR TRANSPLANTS PROGRAM

If you or a covered dependent need transplant services, the Empire Plan Center of Excellence (COE) for Transplants Program provides access to a large nationwide network of transplant providers who have demonstrated quality care, treatment expertise and overall better patient results. The COE is part of the Hospital Program, administered by Anthem Blue Cross. Facilities covered under the COE include Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association's Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants (BDCT) and Anthem Centers of Medical Excellence. It also includes facilities in New York State identified by the Hospital Program administrator for their excellence in kidney transplantation.

Preauthorization Is Required

To receive paid-in-full benefits under the COE for Transplants Program, you must call The Empire Plan and press or say 2 for the Hospital Program for preauthorization. Your participation in the program is voluntary. This benefit is offered to all Empire Plan enrollees regardless of whether the plan is their primary insurance. Medicare-primary enrollees are also eligible. While preauthorization is only required if the plan is primary, Medicare-primary members must still call to enroll in the COE Program. The Hospital Program must preauthorize your transplant services and the services must be provided at a COE for Transplants facility.

What Is Covered

Benefits under the COE for Transplants Program are available for the following types of transplants:

- Bone marrow
- Cord blood stem cell
- Heart
- Heart-lung
- Kidney
- Liver
- Lung
- Pancreas
- Pancreas after kidney
- Peripheral stem cell
- Simultaneous kidney/pancreas

You receive paid-in-full benefits once your enrollment in the COE Program begins, including inpatient and outpatient hospital services and physician care related to the transplant. Services include pretransplant evaluation of the transplant recipient, as well as reevaluations as needed, and 12 months of follow-up care at the center where the transplant was performed. The 12-month period begins on the date of your transplant.

Donor expenses are considered only after a donor is identified and selected as a positive match. Donor expenses must be submitted to the donor's health insurance plan before benefits can be considered under The Empire Plan. Documentation from the donor's health insurance plan must be provided.

If a transplant is authorized but you do not use a designated COE, benefits will be provided in accordance with Empire Plan hospital and/or medical/surgical coverage. You will be subject to the Empire Plan Benefits Management Program requirements and any applicable copayments, deductible and coinsurance.

If you choose to have your transplant in a facility other than a designated COE, you may still take advantage of case management services offered by the Hospital Program. Contact the Benefits Management Program for prior approval and a case management nurse will be assigned to help guide you through the transplant process.

A travel allowance is available to patients enrolled in the COE for Transplants Program. To be eligible, the patient must travel within the United States. See page 3 for details.

Centers of Excellence for Transplants

The COE for Transplants Program includes facilities that have been recognized by either the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association or Anthem for their expertise in delivering specialty care. For a complete list of nationwide facilities that participate, contact The Empire Plan toll free at 1-877-7-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) and press or say 2 for the Hospital Program. You can also go to the Anthem Blue Cross website at anthembluecross.com/nys/find-a-hospital/ and select the link for Center of Excellence for Transplants Program for listings of COE for Transplants facilities.*

** Listings may not display all available COE for Transplants facilities and it is subject to change.*

Case Management

When you participate in the COE for Transplants Program, the Empire Plan Hospital Program will provide case management services through a registered nurse from the time you are listed for transplant until up to 12 months after you receive the transplant. The registered nurse case manager has experience in oncology, bone marrow transplants and solid organ transplants. Your case manager will help you through the transplant process, coordinate all transplant-related needs and work with other Empire Plan programs you may use.

CENTER OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

An allowance for lodging, meal expenses and travel to and from your COE facility may be available if you are enrolled in the COE for Transplants Program. The allowance is available to the patient and one travel companion when the facility is more than 100 miles (200 miles for airfare) from the patient's home. If the patient is a minor (under the age of 18), the allowance will include coverage for up to two travel companions. The Empire Plan provides reimbursement for travel, meals and one lodging per day.

The COE for Transplants Program will reimburse for meals and lodging based on the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) per diem rate and automobile mileage (personal or rental car) based on the IRS medical rate. Save original, itemized receipts for reimbursement. Only the following

travel expenses are reimbursable: lodging, meals, auto mileage (personal and rental car), economy class airfare, coach train fare and certain costs of local travel (e.g., local subway, local ridesharing, taxi or bus fare; shuttle, parking and tolls) incurred once you arrive at the lodging that is needed for transportation from your lodging to the COE. To find the current per diem rates for lodging and meals, visit the GSA website at gsa.gov and look under Travel.

There is no lifetime maximum for travel, meals and lodging for the COE for Transplants Program.

The travel allowance is available as long as you remain enrolled and are receiving benefits under the COE Program.

BENEFITS OUTSIDE CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

If you choose to have your transplant in a facility that is not a COE, or if you need a transplant not available at a COE, you may still take advantage of the case management services at no additional cost to you. Call The Empire Plan and choose the Hospital Program to connect to a case manager.

If you do not use the COE for Transplants Program, you must follow the requirements of the Empire Plan Benefits Management Program and pay any applicable copayments, deductible and coinsurance.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: Is the COE for Transplants Program voluntary?

A: Yes, the COE for Transplants Program is voluntary. If you choose not to use a COE for your transplant, benefits are available in accordance with Empire Plan hospital and/or medical/surgical coverage.

Q: Can I just go to a COE without calling The Empire Plan?

A: You must call The Empire Plan before you receive transplant services at a COE.

Q: Will I have coverage for prescription drugs prescribed by a provider at a COE?

A: Yes, prescription drugs, transplants, treatment ordered and administered at a COE are covered by the plan with no prescription drug copayment. Prescription drugs ordered by a provider treating you at a COE and self-administered at home are covered under the Specialty Pharmacy Program or the Empire Plan Prescription Drug Program, and subject to the applicable copayment.

Q: What sets Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants (BDCT) apart from other transplant centers?

A: Each BDCT is selected based on information for each type of transplant performed including the number of transplants, how long transplants have been performed at the facility, patient management, patient outcomes, transplant team training and experience, patient/family education and support programs and patient post-transplant care. To qualify as a BDCT for a specific type of transplant, a facility must meet all the program criteria.

Q: If I decide to use a COE, do I have to receive all my care at the center?

A: No, you may choose to have part of your care, surgery for example, at the COE and another part of your care, such as follow-up care, at another facility that is not a COE. At the center, you will receive paid-in-full benefits for covered services. Outside the center, The Empire Plan still provides benefits for medically necessary care and you are responsible for any applicable copayments, deductible and coinsurance.

Q: What if I decide to use a hospital that isn't an Empire Plan COE for Transplants?

A: If you choose not to use a center, benefits are available in accordance with Empire Plan hospital and/or medical/surgical coverage. Please see your *Empire Plan Certificate* and *Amendments* for details.

Q: How do I get a nurse to help manage my care?

A: Whether you receive benefits from an Empire Plan COE or a hospital that is not a COE, The Empire Plan offers medical case management under the Benefits Management Program. Case management nurses help patients understand their treatment options and identify facilities available through The Empire Plan. Your *Empire Plan Certificate* has more information.

This issue of *Reporting On* is for information purposes only. Please see your doctor for diagnosis and treatment. Read your plan materials for complete information about coverage.

New York State Department of Civil Service, Employee Benefits Division, Albany, New York 12239 • nyship.ny.gov

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