

PROVIDER BULLETIN

PROVIDER INFORMATION



March 24, 2017

Changes in Medical Policy IV-122 Knee Arthroplasty (Knee Replacement)

Effective May 15, 2017, there will be criteria changes to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (Blue Cross) medical policy IV-122, Knee Arthroplasty (Knee Replacement).

As part of Blue Cross' continual evaluation of standards of care, policy criteria on total knee arthroplasty (TKA) or unicompartmental knee arthroplasty (UKA) for advanced knee joint disease are being revised as follows:

- Criteria addressing advanced knee joint disease classified with grade 3 or grade 4 cartilage damage (based on the Kellgren-Lawrence or Modified Outerbridge Classification Systems) will be combined.
- The combined criteria will require conservative non-surgical therapy prior to TKA or UKA for advanced joint disease (grade 3 or 4), including medical management and physical therapy, unless the patient is unable to complete physical therapy due to progressively worsening pain and disability.
- When physical therapy cannot be completed, the case will be reviewed on an individual basis by an internal physician reviewer.

Evidence-based clinical practice guidelines and position statements from various specialty societies, including the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS), recommend an adequate trial of nonsurgical treatment for patients with advanced knee joint disease prior to TKA or UKA, independent of disease stage.

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.