

PROVIDER BULLETIN

PROVIDER INFORMATION



September 30, 2016

Changes in Medical Policy IV-87 Spinal Fusion: Lumbar

Effective November 21, 2016, there will be changes to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (Blue Cross) medical policy IV-87 “Spinal Fusion: Lumbar.”

As part of Blue Cross’ continual evaluation of standards of care, we are changing our policy position on use of lumbar fusion for treatment of degenerative disc disease (DDD) from medically necessary, when certain criteria are met, to investigative, when the sole indication is DDD. The currently available evidence comparing lumbar fusion to nonsurgical treatment of DDD has significant methodological limitations and reports inconsistent results. Overall, the evidence is insufficient to permit conclusions concerning the effect of lumbar fusion on health outcomes in individuals with DDD.

This medical policy change impacts commercial lines of business only.

Reminder

Policy changes are communicated in the Upcoming Medical Policy Notifications section of the Blue Cross Medical and Behavioral Health Policy website. The Upcoming Medical Policy Notifications section lists new, revised, or inactivated policies approved by the Blue Cross Medical and Behavioral Health Policy Committee and are effective 50 days from the date they were posted. To access the website, go to **providers.bluecrossmn.com**. Under Tools & Resources, select “Medical Policy”, and read/accept the Blue Cross Medical Policy Statement. The Upcoming Medical Policy Notifications section can be found by selecting the “+” (plus) sign next to “Medical and Behavioral Health Policies.”

Questions?

If you have questions, please contact provider services at **(651) 662-5200** or **1-800-262-0820**.