MASSACHUSETTS

EDITORIAL STYLE

Brand Style
House Style
Brand Voice & Tone
Communicating Like a Trusted Ally
Point of View
Inclusive Language
Style Fundamentals
Channels & Segments
Legal
Back to Brand Guidelines

Brand Questions?

EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

Our editorial style is fundamental to representing our brand. This guide is here to help ensure our communications are always on-brand, accurate, clear, and consistent. Anyone writing customer-facing communications should follow these rules.

BRAND STYLE

HOUSE STYLE

We apply the Associated Press (AP) style to all our communications. All exceptions can be found in this guide. See Oxford comma for our most notable exception.

BRAND VOICE & TONE

All our communications should be written in our voice and tone to ensure cohesion and brand recognition. Most importantly, we're approachable, accessible, and supportive. We write informally and conversationally.

COMMUNICATING LIKE A TRUSTED ALLY

Trusted Ally is our brand positioning and persona. It guides how we talk to our members and customers. (Note that the term Trusted Ally isn't used in external communications except for occasional Power of Blue pieces. It's always title case. See our Brand Guidelines.)

POINT OF VIEW

In customer-facing communications, we generally write in the first and second person, using *we* to refer to ourselves and *you* to refer to our audience. Occasionally, we may introduce ourselves as Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts or Blue Cross on first reference and then transition to the first person. We may use the third person (members) with the appropriate audiences.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Health conditions and disabilities
We know that a health condition doesn't define a person. That's why we use person-first language, and never identity-first language.

Identity-first language identifies a person strictly by their condition:

> *If you're diabetic, a Care Manager can help.*
>
> *This benefit is available for at-risk members.*
>
> *The risk of pregnancy complications increases for overweight women.*

Person-first language emphasizes the whole person and views their condition as part of that whole:

> *If you have diabetes, a Care Manager can help.*
>
> *This benefit is available for members who may be at risk.*
>
> *The risk of pregnancy complications increases for women with a BMI of 30 or higher.*

Note that instead of saying *women who are overweight*, we used a specific description to avoid potential triggers and misinterpretation.

And because all our members deserve to feel seen, heard, and never shamed, we don't shy away from affirming and accurate terms like *on the spectrum* and *disability*.

Race and ethnicity
Capitalize all races and ethnicities: *Black, White, Hispanic, Asian*. Use *Hispanic* and not *Latino/a* unless referring to a person who identifies this way. Use *Black*, not *African American* and *White*, not *Caucasian*. Don't edit race and ethnicity questions on forms except for capitalization if necessary. If something looks wrong or potentially offensive, reach out to Chris Mendoza for clarity.

Gender-neutral language
We support our members who identify outside the gender binary, so we use gender-neutral pronouns (they, them) when we don't know a person's preferred pronoun. Replace gendered terms or phrases with gender-neutral language when appropriate.

Instead of: *Your college-aged son or daughter*
Say: *Your college-aged child*

Instead of: *This benefit includes coverage for your husband or wife.*
Say: *This benefit includes coverage for your spouse or domestic partner.*

The use of gendered terms may be considered on a case-by-case basis. We want to ensure we're being authentic in our use of inclusive language, and never pandering or performative.

Use a gender-neutral term unless it's clear that we're referring to a specific gender. For example, it's okay to use *mom-to-be* on a fact sheet about breast-pump savings.

Abortion and reproductive health
We support our members in accessing the care they need and want — without shame. We use the term *abortion* to refer to the medical procedure that terminates a pregnancy and *reproductive health* when we're referring to conditions and treatments that encompass more than that procedure. We don't use *voluntary termination of pregnancy*.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR YOU

AP MANUAL OF STYLE

PLAIN LANGUAGE GUIDE

BRAND CENTRAL

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. ® Registered Marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. ®´ Registered Marks, TM Trademarks, and SM Service Marks are the property of their respective owners. © 2024 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Inc., or Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts HMO Blue, Inc.

