

CITY OF LAREDO



MEDICAL BENEFITS



**BlueCross BlueShield
of Texas**

Experience. Wellness. Everywhere.®

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
Schedule(s) of Coverage(s)	Enclosure
Introduction	
Managed Health Care – In–Network Benefits	1
Managed Health Care – Out–of–Network Benefits	1
Prescription Drug Program Benefits	2
Important Contact Information	2
Customer Service Helpline	2
BCBSTX Website	2
Mental Health Helpline	2
Medical Preauthorization Helpline	2
Who Gets Benefits	
Eligibility Date Requirements for Coverage	3
Effective Dates of Coverage	3
Group Enrollment Application/Change Form	6
Changes In Your Family	7
How the Plan Works	
Allowable Amount	10
Case Management	10
Disease Management	10
Freedom of Choice	11
Identification Card	11
Medical Necessity	12
ParPlan	12
Preexisting Conditions Provision	12
Specialty Care Providers	13
Use of Non–Contracting Providers	13
Preauthorization Requirements	
Preauthorization Requirements	14
Failure to Preauthorize	14
Claim Filing and Appeals Procedures	
Claim Filing Procedures	16
Filing of Claims Required	16
Who Files Claims	16
Where to Mail Completed Claim Forms	17
Who Receives Payment	17
When to Submit Claims	18
Receipt of Claims by the Claims Administrator	18
Review of Claim Determinations	18
Claim Determinations	18
Preauthorization Appeal Procedures	19
Interpretation of Employer’s Plan Provisions	19
Eligible Expenses, Payment Obligations, and Benefits	
Eligible Expenses	21
Copayment Amounts	21
Deductibles	21
Co–Share Stop–Loss Amount	22
Maximum Lifetime Benefits	23
Changes In Benefits	23
Covered Medical Services	
Inpatient Hospital Expenses	24
Medical–Surgical Expenses	24
Extended Care Expenses	25
Special Provisions Expenses	27
Benefits for Treatment of Complications of Pregnancy	27

Benefits for Maternity Care	27
Benefits for Treatment of Chemical Dependency	27
Benefits for Serious Mental Illness	28
Benefits for Mental Health Care	28
Benefits for Emergency Care and Treatment of Accidental Injury	29
Benefits for Preventive Care	29
Benefits for Mammography Screening	30
Benefits for Detection and Prevention of Osteoporosis	30
Benefits for Tests for Detection of Colorectal Cancer	30
Benefits for Certain Tests for Detection of Prostate Cancer	30
Benefits for Speech and Hearing Services	31
Benefits for Cosmetic, Reconstructive, or Plastic Surgery	31
Benefits for Organ and Tissue Transplants	31
Benefits for Treatment of Diabetes	32
Benefits for Physical Medicine Services	34
Benefits for Chiropractic Services	34
Medical Limitations and Exclusions	35
Definitions	39
Prescription Drug Program	
How the Program Works	55
Participating Pharmacy	55
Non-Participating Pharmacy	55
Mail Service Prescription Drug Program (Mandatory)	55
Preferred Brand Name Drug List	56
Injectable Drugs	56
Step Therapy	56
Limitations on Quantities Dispensed-Day Supply	57
Right of Appeal	57
Copayment Amounts	58
Limitations and Exclusions	59
Definitions	61
General Provisions	
Agent	63
Amendments	63
Assignment and Payment of Benefits	63
Claims Liability	63
Disclosure Authorization	63
Medicare	63
Participant/Provider Relationship	63
Refund Of Benefit Payments	64
Subrogation	64
Coordination of Benefits	64
Termination of Coverage	67
Continuation Privilege	68
Amendments	
Notices	

SCHEDULE OF COVERAGE

750 Plan		
Plan Provisions	In–Network Benefits	Out–of–Network Benefits
Deductibles		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calendar Year Deductible <i>Three–month Deductible carryover applies</i> <i>Applies to all Eligible Expenses</i> 	\$750 – per individual \$1,500 – per family	\$1,500 – per individual \$3,000 – per family
Note: In–Network Deductible may be reduced by \$250 per person per Calendar Year, by employee and/or covered spouse undergoing routine annual physical examinations, participation in Blue Care Connections disease management programs when applicable, or City of Laredo sponsored Buena Vida programs.		
Co–Share Stop–Loss Amounts	\$2,500 – per individual \$5,000 – per family	\$5,000 – per individual \$10,000 – per family
Copayment Amounts Required		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physician office visit/consultation (Family Medicine, OB/GYN, Pediatrician, and Internist) 	\$20 Physician office visit	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physician office visit/consultation (all other Specialty Care Providers) 	\$35 Physician office visit	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outpatient Hospital Emergency Room visit 	80% after \$100 outpatient Hospital Emergency Room visit copay, copay waived if admitted	60% after \$100 outpatient Hospital Emergency Room visit copay, copay waived if admitted
Maximum Lifetime Benefits per Participant	\$2,000,000	
Inpatient Hospital Expenses All usual Hospital services and supplies, including semiprivate room, intensive care, and coronary care units.	80% of Allowable Amount after \$750 Calendar Year Deductible No penalty for failure to preauthorize services	60% of Allowable Amount after \$1,500 Calendar Year Deductible \$400 penalty for failure to preauthorize services
Medical–Surgical Expenses		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office visit/consultation (Family Medicine, OB/GYN, Pediatrician, and Internist) Excluding Lab and X–ray 	100% of Allowable Amount after \$20 Copayment Amount	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office visit/consultation (all other Specialty Care Providers), Excluding Lab and X–ray 	100% of Allowable Amount after \$35 Copayment Amount	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inpatient visits and Certain Diagnostic Procedures • Home Infusion Therapy • Physician surgical services in any setting 	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Lab & X–ray 	100% of Allowable Amount	60% of Allowable Amount
Extended Care Expenses		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled Nursing Facility 60 days Per Calendar Year In–Network and Out of Network combined. 	100% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible

SCHEDULE OF COVERAGE

Plan Provisions	In–Network Benefits	Out–of–Network Benefits
Extended Care Expenses–Cont’d <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Health Care \$10,000 Combined Calendar Year maximum • Hospice Care \$20,000 Combined Lifetime maximum 	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Treatment of Chemical Dependency Three separate series of treatments for each covered individual		
Inpatient Services		
Hospital services (facility)	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible (\$400 penalty for failure to preauthorize services)
Physician services	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Outpatient Services		
Physician Expenses (office setting)	80% Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Other Outpatient Services	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Mental Health Care		
Inpatient Services		
Hospital Services (facility)	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible (\$400 penalty for failure to preauthorize services)
Physician Services	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Limited to 21 inpatient days/inpatient visits each Calendar Year		
Outpatient Services		
Physician Expenses (office setting)	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Other Outpatient Services	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Limited to 26 visits each Calendar Year		

