

Healthy BlueSM

BlueChoice® HealthPlan of SC

Healthy Connections 

Healthy Blue Musculoskeletal Care Management (MSK) Program Quick Reference Guide for Physicians/Surgeons

January 1, 2024

Healthy Blue has entered into an agreement with National Imaging Associates, Inc. (NIA)*, to implement a Musculoskeletal Care Management (MSK) Program. This program includes prior authorization for non-emergent MSK procedures: outpatient interventional spine pain management (IPM) services; and inpatient and outpatient lumbar and cervical spine surgeries. This decision is consistent with industry-wide efforts to ensure clinically appropriate quality of care and to manage the increasing utilization of these services.

The following types of services are included in the MSK program for all Healthy Blue members. Providers may begin contacting NIA on January 1, 2024, to obtain prior authorization for procedures scheduled on or after January 1, 2024.

- Outpatient IPM
- Inpatient and outpatient lumbar and cervical spine surgeries

Prior Authorization Implementation

As a provider of MSK services that require prior authorization, it is essential that you develop a process to ensure that the appropriate authorization number(s) has been obtained.

It is the responsibility of the ordering physician/surgeon and rendering facility to ensure that prior authorization was obtained, when necessary. Payment will be denied for procedures performed without a prior authorization, including the MSK surgery hospital admission, and the member cannot be balance-billed for such procedures.

Procedures Requiring Prior Authorization*

Outpatient IPM Procedures:

- Spinal Epidural Injections
- Paravertebral Facet Joint Injections or Blocks
- Paravertebral Facet Joint Denervation (Radiofrequency (RF) Neurolysis)

*A separate prior authorization number is required for each procedure ordered.

*Effective 1/20/2023, National Imaging Associates, Inc. is now a subsidiary of Evolent Health. Evolent Health and its affiliates and subsidiaries collectively referred to as "Evolent."

Healthy Blue is offered by BlueChoice HealthPlan, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association.

Outpatient and Inpatient Spine Surgeries:

- Lumbar Microdiscectomy
- Lumbar Decompression (Laminotomy, Laminectomy, Facetectomy & Foraminotomy)
- Lumbar Spine Fusion (Arthrodesis) With or Without Decompression – Single & Multiple Levels
- Cervical Anterior Decompression with Fusion – Single & Multiple Levels
- Cervical Posterior Decompression with Fusion – Single & Multiple Levels
- Cervical Posterior Decompression (without fusion)
- Cervical Artificial Disc Replacement – Single & Two Levels
- Cervical Anterior Decompression (without fusion)

NIA will manage the MSK program through existing contractual relationships with Healthy Blue. If an urgent/emergent clinical situation exists outside of a hospital emergency room, please contact NIA immediately with the appropriate clinical information for an expedited review. The number to call to initiate a prior authorization request is 1-855-569-6749.

Please refer to NIA's website www.RadMD.com to obtain the Healthy Blue / NIA Billable CPT® Codes Claim Resolution/Utilization Review Matrix for all of the CPT-4 codes that NIA authorizes on behalf of Healthy Blue.

Prior Authorization Information

To ensure that authorization numbers have been obtained, please adhere to the following guidelines.

IPM:

- Procedures performed in the emergency room or on an inpatient basis do not require prior authorization through NIA.
- Outpatient IPM services managed by NIA require a prior authorization for each procedure performed.
- It is the responsibility of the ordering physician to obtain authorization for all interventional pain management procedures outlined. Failure to do so may result in non-payment of your claim.
- Authorizations are valid for 30 calendar days from the date of service.

Outpatient and Inpatient MSK Surgeries:

- Emergency musculoskeletal surgery (admitted via the Emergency Room) do not require prior authorization through NIA.
- Non-emergent outpatient and inpatient spine surgery services require prior authorization through NIA.
- **Note:** Healthy Blue prior authorization requirements for the facility or hospital admission must be obtained separately and only initiated after the surgery has met NIA's medical necessity criteria.
- NIA's medical necessity review and determination is for the authorization of the surgeon's professional services and type of surgery being performed. NIA will provide Healthy Blue with the surgery type requested and authorization determination.
- Authorizations are valid for 30 calendar days from the date of service for outpatient spine surgeries and 3 calendar days from the date of service for inpatient spine surgeries.

Checking Authorizations

You can check on the status of authorization requests quickly and easily by going to the NIA website, www.RadMD.com. After sign-in, select the **My Exam Requests** tab to view authorization requests and verify status.

Submitting Claims

Claims continue to go directly to Healthy Blue. Please send your claims for MSK procedures to the following address:

Healthy Blue
PO Box 100317
Columbia, SC 29203-2317

Quick Contacts

- Website: www.RadMD.com
- Toll Free Phone Numbers:
- 1-855-569-6749

Providers are encouraged to use EDI claims submission.

The Healthy Blue payor ID number is 00403.

Frequently Asked Questions

In this section NIA addresses commonly asked questions received from providers.

Where can I find NIA's Guidelines for MSK procedures?

Guidelines can be found on NIA's website at www.RadMD.com.

Is prior authorization necessary if Healthy Blue is not the member's primary insurance?

No.

What does the NIA authorization number look like?

The NIA authorization number consists of alpha/numeric characters (e.g., 1234X567). In some cases, the ordering provider may instead receive an NIA tracking number (not the same as an authorization number) if the physician's authorization request is not approved at the time of initial contact. Providers can use either number to track the status of their request on the RadMD website or via our Interactive Voice Response telephone system.

Who can I contact at NIA for questions, complaints, and appeals, etc.?

Please use the following NIA contacts by type of issue:

- To educate your staff on NIA procedures and to assist you with any provider issues or concerns, contact your NIA Area Provider Relations Manager.
- Preauthorization and claims payment complaints/appeals: Follow the instructions on your non-authorization letter or Explanation of Benefit (EOB)/Explanation of Payment (EOP) notification.

How do referring/ordering physicians know who NIA is?

Healthy Blue and NIA share training and education materials with physicians and surgeons prior to the implementation. Healthy Blue and NIA also coordinate outreach and orientation for providers.

What will the member ID card look like? Will it have both NIA and Healthy Blue information on the card? Or will there be two cards?

The Healthy Blue member ID card does not have NIA identifying information on it.