Brand Style
Style Fundamentals
Important Terms
Provider Types
Plain Language
Headlines & Subheads
Letter Casing
Capitalization
Punctuation
Numbers
Dates & Times
Phone Numbers
Acronyms & Abbreviations
And & Ampersand
Bullet Points
Numbered Lists
Icons
Forms, Charts & Tables
CTAs & Buttons
Links
Footnotes
Channels & Ingredients
Legal
Back to Brand Guidelines

Brand Questions?

EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

Our editorial style is fundamental to representing our brand. It helps us speak with one voice, communicate clearly, always on-brand, accurate, clear, and consistent. Anyone writing customer-facing communications should follow these rules.

STYLE FUNDAMENTALS

IMPORTANT TERMS

Note capitalization.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Spell out the complete company name on first use, then use *Blue Cross*. You may use *Blue Cross* on first use in the following scenarios **only when the logo is present**:

- On all online platforms, including social media and *.org*
- When space is extremely limited, such as on a small postcard
- When use of the complete name **significantly** affects flow or readability

The full company name must always be used in assets that also refer to the Association or other Blues plans.

The only acceptable forms of our company name are:
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Blue Cross MA
Blue Cross

BCBSE and *BCBSHM* may only be used in pre-approved circumstances, such as our Twitter handle.

Note that there's no and in our company name.

Keep in mind that we retire from the first person POV, so customer-facing copy should rarely use our company name.

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association
Our company is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Use the full name on first use. You may use *Blue Cross and Blue Shield* after first use. Note that and is used in the Association name only.

It's preferable to use the full company name in all instances in assets that also refer to other Blues plans.

24/7 Nurse Line
Capitalized. Use *registered nurse* in descriptions.

accounts/employer/employees
Use *accounts* when referring to generally use the term accounts. You may use *employee* when referencing a single account. Both should be lowercase. Use employees when talking to employers about their employees. Never use it in member-facing communications.

Care Management/Care Manager
Capitalized in all instances. Always pair with Team Blue on first use. Team Blue *Care Manager*

child/kid
Use kids to avoid sounding overly formal. You may use *child/children* when the situation calls for it. When referring to the member's child *your child is preferred*.

co-insurance
Not capitalized.

copayment/copay
Not hyphenated.

cost/you pay
Not cold share unless mandated. The only other use is *Hospital Choice Cost Sharing*.

create an account
Not register.

dietitian/nutritionist
All registered dietitians are nutritionists, but not all nutritionists are registered dietitians. The term dietitian is regulated, as they must pass a test and be credentialed to use the title. Dietitians promote healthy eating habits. Always confirm with the marketing manager which we're referring to. Our buy-up Care Management programs have dietitians (core doesn't).

Find a Doctor & Estimate Costs tool
Capitalized, with ampersand. Tool isn't part of the name and therefore not capitalized.

fitness and weight-loss reimbursement
Not benefit, except for Medicare.

health care
Always use two words.

(the) mail service pharmacy
Lowercase.

maintenance medications
On first use: *Maintenance medications, also known as long-term medications*.

medical
Not clinical, except in the case of *clinical testing or similar*.

member/customer
Use member when anyone with Blue Cross Health Insurance. Customer refers to our accounts, brokers and other partners. A group of business people with members and customers may be referred to as customers.

Member Service/Member Service representative
Capitalized. In your *Fixing* with Team Blue on first use is preferable.
Team Blue Member Service

Note: For account-facing TrueCare™ assets only, Use Blue *Blue Member Service Advocate* on first use and then *Service Advocate*.

mental health
Not *behavioral health*. Use *mental health condition* or *mental health issue*. Don't use *mental health challenge*.

mental health specialist
Use this as an all-encompassing term. Be specific when applicable (therapist, psychiatrist, etc.

no-cost/at no additional cost
Never use *free unless* pair referring to something other than our products, services, and tools.

non-for-profit
Blue Cross is a not-for-profit organization, as we don't operate for the public benefit but rather to serve our members. This is different from a nonprofit organization.

partnership
This term has legal ramifications and shouldn't be used unless approved by Reserve Partner.

plan/benefit
A plan offers a complete insurance policy. A benefit refers to specific features covered by an insurance plan. Reach out to the marketing manager if you're not sure whether a plan feature is technically a benefit or should be called something else, such as a feature or reimbursement.

preventive
Not *preventative*.

regular dental checkup
Not routine dental exam.

routine eye exam
Not annual eye exam.

routine health checkup
Not annual health checkup; physical, or exam. See Medicare for an exception.

sign in/log in
Not log in.

subscriber
A subscriber is the primary member enrolled in our health plan. Their spouse, children, and dependents may be members.

substance use disorder/alcohol use disorder/alcohol use disorder
Specific instances should be described as *misuse, substance misuse, opioid misuse, alcohol misuse*.