SCHEDULE OF COVERAGE

Plan Provisions	In–Network Benefits	Out–of–Network Benefits
Serious Mental Illness	Same as any other physical illness	Same as any other physical illness
Emergency Care Accidental Injury & Emergency Care within first 72 hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility Charges • Physician Charges 	80% of Allowable Amount after \$100 outpatient Hospital emergency room Copayment Amount waived if admitted 80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	
Accidental Injury & Emergency Care after 72 hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility Charges • Physician Charges 	80% of Allowable Amount after \$100 outpatient Hospital emergency room Copayment Amount waived if admitted 80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after \$100 outpatient Hospital emergency room Copayment Amount waived if admitted 60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Ground Ambulance Services	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	
Air Ambulance Services	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	
Preventive Care Routine physical examinations, well baby care, immunizations 6 years & over, routine lab, x–ray,	100% of Allowable Amount	100% of Allowable Amount
Immunizations Birth up to age 6	100% Deductible waived	100% Deductible waived
Speech and Hearing Services \$1,500 maximum benefit amount each 36–month period for hearing aids	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Chiropractic Services 20 Visits per Calendar Year Maximum	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Physical Medicine Services \$2,000 Calendar Year Maximum benefit per Participant	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Occupational Therapy Outpatient Facility and Office Visits \$2,000 Calendar Year Maximum Benefit per Calendar Year Maximum Chiropractic Services not included.	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible

SCHEDULE OF COVERAGE

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM

750 Plan

Plan Provisions	Participating Pharmacy	Non-Participating Pharmacy
Retail Pharmacy, no more than a 30-Day Supply	\$10 Copayment Amount – Generic Drugs \$35 Copayment Amount* – Preferred Brand Name Drug \$55 Copayment Amount* – Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug	80% of Allowable Amount minus Copayment Amount
Mail Service (Mandatory), up to a 90-Day Supply	\$10 Copayment Amount – Generic Drugs \$35 Copayment Amount* – Preferred Brand Name Drug \$55 Copayment Amount* – Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug	
Prior Authorization Provision	Does Not Apply	
Step Therapy Provision	Applies to proton pump inhibitors and cholesterol lowering drugs	
Limitations on Quantities Dispensed – Day Supply	Applies	
Disposable Insulin needles/syringes and/or disposable diabetic testing supplies	When prescribed and dispensed at the same time as Insulin, will be included under the same copayment. Disposable needles/syringes and/or disposable diabetic testing supplies must be dispensed in a quantity corresponding to the amount of insulin to be dispensed and must be submitted at the same time to be included under the same copayment as the insulin. This benefit is available at the local retail pharmacy or Mail Order Benefit program.	

* If you receive a Preferred Brand Name Drug or a Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug when a Generic Drug is available, you may incur additional costs. Refer to the Prescription Drug Program portion of your Benefit booklet for details.

Dependent Eligibility

Dependent Child Age Limit to age 25.

Dependent children are eligible for Maternity Care benefits

Preexisting Conditions

Benefits for Eligible Expenses incurred for treatment of a Preexisting Condition will not be available for up to 12-months following the Participant's initial Effective Date, or if a Waiting Period applies, the first day of the Waiting Period (typically the date you are hired). Credit will be given for time served under Creditable Coverage. For a more detailed explanation, see the section **HOW THE PLAN WORKS** in this Benefit Booklet.

SCHEDULE OF COVERAGE

1000 Plan Retirees Only		
Plan Provisions	In–Network Benefits	Out–of–Network Benefits
Deductibles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calendar Year Deductible <i>Three–month Deductible carryover applies</i> <i>Applies to all Eligible Expenses</i> 	\$1,000 – per individual \$2,000 – per family	\$2,000 – per individual \$4,000 – per family
Co–Share Stop–Loss Amounts	\$2,500 – per individual \$5,000 – per family	\$5,000 – per individual \$10,000 – per family
Copayment Amounts Required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician office visit/consultation (Family Medicine, OB/GYN, Pediatrician, and Internist) Physician office visit/consultation (all other Specialty Care Providers) Outpatient Hospital Emergency Room visit 	\$20 Physician office visit \$35 Physician office visit 80% after \$100 outpatient Hospital Emergency Room visit copay, copay waived if admitted	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible 60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible 60% after \$100 outpatient Hospital Emergency Room visit copay, copay waived if admitted
Maximum Lifetime Benefits per Participant	\$2,000,000	
Inpatient Hospital Expenses All usual Hospital services and supplies, including semiprivate room, intensive care, and coronary care units.	80% of Allowable Amount after \$1,000 Calendar Year Deductible No penalty for failure to preauthorize services	60% of Allowable Amount after \$2,000 Calendar Year Deductible \$400 penalty for failure to preauthorize services
Medical–Surgical Expenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office visit/consultation (Family Medicine, OB/GYN, Pediatrician, and Internist) Excluding Lab and X–ray Office visit/consultation (all other Specialty Care Providers), Excluding Lab and X–ray Inpatient visits and Certain Diagnostic Procedures Home Infusion Therapy Physician surgical services in any setting Independent Lab & X–ray 	100% of Allowable Amount after \$20 Copayment Amount 100% of Allowable Amount after \$35 Copayment Amount 80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible 100% of Allowable Amount	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible 60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible 60% of Allowable Amount
Extended Care Expenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skilled Nursing Facility 60 days Per Calendar Year In–Network and Out of Network combined. 	Deductible applies 100% of Allowable Amount	Deductible applies 60% of Allowable Amount

SCHEDULE OF COVERAGE

Plan Provisions	In–Network Benefits	Out–of–Network Benefits
Extended Care Expenses–Cont’d <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Health Care \$10,000 Combined Calendar Year maximum • Hospice Care \$20,000 Combined Lifetime maximum 	Deductible applies 80% of Allowable Amount	Deductible applies 60% of Allowable Amount
Treatment of Chemical Dependency Three separate series of treatments for each covered individual Inpatient Services Hospital services (facility) Physician services	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible 80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible (\$400 penalty for failure to preauthorize services) 60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Outpatient Services Physician Expenses (office setting) Other Outpatient Services	80% Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible 80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible 60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Mental Health Care Inpatient Services Hospital Services (facility) Physician Services Limited to 21 inpatient days/inpatient visits each Calendar Year	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible 80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible (\$400 penalty for failure to preauthorize services) 60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Outpatient Services Physician Expenses (office setting) Other Outpatient Services Limited to 26 visits each Calendar Year	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible 80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible 60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible

SCHEDULE OF COVERAGE

Plan Provisions	In–Network Benefits	Out–of–Network Benefits
Serious Mental Illness	Same as any other physical illness	Same as any other physical illness
Emergency Care Accidental Injury & Emergency Care within first 72 hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility Charges • Physician Charges 	80% of Allowable Amount after \$100 outpatient Hospital emergency room Copayment Amount waived if admitted 80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	
Accidental Injury & Emergency Care after 72 hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility Charges • Physician Charges 	80% of Allowable Amount after \$100 outpatient Hospital emergency room Copayment Amount waived if admitted 80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after \$100 outpatient Hospital emergency room Copayment Amount waived if admitted 60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Ground Ambulance Services	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	
Air Ambulance Services	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	
Preventive Care Routine physical examinations, well baby care, immunizations 6 years & over, routine lab, x–ray,	100% of Allowable Amount	100% of Allowable Amount
Immunizations Birth up to age 6	100% Deductible waived	100% Deductible waived
Speech and Hearing Services \$1,500 maximum benefit amount each 36–month period for hearing aids	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Chiropractic Services 20 Visits per Calendar Year Maximum	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Physical Medicine Services \$2,000 Calendar Year Maximum benefit per Participant	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible
Occupational Therapy Outpatient Facility and Office Visits \$2,000 Calendar Year Maximum Benefit per Calendar Year Maximum Chiropractic Services not included.	80% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible	60% of Allowable Amount after Calendar Year Deductible

SCHEDULE OF COVERAGE

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM

1000 Plan

Plan Provisions	Participating Pharmacy	Non-Participating Pharmacy
Retail Pharmacy, no more than a 30-Day Supply	\$6 Copayment Amount – Generic Drugs \$30 Copayment Amount* – Preferred Brand Name Drug \$50 Copayment Amount* – Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug	80% of Allowable Amount minus Copayment Amount
Mail Service (Mandatory), up to a 90-Day Supply	\$7 Copayment Amount – Generic Drugs \$20 Copayment Amount* – Preferred Brand Name Drug \$35 Copayment Amount* – Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug	
Prior Authorization Provision	Does Not Apply	
Step Therapy Provision	Applies to proton pump inhibitors and cholesterol lowering drugs	
Limitations on Quantities Dispensed – Day Supply	Applies	
Disposable Insulin needles/syringes and/or disposable diabetic testing supplies	When prescribed and dispensed at the same time as Insulin, will be included under the same copayment. Disposable needles/syringes and/or disposable diabetic testing supplies must be dispensed in a quantity corresponding to the amount of insulin to be dispensed and must be submitted at the same time to be included under the same copayment as the insulin. This benefit is available at the local retail pharmacy or Mail Order Benefit program.	

* If you receive a Preferred Brand Name Drug or a Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug when a Generic Drug is available, you may incur additional costs. Refer to the Prescription Drug Program portion of your Benefit booklet for details.

Dependent Eligibility

Dependent Child Age Limit to age 25.

Dependent children are eligible for Maternity Care benefits

Preexisting Conditions

Benefits for Eligible Expenses incurred for treatment of a Preexisting Condition will not be available for up to 12-months following the Participant's initial Effective Date, or if a Waiting Period applies, the first day of the Waiting Period (typically the date you are hired). Credit will be given for time served under Creditable Coverage. For a more detailed explanation, see the section **HOW THE PLAN WORKS** in this Benefit Booklet.

INTRODUCTION

This Plan is offered by the City of Laredo as one of the benefits of your employment. The benefits provided are intended to assist you with many of your health care expenses for Medically Necessary services and supplies. There are provisions throughout this Benefit Booklet that affect your health care coverage. It is important that you read the Benefit Booklet carefully so you will be aware of the benefits and requirements of this Plan. In the event of any conflict between any components of this Plan, the Administrative Service Agreement provided to City of Laredo by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) prevails.

The defined terms in this Benefit Booklet are capitalized and shown in the appropriate provision in the Benefit Booklet or in the **DEFINITIONS** section of the Benefit Booklet. Whenever these terms are used, the meaning is consistent with the definition given. Terms in italics may be section headings describing provisions or they may be defined terms.

The terms “you” and “your” as used in this Benefit Booklet refer to the Employee. Use of the masculine pronoun “his,” “he,” or “him” will be considered to include the feminine unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

Managed Health Care – In–Network Benefits

To receive In–Network Benefits as indicated on your Schedule of Coverage, **you must** choose Providers within the Network for all care (**other than for emergencies**). The Network has been established by BCBSTX and consists of Physicians, Specialty Care Providers, Hospitals, and other health care facilities to serve Participants throughout the Network Plan Service Area. Refer to your Provider directory or visit the BCBSTX website at www.bcbstx.com to make your selections. The listing may change occasionally, so make sure the Providers you select are still Network Providers. An updated directory will be available at least annually or you may access our website, www.bcbstx.com, for the most current listing to assist you in locating a Provider.

To receive In–Network Benefits for Mental Health Care, Serious Mental Illness, and treatment of Chemical Dependency all care should be preauthorized by calling the toll–free Mental Health Helpline indicated on your Identification Card and in this Benefit Booklet. Services and supplies for Mental Health Care, Serious Mental Illness, and treatment of Chemical Dependency must be provided by Network Providers that have specifically contracted with the Claims Administrator to furnish services and supplies for those types of conditions to be considered for In–Network Benefits.

If you choose a Network Provider, the Provider will bill the Claims Administrator – not you – for services provided.

The Provider has agreed to accept as payment in full the least of...

- The billed charges, or
- The Allowable Amount as determined by the Claims Administrator, or
- Other contractually determined payment amounts.

You are responsible for paying any Deductibles, Copayment Amounts, and Co–Share Amounts. You may be required to pay for limited or non–covered services. No claim forms are required.

Managed Health Care – Out–of–Network Benefits

If you choose Out–of–Network Providers, only Out–of–Network Benefits will be available. If you go to a Provider outside the Network, benefits will be paid at the Out–of–Network Benefits level. If you choose a health care Provider outside the Network, you may have to submit claims for the services provided.

You will be responsible for...

- Billed charges above the Allowable Amount as determined by the Claims Administrator,
- Co–Share Amounts and Deductibles,
- Preauthorization, and
- Limited or non–covered services.

INTRODUCTION

Prescription Drug Program Benefits

Benefits are provided for those Covered Drugs as explained in the **PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM** section and shown on your Schedule of Coverage in this Benefit Booklet. The amount of your payment under the Plan depends on whether:

- the Prescription Order is filled at a Participating Pharmacy, or at a Non-Participating Pharmacy, or through the Mail Service Prescription Drug Program; or
- a Generic Drug is dispensed; or
- a Preferred or Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug is dispensed.

Important Contact Information

Resource	Contact Information	Accessible Hours (Central Time)
Customer Service Helpline	1-800-521-2227	Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Website	www.bcbstx.com	24 hours a day 7 days a week
Medical Preauthorization Helpline	1-800-441-9188	Monday – Friday 7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Mental Health Helpline	1-800-528-7264	24 hours a day 7 days a week

Customer Service Helpline

Customer Service Representatives can:

- Identify your Plan Service Area
- Give you information about Network and *ParPlan* Providers
- Distribute claim forms
- Answer your questions on claims
- Assist you in identifying a Network Provider (but will not recommend specific Network Providers)
- Provide information on the features of the Plan
- Record comments about Providers
- Assist you with questions regarding the **PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM**

BCBSTX Website

Visit the BCBSTX website at www.bcbstx.com for information about BCBSTX, access to forms referenced in this Benefit Booklet, and much more.

Mental Health Helpline

To satisfy preauthorization requirements for Participants seeking treatment for Mental Health Care, Serious Mental Illness, and treatment of Chemical Dependency you, your Physician, Provider of services, or a family member may call the Mental Health Helpline at any time, day or night.

Medical Preauthorization Helpline

To satisfy all medical preauthorization requirements for inpatient Hospital Admissions, Extended Care Expenses, or Home Infusion Therapy, call the Medical Preauthorization Helpline.

WHO GETS BENEFITS

Eligibility Date Requirements for Coverage

The Eligibility Date is the date a person becomes eligible to be covered under the Plan. A person becomes eligible to be covered when he becomes an Employee or a Dependent and is in a class eligible to be covered under the Plan. The Eligibility Date is:

1. The date the Employee, including any Dependents to be covered, completes a 90 day waiting period from the date of employment;
2. Described in the *Dependent Enrollment Period* section for a new Dependent of an Employee already having coverage under the Plan.