You may use addiction to describe the concept when misuse has already been established. *It may be hard to comprehend the causes and impact of addiction*.

Use *in recovery* for someone who is successfully managing their substance use disorder.

Never use addict, abuse, abuser, habit, or clean.

Team Blue
Capitalized.

TrueCare™
Capitalized. Account-facing only. Use *Team Blue Member Service Advocate* on first use and then *Service Advocate* instead of *Member Service representative*.

vaccine/vaccination/immunization

- **vaccine:** The medicine you receive; interchangeable with shot
- **vaccination:** The act of getting a vaccine
- **immunization:** The process of becoming immune to a disease, usually through vaccination

If multiple uses work, default to vaccine for plain language.

Virtual Care Team/virtual primary care provider (PCP)
The name of the product is Virtual Care Team, which is capitalized. Team is capitalized. The role is a Virtual PCP, which shouldn't be capitalized. Don't use the *Virtual Care Team*, use your *Virtual Care Team* or a *Virtual Care Team*.

well-being
Hyphenated.

PROVIDER TYPES

primary care provider (PCP): Use to encompass doctors, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants who provide/deliver any type of primary care. PCPs are often considered the "front door" for members' general medical care. **Note:** Never use physician (primary care physician)

Primary care includes (but isn't limited to):
- Preventive care
- Routine health checkups
- Checkups for specific issues
- Preventive screenings
- Immunizations
- Chronic care
- Cold, flu, sick visits
- Management of current and chronic health conditions
- Mental health concerns

When to use PCP:

- For any primary preventive, or ongoing care
- Referring to a provider in general
- As the first stop for general care

Note: Reach out to the marketing manager for validation on correct term usage as needed.

health care provider: Use when referring to an unspecified medical professional or group of medical professionals authorized to provide health care: doctors, nurses, PAs, dentists, midwives, ophthalmologists, dietitians, etc.

When to use health care provider:

- When we don't know what type of provider a member is seeing/will see for their specific care
- When we're talking very broadly about any and all types of providers

Examples:

Postpartum care: *Check in with your health care provider within six weeks of delivery. (We don't know what type of provider they used for their care — OB/GYN, midwife, etc.)*

Mental health: *Make sure you don't stop taking your antidepressants cold turkey. Reach out to your health care provider if you want to make a change. (We don't know what type of provider they used for their mental health care — PCP, psychiatrist, etc.)*

Find care: *To find a health care provider who can help use our Find a Doctor & Estimate Costs tool.* (Unless we're specifically encouraging them to find a PCP, we don't know what type of provider they'd prefer to look for.)

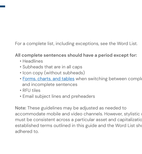
doctor: Use when referring specifically and only to MDs/DOs.

specialist: Use infrequently to refer to a particular kind of provider such as a neurologist, orthopedic surgeon, etc. Use the specific specialist type when applicable rather than the generic specialist. Specialist is also used when talking about referrals needed with HMO plans.

health care professional: Use to encompass people who give advice/guidance/consult but don't provide/deliver care: Care Managers, Health Coaches, Nutritionists, Dietitians, etc. We should avoid therapists (this term can be ambiguous, and we don't have Mental Care Managers). *Health care professionals, such as registered nurses and mental health specialists.*.)

Always use the specific provider type when applicable: *therapist, registered nurse, etc.*

Never use clinician, physician (except for physician assistant), or practitioner in member-facing communications for consistency and adherence to plain language.