Employee Eligibility

Any person eligible under this Plan and covered by the Employer's previous Health Benefit Plan on the date prior to the Plan Effective Date, including any person who has continued group coverage under applicable federal or state law, is eligible on the Plan Effective Date. Otherwise, you are eligible for coverage under the Plan when you satisfy the definition of an Employee and you reside or work in the Plan Service Area.

If you retire after having been covered as a regular full-time Employee, your medical coverage may be continued as indicated below:

1. All regular full-time Employees, who meet the Plan definition of a retiree, retired from the Employer and have elected the Retiree Medical Benefit.
2. The coverage also applies to the dependents as defined of each such retiree, provided the retiree had dependent coverage for those dependents on the date of his/hers retirement.

Dependent Eligibility

If you apply for coverage, you may include your Dependents. Eligible Dependents are:

1. Your spouse;
2. An unmarried child under the limiting age shown in the Schedule of Coverage;
3. Any unmarried child of any age who is medically certified as Disabled and dependent on the parent;
4. A child of your child who is your Dependent for federal income tax purposes at the time application for coverage of the child is made;
5. Any other child included as an eligible Dependent under the Plan.

A detailed description of Dependent is in the **DEFINITIONS** section of this Benefit Booklet.

An Employee must be covered first in order to cover his eligible Dependents. No Dependent shall be covered prior to the Employee's Effective Date of coverage. If you are married to a City of Laredo employee, you may elect to cover your spouse as a Dependent during the City's annual enrollment or at the time of a qualifying event, and child/dependent of either one of the two employees may only be covered under the City of Laredo's medical plan as a dependent by one of the two employees.

Effective Dates of Coverage

In order for an Employee's coverage to take effect, the Employee must submit written enrollment for coverage for himself and any Dependents. The Effective Date is the date the coverage for a Participant actually begins. The Effective Date under the Plan is shown on your Identification Card. It may be different from the Eligibility Date.

Timely Applications

It is important that your application for coverage under the Plan is received timely by the Claims Administrator through the Plan Administrator.

WHO GETS BENEFITS

If you apply for coverage and make the required contributions for yourself or for yourself and your eligible Dependents and if you:

1. Are eligible on the Plan Effective Date and the application is received by the Claims Administrator through the Plan Administrator prior to or within 31 days following such date, your coverage will become effective on the Plan Effective Date;
2. Enroll for coverage for yourself or for yourself and your Dependents during an Benefit Enrollment Period, coverage shall become effective on the Plan Anniversary Date; and.
3. Become eligible after the Plan Effective Date and if the application is received by the Claims Administrator through the Plan Administrator within the first 31 days following your Eligibility Date, the coverage will become effective in accordance with eligibility information provided by your Employer (the City of Laredo).

Effective Dates – Delay of Benefits Provided

Coverage becomes effective for you and/or your Dependents on the Plan Effective Date upon completion of an application for coverage. If you or your eligible Dependent(s) are confined in a Hospital or Facility Other Provider on the Plan Effective Date, your coverage is effective on the Plan Effective Date. However, if this Plan is replacing a discontinued Health Benefit Plan or self-funded Health Benefit Plan, benefits for any Employee or Dependent may be delayed until the expiration of any applicable extension of benefits provided by the previous Health Benefit Plan or self-funded Health Benefit Plan.

Effective Dates – Late Enrollee

If your application is not received within 31 days from the Eligibility Date, you will be considered a Late Enrollee. You will become eligible to apply for coverage during the City of Laredo's next Benefit Enrollment Period. Your coverage will become effective on the Plan Anniversary Date. If you are a Late Enrollee, you may be subject to a 12-month Preexisting Condition limitation beginning on the Plan Anniversary Date.

Loss of Other Health Insurance Coverage

An Employee who is eligible, but not enrolled for coverage under the terms of the Plan (and/or a Dependent, if the Dependent is eligible, but not enrolled for coverage under such terms) shall become eligible to apply for coverage if each of the following conditions is met:

1. The Employee or Dependent was covered under a Health Benefit Plan, self-funded Health Benefit Plan, or had other health insurance coverage at the time this coverage was previously offered; and
2. Coverage was declined under this Plan in writing, on the basis of coverage under another Health Benefit Plan or self-funded Health Benefit Plan; and
3. There is a loss of coverage under such prior Health Benefit Plan or self-funded Health Benefit Plan as a result of:
 - a. Exhaustion of continuation under Title X of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) of 1985, as amended; or
 - b. Cessation of Dependent status (such as divorce or attaining the maximum age to be eligible as a dependent child under the Plan), termination of employment, a reduction in the number of hours of employment, or employer contributions toward such coverage were terminated; or
 - c. Termination of the other plan's coverage, a situation in which an individual incurs a claim that would meet or exceed a lifetime limit on all benefits, a situation in which the other plan no longer offers any benefits to the class of similarly situated individuals that include you or your Dependent, or, in the case of coverage

WHO GETS BENEFITS

offered through an HMO, you or your Dependent no longer reside, live, or work in the service area of that HMO and no other benefit option is available; and

4. You request to enroll no later than 31 days after the date coverage ends under the prior Health Benefit Plan or self-funded Health Benefit Plan or, in the event of the attainment of a lifetime limit on all benefits, the request to enroll is made not later than 31 days after a claim is denied due to the attainment of a lifetime limit on all benefits. Coverage will become effective the first day of the Plan Month following receipt of the application by the Claims Administrator through the Plan Administrator.

If all conditions described above are not met, you will be considered a Late Enrollee.

Loss of Governmental Coverage

An individual who is eligible to enroll and who has lost coverage under Medicaid (Title XIX of the Social Security Act), other than coverage consisting solely of benefits under Section 1928 of that Act (42 U.S.C. Section 1396s) or under the Texas Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Chapter 62, Health and Safety Code, is not a Late Enrollee provided appropriate enrollment application/change forms and applicable contributions are received by the Claims Administrator within sixty (60) days after the date on which such individual loses coverage. Coverage will be effective the day after prior coverage terminated.

Health Insurance Premium Payment (HIPP) Reimbursement Program

An individual who is eligible to enroll and who is a recipient of medical assistance under the state of Texas Medicaid Program or enrolled in CHIP, and who is a participant in the state of Texas HIPP Reimbursement Program may enroll with no enrollment period restrictions. If the individual is not eligible unless a family member is enrolled, both the individual and family member may enroll. The Effective Date of Coverage is on the first day of the month after the Claims Administrator receives (i) written notice from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, or (ii) enrollment forms, from you, provided such forms and applicable contributions are received by the Claims Administrator within sixty (60) days after the date the individual becomes eligible for participation in the HIPP Reimbursement Program.

Dependent Enrollment Period

1. Special Enrollment Period for Newborn Children

This provision will cover well baby medical services provided at birth in the hospital, (including routine circumcision), for the necessary care and treatment of medically diagnosed congenital defects and birth abnormalities or for sickness or injury that occurs during the birth. This provision does not cover non-birth related sickness, injury or well baby follow-up check-ups. However, the Newborn Child Coverage will not be activated unless you add or enroll for dependent coverage and make the required contributions. Payment of claims will not be processed until the newborn child is added to the plan. If the newborn child is not enrolled within the 31 days grace period and claims are incurred the employee will become financially responsible for all health care costs incurred.