PLAIN LANGUAGE

The Plain Language Writing Act of 2010 requires us to write clear communications our audience will understand the "first time they read it. It's writing that's clear, concise, and well organized, which aligns with both general and internal best practices.

It's extremely important to be familiar with our Plain Language Guide to ensure you sound like Blue Cross on the page.

HEADLINES & SUBHEADS

Headlines in Bebas Neue are always in all caps. Never use periods in a headline unless it's more than one sentence.

Subheads should be sentence case (see exception below). When a subhead is a complete sentence, use a period. Stick to either complete or incomplete sentences within a single section.

For a complete list, including exceptions, see the Word List.

All complete sentences should have a period except for:

- Headlines
- Subheads that are in all caps
- Icon copy (without subheads)
- Forms, charts, and tables when switching between complete and incomplete sentences
- RFU titles
- Email subject lines and preheaders

Note: These guidelines may be adjusted as needed to accommodate mobile and video channels. However, stylistic choices must be consistent across a particular asset and capitalization of established terms outlined in this guide and the Word List should be adhered to.

LETTER CASING

We use sentence case for everything except:

- All caps
  - Bebas Neue headlines
  - Buttons
  - CAT Sans subheads (that are short, incomplete sentences (1–3 words) at the designer's discretion
- Title case
  - Subheads stating the names of articles, webinars, or similar
  - Navigation waypoints
  - Formal titles
  - Forms, charts, and tables when necessary
- All lowercase
  - URLs

See Capitalization for more usage guidelines.

CAPITALIZATION

Capitalize the names of our products, programs, and services:

Dental Blue®
Find a Doctor and Estimate Costs tool
Care Management program

Don't capitalize general benefits or services:
reproductive health travel benefit
emergency medical outpatient services

Never capitalize conditions, everyday terms, common health care terms, medical terms, or the names of health care providers:
It's almost time for open enrollment.
You may need prior authorization from your doctor.
As a leader in assisted reproductive technology (ART),.
Call the 24/7 Nurse Line to speak to a registered nurse.
Contact your account executive.

Never capitalize plan, benefit, or program unless it's part of the proper name.

Capitalize the titles of articles, webinars, and similar.
Note: Inbox message headlines aren't considered titles and should be sentence case.

Only capitalize the names of forms and other documents if referring to their actual title as written on the original document.
Don't capitalize form or document.
Fill out the Reproductive Health Travel Benefit Reimbursement form and mail it to...
Read the annual mental health fact sheet to learn more.

Capitalize and bold navigation waypoints:
*Click **Mental Health Options** under **My Care**.*

Never capitalize team names: *marketing team*
Capitalize department names: Sales & Marketing

Capitalize formal titles, but not job names:
John Smith is a senior copywriter on the creative team.
Senior Copywriter John Smith has been at Blue Cross for six years.

Capitalize only the formal titles of event sponsors:
Join us for our annual Gala.
You can apply to be a platinum sponsor.
We're proud to be a sponsor.

For a complete list, including exceptions, see the Word List.

PUNCTUATION

Oxford comma
We use the Oxford (serial) comma, as it ensures clarity and follows the Associated Press AP style only uses them when it's necessary to remove ambiguity, we know consistency is important in marketing communications. Customer-facing communications should always use the Oxford comma.

Comma usage
We use commas to ensure clarity, avoiding overuse. Follow these seven rules for comma usage.

Note Don't use a comma when a subject has two verbs or to separate a subject from its verb.

Wrong: *You can text your Care Manager, or call Team Blue.*
Right: *You can text your Care Manager or call Team Blue.*

Wrong: *Our experts are standing by, to help you coordinate mental health support.*
Right: *Our experts are standing by to help you coordinate mental health support.*

Avoid comma splices. These are sentences that use a comma to connect two independent clauses.

Wrong: *Preventive care is key to maintaining overall health, that's why you should schedule a routine health checkup.*
Right: *Preventive care is key to maintaining overall health. That's why you should schedule a routine health checkup.*

Exclamation points
An exclamation point may be used when something is exciting or congratulatory. They should be used infrequently and no more than one per 500 words of communication. It's okay to use an exclamation point in a headline or subhead when appropriate.

Periods
Every complete sentence should have a period except for the following:

- Headlines
- Icon copy
- Forms, charts, and tables when switching between complete and incomplete sentences
- RFU titles
- Email subject lines and preheaders

Within a set of sentences (for example, a list of bullet points), all should either be complete sentences or incomplete sentences for consistency.

Hyphenlen–dashlem–dash
Hyphens are used to join two or more words together: well-being.

En–dashes are used to indicate a range, often in place of the word to. We write out ranges, such as dates, but may use an en-dash in a chart or table.

Em–dashes are used to help explain something or pause for effect. Schedule your exam — it really is that important. We include a space before and after an em-dash.

Slashes
Don't use spaces on either side.

Quotation marks
Use quotation marks for direct quotes or around words or phrases that are being used in an unusual or ironic way (this should be very infrequent). When emphasizing a single word or phrase, use bold instead of quotation marks (use bold infrequent). Periods and commas always go inside quotation marks. Question marks go inside only if it's part of the quoted phrase.

Colons
Use colons to introduce a list or alert readers to an explanation of the previous sentence. Capitalize the first word after a colon if it's a proper noun or if it's part of a complete sentence. Capitalize the first word when it introduces a list.

NUMBERS

Spell out numbers under ten. For numbers 10 and over, use numerals. It's okay to use numerals to refer to page numbers or in social media, callouts, icons, infographics, and headlines for readability.

DATES AND TIMES

Dates: Spell out dates entirely.
Your plan will become effective January 1, 2023.

Times: Spell out times using the following style and order:
Call Member Service Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. ET.

PHONE NUMBERS

Phone numbers should always start with 1. Use hyphens, and be in both or dollar. Include available hours if applicable.

1-800-262-2583

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Identify each term in full the first time you use it and establish the acronym: *The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*. You may choose to include the acronym on first use in body copy if it's used in a few places and it's easier for the reader to understand. Continue the acronym unless it's used again in the document or if it's commonly referred to outside of Blue Cross by the abbreviation only.

Exceptions that don't need to be spelled out on first use (use your best judgement)
ASC (account-facing)
HMO, PPO
HPV, HIV, AIDS
RS
OB/GYN
PCP
U.S.

AND VS. AMPERSAND (&)

Always spell out and except when using in:

- Common abbreviations: Q&A
- Specific word pairings: voice & tone
- Charts and tables
- Social media/social media posts, and other use cases with strict character limits
- Department names/titles where & is always used

Use your best judgement regarding consistency. On, egg, for example, if there's an ampersand used in a term in the rea, it might make sense to use it in the headline as well.

Note: Don't use the Oxford comma with an ampersand.

BULLET POINTS

Bullet points may be fragments or complete sentences but should be consistent within a set. Use these punctuation rules:

- Bullets should always be sentence case.
- Use periods if they're complete sentences.
- Don't use periods if they complete the introductory stem.
- If the introductory stem is a complete sentence or a fragment completed by each bullet, end it with a colon.

NUMBERED LISTS

Only use a numbered list instead of bullets if you're sharing actions that must be done in a particular order. Follow the same guidelines as used for bullet points above.

ICONS

All icon copy should be sentence case. Don't use periods unless they're more than one sentence long or there's a subhead and body copy. Don't use a period with the icon subhead.

FORMS, CHARTS, AND TABLES

Use sentence case. It's okay to switch between complete and incomplete sentences if necessary. In this case, don't use periods.

CTAS AND BUTTONS

CTAs should be specific and provide all the information needed for members to understand what they'll get if they click. One CTA per communication is generally preferred.

Use the specific term associated with a desired action:
Call Member Service at **1-800-262-2583** (Not contact.)

Buttons should be short, straightforward, and clearly describe where the click leads. We commonly use learn more, get started, sign in, now, and create an account. They're always all caps.

LINKS

Avoid long URLs. The marketing manager should provide a vanity URL or QR code, or you can use instructions to direct the member instead.

*Sign in to MyBlue and click **Mental Health Options** under **My Care**.*

URLs should be bold and lowercase (see Footnotes for an exception). Don't include www.