If you already have Dependent Coverage and acquire a newborn child, you must enroll the baby for coverage within 31 days from the date of birth of the child.

If you fail to enroll for Dependent Coverage within 31 days of the birth of the child, you must wait until the next Benefit Enrollment period (in September) to enroll the baby for coverage. To enroll a dependent for coverage, you must complete, sign and date a dependent change form which is acceptable to the City of Laredo and deliver it to the Personnel Division, Human Resources Department, within 31 days of the birth of the child.

2. Special Enrollment Period for Adopted Children or Children Involved in a Suit for Adoption

Coverage of an adopted child or child involved in a suit for adoption will be automatic for the first 31 days following the adoption or date on which a suit for adoption is sought. For coverage to continue beyond this time, the Claims Administrator through the Plan Administrator must receive all necessary forms and the required contributions within the 31-day period or a period consistent with the next billing cycle. Coverage will become

WHO GETS BENEFITS

effective on the date of adoption or date on which a suit for adoption is sought. If you notify the Claims

Administrator through the Plan Administrator after that 31-day period, the child's coverage will become effective on the Plan Anniversary Date following the City of Laredo's next Benefit Enrollment Period.

3. ***Court Ordered Dependent Children***

If a court has ordered an Employee to provide coverage for a child, coverage will be automatic for the first 31 days after the date the City of Laredo receives notification of the court order. To continue coverage beyond the 31 days, the Claims Administrator through the Plan Administrator must receive all necessary forms and the required contributions within the 31-day period. If you notify the Claims Administrator through the Plan Administrator after that 31-day period, the Dependent child's coverage will become effective on the Plan Anniversary Date following the City of Laredo's next Benefit Enrollment Period.

4. ***Other Dependents***

Written application must be received within 31 days of the date that a spouse or child first qualifies as a Dependent. If the written application is received within 31 days, coverage will become effective on the date the child or spouse first becomes an eligible Dependent. If application is not made within the initial 31 days, then your Dependent's coverage will become effective on the Plan Anniversary Date following your the City of Laredo's next Benefit Enrollment Period.

If you ask that your Dependent be provided health care coverage after having canceled his or her coverage while your Dependent was still entitled to coverage, your Dependent's coverage will become effective in accordance with the provisions for Late Enrollees.

In no event will your Dependent's coverage become effective prior to your Effective Date.

Other Employee Enrollment Period

1. As a special enrollment period event, if you acquire a Dependent through birth, adoption, or through suit for adoption, and you previously declined coverage for reasons other than under ***Loss of Other Health Insurance Coverage***, as described above, you may apply for coverage for yourself, your spouse, and a newborn child, adopted child, or child involved in a suit for adoption. If the written application is received within 31 days of the birth, adoption, or suit for adoption, coverage for the child, you, or your spouse will become effective on the date of the birth, adoption, or date suit for adoption is sought.

If you marry and you previously declined coverage for reasons other than under ***Loss of Other Health Insurance Coverage*** as described above, you may apply for coverage for yourself and your spouse. If the written application is received within 31 days of the marriage, coverage for you and your spouse will become effective on the first day of the month following receipt of the application by the Claims Administrator through the Plan Administrator.

2. If you are required to provide coverage for a child as described in ***Court Ordered Dependent Children*** above, and you previously declined coverage for reasons other than under ***Loss of Other Health Insurance Coverage***, you may apply for coverage for yourself. If the written application is received within 31 days of the date the City of Laredo receives notification of the court order, coverage for you will become effective on the date the City of Laredo receives notification of the court order.

Group Enrollment Application/Change Form

Use this form to...

- Notify the Plan of a change to your name
- Add Dependents
- Drop Dependents
- Cancel all or a portion of your coverage
- Notify the Plan of all changes in address for yourself and your Dependents. An address change may result in benefit changes for you and your Dependents if you move out of the Plan Service Area of the Network.

WHO GETS BENEFITS

You may obtain this form from the City of Laredo, by calling the Claims Administrator's Customer Service Helpline telephone number shown in this Benefit Booklet or on your Identification Card, or by accessing the BCBSTX website.

If a Dependent's address and zip code are different from yours, be sure to indicate this information on the form. After you have completed the form, return it to the City of Laredo.

Changes In Your Family

You should promptly notify the Claims Administrator through the Plan Administrator in the event of a birth or follow the instructions below when events, such as but not limited to, the following take place:

- If you are adding a Dependent due to marriage, adoption, or a child being involved in a suit for which an adoption of the child is sought, or the City of Laredo receives a court order to provide health coverage for a Participant's child or your spouse, you must submit a Group Enrollment Application/Change Form and the coverage of the Dependent will become effective as described in *Dependent Enrollment Period*.
- When you divorce, your child marries or reaches the age indicated on the Schedule of Coverage as "Dependent Child Age Limit," or "Student Age Limit", or a Participant in your family dies, coverage under the Plan terminates in accordance with the **Termination of Coverage** provisions selected by the City of Laredo.

Notify the City of Laredo promptly if any of these events occur. Benefits for expenses incurred after termination are not available. If your Dependent's coverage is terminated, refund of contributions will not be made for any period before the date of notification. If benefits are paid prior to notification to the Claims Administrator by the Plan Administrator, refunds will be requested.

Please refer to the **Continuation Privilege** subsection in this Benefit Booklet for additional information.

Retiree Medical Benefits

If you retire after having been covered as a regular full-time employee, your medical coverage may be continued as indicated below:

Eligibility

1. All regular full-time employees, who meet the Plan definition of a retiree, retired from the employer and have elected the Retiree Medical Benefit.
2. The coverage also applies to the dependents as defined of each such retiree, provided the retiree had dependent coverage for those dependents on the date of his/hers retirement.

Medical

The benefits applicable to a covered retiree and his/hers dependents are those benefits described in the Schedule of Benefits booklet certificate for active employees and their dependents, except for any options available only to Retirees that a covered person may select for his/her coverage and for dependent coverage at the time of retirement or as otherwise specified in a collective bargaining agreement.

Retiree Effective Date of Coverage

You may elect to continue your medical coverage through the Retiree Medical Benefit at the time you retire from the City. You must notify your employer of your desire for retiree medical coverage in writing within 31 days of your retirement date, or of the date of notification of your retirement status.

Your retiree medical coverage will be effective as of your retirement date.

You may not elect to begin retiree medical coverage more than 31 days after you are officially notified of your retirement status under any circumstances.

WHO GETS BENEFITS

Dependent Effective Date of Coverage

Your dependents will become covered for retiree medical benefits on the date you are officially notified of the retirement status if they were covered for medical benefits at the same time of your retirement and if you enroll

them for dependent retiree medical benefits. Your dependents must be enrolled for coverage within 31 days of your retirement date or the date of notification of the retirement status.

In no event will dependent coverage become effective before the date your personal coverage is effective.

Enrollment

To enroll for retiree coverage you must:

1. Complete and sign a group enrollment form which is acceptable to the Group Benefits Administrator; and
2. Deliver it to your employer.

Termination Date of Coverage (Retired Persons and Their Dependents)

Your coverage and your dependents' coverage will terminate on the earliest of;

1. The date your plan terminates
2. The last day of the period for which you make any required contribution; or
3. The date of which the coverage for your class terminates;

Coverage for a dependent cannot extend beyond the date of coverage for the Retiree ends unless the dependent is a surviving spouse or dependent child of the retiree who was covered under the plan at the time of the retiree's death.

1. **Surviving Spouse:** Effective October 1, 1994 a surviving dependent spouse will be eligible to continue medical coverage under the plan at the time of the Retiree's death. In this case, medical coverage will continue for the surviving spouse, until the surviving spouse remarries or until the surviving spouse reaches Medicare age, whichever occurs first and the required contributions are paid.
2. **Surviving Dependent Child:** Effective October 1, 1994, a surviving dependent child will be eligible to continue medical coverage beyond the date that coverage for the retiree ends, if the surviving dependent child of the retiree was covered under the plan at the time of the Retiree's death. In this case, medical coverage will continue as long as surviving dependent child meets the definition of "Dependent" under the City's medical booklet and the required contributions are paid.

Retiree Coordination with Medicare

Retiree coverage will be coordinated with Medicare coverage if applicable. Please see the section entitled "Coordination with Medicare" in this booklet.

Definitions

Medicare – the health insurance provided by Title XVIII of the Social Security Act as amended.

Full Medicare Coverage – coverage under both:

Part "A" Hospital Insurance; and

Part "B" Medical Insurance.

Part "C" Choice provided by Medicare. If a person is eligible for either Part, he/she will be deemed to have Full Medical Coverage, even if he/she does not enroll for it with the following exception: Firefighters who were employed before April 1, 1986 and their dependents.

Coordination

If a covered person incurred expenses for which benefits are payable under this Plan, the Plan will follow Medicare guidelines to determine which plan is primary.

WHO GETS BENEFITS

Once covered person (retiree or dependent) is eligible for Medicare Parts A & B they must sign up for the City of Laredo's Medicare supplement at the Human Resources Department. Failure to do so within 31 days due to age eligibility will result in the covered person assuming financial responsibility for claims not covered by Medicare.

The Plan does not coordinate with Medicare Part C.

Primary means that the benefits payable under the Employer's Plan will be determined and paid without regard to Medicare.

Secondary means Medicare is primary and the Group Benefits Administrator will reduce its payment so that the total payable by full Medicare coverage and the Group Benefits Administrator will not exceed 100% of the actual Covered Expense.

Coverage under the City of Laredo Plan of a Medicare eligible Covered person will be primary only if:

1. the Covered Person is an active full time Employee;
2. the Covered Person is a spouse of an active full-time Employee; or
3. the Covered Person is entitled to benefits under Medicare because of renal dialysis or kidney transplant. In this case, coverage under this booklet will be primary only during the first 18 months of the period such person is so entitled.

The Group Benefit Administrator's determination will be based on the status of the Covered Person on the date such covered expenses are incurred.

If a person does not:

1. enroll for Full Medicare Coverage; or
2. make premium payments when due for Medicare benefits,

The Group Benefits Administrator will calculate the benefits that would have been paid by Full Medicare Coverage.

HOW THE PLAN WORKS

Allowable Amount

The Allowable Amount is the maximum amount of benefits the Claims Administrator will pay for Eligible Expenses you incur under the Plan. The Claims Administrator has established an Allowable Amount for Medically Necessary services, supplies, and procedures provided by Providers that have contracted with the Claims Administrator or any other Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan, and Providers that have not contracted with the Claims Administrator or any other Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan. When you choose to receive services, supplies, or care from a Provider that does not contract with the Claims Administrator, you will be responsible for any difference between the Claims Administrator's Allowable Amount and the amount charged by the non-contracting Provider. You will also be responsible for charges for services, supplies, and procedures limited or not covered under the Plan, any applicable Deductibles, Co-Share Amounts, and Copayment Amounts.

Review the definition of Allowable Amount in the **DEFINITIONS** section of this Benefit Booklet to understand the guidelines used by the Claims Administrator.

Case Management

Under certain circumstances, the Plan allows the Claims Administrator the flexibility to offer benefits for expenses which are not otherwise Eligible Expenses. The Claims Administrator, at its sole discretion, may offer such benefits if:

- The Participant, his family, and the Physician agree;
- Benefits are cost effective; and
- The Claims Administrator anticipates future expenditures for Eligible Expenses which may be reduced by such benefits.

Any decision by the Claims Administrator to provide such benefits shall be made on a case-by-case basis. The case coordinator for the Claims Administrator will initiate case management in appropriate situations.

Disease Management

The purpose of the program is to provide members with education and self management techniques necessary to manage their condition effectively; thereby, reducing hospitalization and/or ER utilization.

- Members are identified for enrollment in this voluntary program based on the severity of the disease.
- Members meeting the criteria will receive an invitational letter to participate in the program.
- The programs identify the best methods of helping members learn to control their disease more effectively.

This program is available for members with the following services:

- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)
- Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Low Back Pain
- Metabolic Syndrome which includes Hypertension and Hyperlipidemia
- HIV/HCV
- ESRD
- Oncology

HOW THE PLAN WORKS

Freedom of Choice

<i>Each time you need medical care, you can choose to:</i>		
See a Network Provider	See an Out-of-Network Provider	
	ParPlan Provider <i>(refer to ParPlan, below, for more information)</i>	Out-of-Network Provider that is not a contracting Provider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You receive the higher level of benefits (In-Network Benefits) • You are not required to file claim forms • You are not balance billed; Network Providers will not bill for costs exceeding the Claims Administrator's Allowable Amount for covered services • Your Provider will preauthorize necessary services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You receive the lower level of benefits (Out-of-Network Benefits) • You are not required to file claim forms in most cases; <i>ParPlan</i> Providers will usually file claims for you • You are not balance billed; <i>ParPlan</i> Providers will not bill for costs exceeding the Claims Administrator's Allowable Amount for covered services • In most cases, <i>ParPlan</i> Providers will preauthorize necessary services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You receive Out-of-Network Benefits (the lower level of benefits) • You are required to file your own claim forms • You may be billed for charges exceeding the Claims Administrator's Allowable Amount for covered services • You must preauthorize necessary services

Identification Card

The Identification Card tells Providers that you are entitled to benefits under the City of Laredo's Health Benefit Plan. The card offers a convenient way of providing important information specific to your coverage including, but not limited to, the following:

- ***Your Subscriber identification number.*** This unique identification number is preceded by a three character alpha prefix that identifies Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas as your Claims Administrator.
- ***Your group number.*** This is the number assigned to identify the City of Laredo's Health Benefit Plan with the Claims Administrator.
- ***Any Copayment Amounts that may apply to your coverage.***
- ***Important telephone numbers.***

Always remember to carry your Identification Card with you and present it to your Providers or Participating Pharmacies when receiving health care services or supplies.

Please remember that any time a change in your family takes place it may be necessary for a new Identification Card to be issued to you (refer to the **WHO GETS BENEFITS** section for instructions when changes are made). Upon receipt of the change in information, the Claims Administrator will provide a new Identification Card.