Don't use URLs in digital assets; use a button or insert a link into the text.

Always use **bluecrossma.org**, not **bluecrossma.com**.

QR CODES

QR codes are best suited for print and out-of-home communications. Don't use them on digital assets. Including the URL with the QR code is preferred.

Use a CTA with a QR code:
Scan the QR code.
To learn more, visit medicaresc.bluecrossma.com or scan the QR code.
<QR code>
Scan the QR code using your smartphone camera. <QR code>

Note: *Scan the QR code using your smartphone camera* is preferred for older/less aware audiences.

FOOTNOTES

Use footnotes when a fact isn't common knowledge or readily available across dozens of websites. If a marketing manager provides the information, they should provide the source.

No footnote necessary: *Recommended childhood vaccines have been proven safe through clinical testing.*

Footnote necessary: *More than 67 million COVID-19 vaccines have been given in the US through March 1, 2023.*

For simplicity and readability in design, we don't use bold or italics in footnotes.

Website: Website name, URL last access date.

1. Modivus MD. modivus.md/2023/01/20/the-state-of-physician-burnout-in-2023/ last accessed March 15, 2023.

Note: If the URL is very long, you may use the main URL. (modivus.md)

Print article: Author name, "article title," publication name, month/year of publication.

1. Mary Smith, "Not My Story," True Stories, January 2023.

Book: Author name, book title, (page numbers), publication year.

1. John Brown, My Story, (pages 21-25), 2021.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR YOU

AP MANUAL OF STYLE
PLAIN LANGUAGE GUIDE
BRAND CENTRAL

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. ® Registered Marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. ™ Registered Marks, ™ Trademarks, and SM Service Marks are the property of their respective owners. © 2023 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Inc., a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts HMO Blue Inc.

MASSACHUSETTS

EDITORIAL STYLE

Brand Style
Style Fundamentals
Channels & Segments
Emails
Letters
Social media
Medicare
Federal Employment Program
Legal
Back to Brand Guidelines

Brand Questions?

EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

Our editorial style is fundamental to representing our brand. This guide is here to help ensure our communications are always on-brand, accurate, clear, and consistent. Anyone writing customer-facing communications should follow these rules.

CHANNELS

Emails

Subject lines should be kept under 45 characters.
Use sentence case and omit periods.

Pre-headers should be kept under 80 characters.
Use sentence case and omit periods.

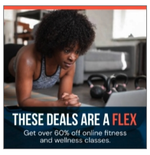
Letters

Use first name only in the salutation unless first and last is required, as with Medicare. Only use initial caps for proper names in a salutation.

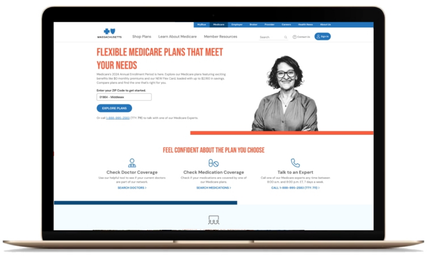
Dear Medicare Advantage member,

Social media

We can be a bit more casual when writing for social media. It's okay to break the rules for ampersands, exclamation points, acronyms, numerals, and symbols if necessary.



SEGMENTS



Medicare

Medicare is a complicated segment with many rules and exceptions. Reach out to Lindsay Rinaldi if you have questions.

General style

Prescription Drug Plan is used, but we should still use medications as the stand-alone word.
Use first and last names in salutations.

Provider of choice (POC) is only used for Medicare PPO members, as they aren't required to have a PCP. Use it when asking them to select a provider as we'd use PCP for HMO members.

See the Word List for capitalization guidelines and correct usage of plan names.

Provider visit types

There are three kinds of provider visits we refer to:

Welcome to Medicare Wellness Visit:
This one-time preventive visit is covered within the first 12 months a person has Medicare Part B.

Annual Wellness Visit (regulatory); annual wellness visit (marketing materials):
This is an assessment of health and overall well-being. It's covered by Medicare once every 12 months.