Unauthorized, Fraudulent, Improper, or Abusive Use of Identification Cards

1. The unauthorized, fraudulent, improper, or abusive use of Identification Cards issued to you and your covered Dependents will include, but not be limited to, the following actions, when intentional:
 - a. Use of the Identification Card prior to your Effective Date;
 - b. Use of the Identification Card after your date of termination of coverage under the Plan;
 - c. Obtaining prescription drugs or other benefits for persons not covered under the Plan;
 - d. Obtaining prescription drugs or other benefits that are not covered under the Plan;

HOW THE PLAN WORKS

- e. Obtaining Covered Drugs for resale or for use by any person other than the person for whom the Prescription Order is written, even though the person is otherwise covered under the Plan;
 - f. Obtaining Covered Drugs without a Prescription Order or through the use of a forged or altered Prescription Order;
 - g. Obtaining quantities of prescription drugs in excess of Medically Necessary or prudent standards of use or in circumvention of the quantity limitations of the Plan;
 - h. Obtaining prescription drugs using Prescription Orders for the same drugs from multiple Providers;
 - i. Obtaining prescription drugs from multiple Pharmacies through use of the same Prescription Order.
2. The fraudulent or intentionally unauthorized, abusive, or other improper use of Identification Cards by any Participant can result in, but is not limited to, the following sanctions being applied to all Participants covered under your coverage:
- a. Denial of benefits;
 - b. Cancellation of coverage under the Plan for **all** Participants under your coverage;
 - c. Limitation on the use of the Identification Card to one designated Physician, Other Provider, or Participating Pharmacy of your choice;
 - d. Recoupment from you or any of your covered Dependents of any benefit payments made;
 - e. Pre-approval of drug purchases and medical services for all Participants receiving benefits under your coverage;
 - f. Notice to proper authorities of potential violations of law or professional ethics.

Medical Necessity

All services and supplies for which benefits are available under the Plan must be Medically Necessary as determined by the Claims Administrator. Charges for services and supplies which the Claims Administrator determines are not Medically Necessary will not be eligible for benefit consideration and may not be used to satisfy Deductibles or to apply to the Co-Share Stop-Loss Amount.

ParPlan

When you consult a Physician or Professional Other Provider who does not participate in the Network, you should inquire if he participates in the Claims Administrator's *ParPlan*...a simple direct-payment arrangement. If the Physician or Professional Other Provider participates in *ParPlan*, he agrees to:

- File all claims for you,
- Accept the Claim Administrator's Allowable Amount determination as payment for Medically Necessary services, and
- Not bill you for services over the Allowable Amount determination.

You will receive Out-of-Network Benefits and be responsible for:

- Any Deductibles,
- Co-Share Amounts, and
- Services that are limited or not covered under the Plan.

Note: If you have a question regarding a Physician's or Professional Other Provider's participation in *ParPlan*, please contact the Claims Administrator's Customer Service Helpline.

Preexisting Conditions Provision

Benefits for Eligible Expenses incurred for treatment of a Preexisting Condition will not be available under this Plan. This provision will not apply after the earlier of:

HOW THE PLAN WORKS

- the end of a six (6) consecutive month period ending on the Participant's initial effective date of coverage (or, if a Waiting Period applied to the Participant other than a Late Enrollee, the first day of the Waiting Period), during which the Participant received no medical advice or treatment for the Preexisting Condition; or
- the end of a twelve (12) consecutive month period which began on the Participant's initial effective date of coverage (or, if a Waiting Period applied to the Participant other than a Late Enrollee, the first day of the Waiting Period).

In addition, this provision will not apply to a Participant who was continuously covered for an aggregate period of twelve months under Creditable Coverage that was in effect up to a date not more than 63 days before the Effective Date of Coverage under the Health Benefit Plan, excluding any Waiting Periods.

The Claims Administrator will credit the time a Participant was covered under Creditable Coverage toward reducing the twelve-month period referenced above, if the previous coverage was in effect under a Health Benefit Plan or self-funded Health Benefit Plan at any time during the twelve-months prior to the Effective Date of Coverage under this Plan. If the previous coverage was issued under a Health Benefit Plan, any waiting period that applied before that coverage became effective also will be credited.

All terms, provisions, limitations and exclusions of the Plan will continue to apply to all Participants, including limitation on benefits for admissions which began prior to the Plan Effective Date.

Specialty Care Providers

A wide range of Specialty Care Providers is included in the Network. When you need a specialist's care, In-Network Benefits will be available, but only if you use a Network Provider.

There may be occasions however, when you need the services of an Out-of-Network Provider. This could occur if you have a complex medical problem that cannot be taken care of by a Network Provider.

- If the services you require are not available from Network Providers, In-Network Benefits will be provided when you use Out-of-Network Providers.
- If you elect to see an Out-of-Network Provider and if the services could have been provided by a Network Provider, only Out-of-Network Benefits will be available.

Use of Non-Contracting Providers

When you choose to receive services, supplies, or care from a Provider that does not contract with BCBSTX (a non-contracting Provider), you receive Out-of-Network Benefits (the lower level of benefits). Benefits for covered services will be reimbursed based on the BCBSTX non-contracting Allowable Amount, which in most cases is less than the Allowable Amount applicable for BCBSTX contracted Providers. Please see the definition of non-contracting Allowable Amount in the **DEFINITIONS** section of this Benefit Booklet. **The non-contracted Provider is not required to accept the BCBSTX non-contracting Allowable Amount as payment in full and may balance bill you for the difference between the BCBSTX non-contracting Allowable Amount and the non-contracting Provider's billed charges. You will be responsible for this balance bill amount, which may be considerable.** You will also be responsible for charges for services, supplies and procedures limited or not covered under the Plan and any applicable Deductibles, Co-Share Amounts, and Copayment Amounts.

PREAUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Preauthorization Requirements

Preauthorization establishes in advance the Medical Necessity of certain care and services covered under this Plan. It ensures that the preauthorized care and services described below will not be denied on the basis of Medical Necessity. However, preauthorization does not guarantee payment of benefits.

Coverage is always subject to other requirements of the Plan, such as Preexisting Conditions, limitations and exclusions, payment of contributions, and eligibility at the time care and services are provided.

To satisfy preauthorization requirements, on business days between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Central Standard Time, you, your Physician, Provider of services, or a family member should call one of the Customer Service toll-free numbers listed on the back of your Identification Card. After working hours or on weekends, please call the "Medical Preauthorization Helpline" toll-free number listed on the back of your Identification Card. Your call will be recorded and returned the next working day. A benefits management nurse will follow up with your Provider's office. All timelines for preauthorization requirements are provided in keeping with applicable state and federal regulations.

The following types of services require preauthorization:

- All inpatient Hospital Admissions,
- Extended Care Expenses,
- Home Infusion Therapy,
- All inpatient and outpatient treatment of Chemical Dependency,
- All inpatient and outpatient Mental Health Care,
- All inpatient and outpatient treatment of Serious Mental Illness, and
- If you transfer to another facility or to or from a specialty unit within the facility.

In–Network Benefits will be available if you use a Network Provider or Network Specialty Care Provider. In–Network Providers will preauthorize services for you, when required.

If you elect to use Out–of–Network Providers for services and supplies available In–Network, Out–of–Network Benefits will be paid.