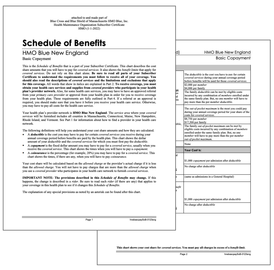
Annual Physical Exam (regulatory); annual physical exam (marketing materials):
This is an assessment of bodily health, usually scheduled when a health problem arises. It's generally not covered by Medicare and therefore not referred to often in our marketing materials.

Regulatory documents

Regulatory documents, such as Summaries of Benefits and formularies, have many exceptions to both our general and Medicare editorial style, including:

- Capitalization and quotes are okay when they're used in coding.
- Common contractions don't have to be used.
- Certain do-not-use terms, such as physician, may be used.
- Drugs may be used in all instances.
- Acronyms can be included with the full name in multiple instances.
- Dates don't have to be spelled out.

Always look for Regulatory in a project name to ensure you're not making unnecessary edits. In general, writers should only touch new content. Proofreaders should focus only on spelling and egregious grammatical errors.


Schedule of Benefits
HMO Blue New England
Basic Copayment

BlueCross BlueShield
Federal Employee Program

Federal Employment Program

The FEP has its own brand, but we typically adhere to our voice and tone and use our editorial style. Reach out to the marketing manager with questions for mandated FEP language.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR YOU

AP MANUAL OF STYLE

PLAIN LANGUAGE GUIDE

BRAND CENTRAL

Download the MyBlue app:
Download on the App Store
GET IT ON Google Play

Follow us:

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. ® Registered Marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. ®' Registered Marks, TM Trademarks, and SM Service Marks are the property of their respective owners. © 2023 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Inc., or Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts HMO Blue, Inc.

MASSACHUSETTS

EDITORIAL STYLE

Brand Style
Style Fundamentals
Channels & Segments
Legal
Registered marks and trademarks
Co-branding
Protected health information
Logo disclaimer
Legal copy
Back to Brand Guidelines

Brand Questions?

EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

Our editorial style is fundamental to representing our brand. This guide is here to help ensure our communications are always on-brand, accurate, clear, and consistent. Anyone writing customer-facing communications should follow these rules.

LEGAL

Registered marks and trademarks
First use only. It's the writer's job to find out which marks are needed if not provided. See the Derivatives list for names we own.

Co-branding
Certain instances require that we use specific language when referring to a product or service.

A product, service, or tool that we don't own:
Include an independent company on first use and specify what the company does.

If you're ready to get support for your mental health, Learn to Live, an independent company, may be able to help.

See the Derivatives List for products, services, and tools we own.

A white-labeled product, service, or tool:
If the product, service, or tool takes the user to an experience not owned by us, such as with ahealthyme®´, it's a good idea to include a footnote stating it's an independent company. In this case, it's not legally mandated — but it does make for a better user experience.

Protected health information (PHI)
Due to PHI laws, we can't identify a member's condition, diagnosis, or treatment in any communication potentially available to outside parties, such as email. For direct mail, PHI can't be visible publicly, so it must be inside a folded mailer on a sealed envelope.

Wrong: *Keep your asthma in check.*
Right: *Keep asthma in check.*

Wrong: *Take your asthma controller medications as prescribed.*
Right: *If you have asthma, take your controller medications as prescribed.*

Or use language that speaks to the member more abstractly:
Taking controller medications as prescribed can help prevent asthma symptoms.

Note: The more sensitive the condition, the more careful we need to be. Legal also reviews for PHI.

Logo disclaimer
Whenever the Blue Cross logo appears on a page, include this legal copy at the bottom:
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Note: Designers should know to automatically include this.

Legal copy
It's the marketing manager's job to provide new or updated legal copy. You don't have to include it in your copy deck.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR YOU

AP MANUAL OF STYLE

PLAIN LANGUAGE GUIDE

BRAND CENTRAL

Download the MyBlue app:

Download on the App Store
GET IT ON Google Play

Follow us:

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. ® Registered Marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. ®´ Registered Marks, TM Trademarks, and SM Service Marks are the property of their respective owners. © 2023 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Inc., or Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts HMO Blue, Inc.