However, if care is not available from Network Providers as determined by the Claims Administrator, and the Claims Administrator acknowledges your visit to an Out–of–Network Provider **prior to the visit**, In–Network Benefits will be paid; otherwise, Out–of–Network Benefits will be paid and the claim will have to be resubmitted for review and adjusted, if appropriate.

You are responsible for ensuring that preauthorization requirements are satisfied. Failure to preauthorize services will be subject to guidelines described in the paragraph entitled ***Failure to Preauthorize***.

Failure to Preauthorize

If preauthorization for inpatient Hospital Admissions, Extended Care Expense, Home Infusion Therapy, Mental Health Care, treatment of Serious Mental Illness, or treatment of Chemical Dependency as described above, is not obtained the Claims Administrator will review the Medical Necessity of your treatment prior to the final benefit determination.

If the Claims Administrator determines the treatment or service is not Medically Necessary, benefits will be reduced or denied; or, if in connection with an inpatient Hospital Admission, you may be responsible for a penalty, if indicated on your Schedule of Coverage. The penalty charge will be deducted from any benefit payment which may be due for the inpatient admission.

If an inpatient Hospital Admission or extension for any treatment or service described below is not preauthorized and it is determined that the admission or extension was not Medically Necessary, benefits will be reduced or denied.

PREAUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Preauthorization for Inpatient Hospital Admissions

In the case of an elective inpatient Hospital Admission, the call for preauthorization should be made at least two working days before you are admitted unless it would delay Emergency Care. In an emergency, preauthorization should take place within two working days after admission, or as soon thereafter as reasonably possible.

When an inpatient Hospital Admission is preauthorized, a length-of-stay is assigned. If you require a longer stay than was first preauthorized, your Provider may seek an extension for the additional days. Benefits will not be available for room and board charges for medically unnecessary days.

Preauthorization not Required for Maternity Care and Treatment of Breast Cancer Unless Extension of Minimum Length of Stay Requested

Your Plan is required to provide a minimum length-of-stay in a Hospital facility for the following:

- Maternity Care
 - 48 hours following an uncomplicated vaginal delivery
 - 96 hours following an uncomplicated delivery by caesarean section
- Treatment of Breast Cancer
 - 48 hours following a mastectomy
 - 24 hours following a lymph node dissection

You or your Provider will not be required to obtain preauthorization from BCBSTX for a length of stay less than 48 hours (or 96 hours) for Maternity Care or less than 48 hours (or 24 hours) for Treatment of Breast Cancer. If you require a longer stay, you or your Provider must seek an extension for the additional days by obtaining preauthorization from BCBSTX.

Preauthorization for Extended Care Expenses and Home Infusion Therapy

Preauthorization for Extended Care Expenses and Home Infusion Therapy may be obtained by having the agency or facility providing the services contact the Claims Administrator to request preauthorization. The request should be made:

- Prior to initiating Extended Care Expenses or Home Infusion Therapy;
- When an extension of the initially preauthorized service is required; and
- When the treatment plan is altered.

The Claims Administrator will review the information submitted prior to the start of Extended Care Expenses or Home Infusion Therapy and will send a letter to you and the agency or facility confirming preauthorization or denying benefits. If Extended Care Expenses or Home Infusion Therapy is to take place in less than one week, the agency or facility should call the Claims Administrator's **Medical Preauthorization Helpline** telephone number indicated in this Benefit Booklet or shown on your Identification Card.

If the Claims Administrator has given notification that benefits for the treatment plan requested will be denied based on information submitted, claims will be denied.

Preauthorization for Mental Health Care, Serious Mental Illness, and Treatment of Chemical Dependency

All inpatient and outpatient Mental Health Care, treatment of Serious Mental Illness, and treatment of Chemical Dependency should be preauthorized.

CLAIM FILING AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

CLAIM FILING PROCEDURES

Filing of Claims Required

Notice of Claim

You must give written notice to the Claims Administrator within 15 months, or as soon as reasonably possible, after any Participant receives services for which benefits are provided under the Plan. Failure to give notice within this time will not invalidate or reduce any claim if you show that it was not reasonably possible to give notice and that notice was given as soon as it was reasonably possible.

Claim Forms

When the Claims Administrator receives notice of claim, it will furnish to you, or to the City of Laredo for delivery to you, the Hospital, or your Physician or Professional Other Provider, the claim forms that are usually furnished by it for filing Proof of Loss.

The Claims Administrator for the Plan must receive claims prepared and submitted in the proper manner and form, in the time required, and with the information requested before it can consider any claim for payment of benefits.

Who Files Claims

Providers that contract with the Claims Administrator and some other health care Providers (such as *ParPlan* Providers) will submit your claims directly to the Claims Administrator for services provided to you or any of your covered Dependents. At the time services are provided, inquire if they will file claim forms for you. To assist Providers in filing your claims, you should carry your Identification Card with you.

Contracting Providers

When you receive treatment or care from a Provider or Covered Drugs dispensed from a Pharmacy that contracts with the Claims Administrator, you will generally not be required to file claim forms. The Provider will usually submit the claims directly to the Claims Administrator for you.

Non-Contracting Providers

When you receive treatment or care from a health care Provider or Covered Drugs dispensed from a Pharmacy that does not contract with the Claims Administrator, you may be required to file your own claim forms. Some Providers, however, will do this for you. If the Provider does not submit claims for you, refer to the subsection entitled *Participant-filed claims* below for instruction on how to file your own claim forms.

Mail Service Prescription Drug Program

When you receive Covered Drugs dispensed through the Mail Service Prescription Drug Program, you must complete and submit the mail service prescription drug claim form to the address on the claim form. Additional information may be obtained from the City of Laredo, from the Claims Administrator, off of the BCBSTX website, or by calling the Customer Service Helpline.

Participant-filed claims

- Medical Claims

If your Provider does not submit your claims, you will need to submit them to the Claims Administrator using a Subscriber-filed claim form provided by the Plan. The City of Laredo should have a supply of claim forms or you can obtain copies from the BCBSTX website. Follow the instructions on the reverse side of the form to complete the claim. Remember to file each Participant's expenses separately because any Copayment amounts,

CLAIM FILING AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

Deductibles, maximum benefits, and other provisions are applied to each Participant separately. Include itemized bills from the health care Providers, labs, etc., printed on their letterhead and showing the services performed, dates of service, charges, and name of the Participant involved.

- **Prescription Drug Claims**

When you receive Covered Drugs dispensed from a Non-Participating Pharmacy, a *Prescription Reimbursement Claim Form* must be submitted. This form can be obtained from the Claims Administrator or the City of Laredo. This claim form, accompanied by an itemized bill obtained from the Pharmacy showing the prescription services you received, should be mailed to the address shown below or on the claim form.

Instructions for completing the claim form are provided on the back of the form. You may need to obtain additional information, which is not on the receipt from the pharmacist, to complete the claim form.

Bills for Covered Drugs should show the name, address and telephone number of the Pharmacy, a description and quantity of the drug, the prescription number, the date of purchase and most importantly, the name of the Participant using the drug.

VISIT THE BCBSTX WEBSITE FOR SUBSCRIBER CLAIM FORMS AND OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION
www.bcbstx.com

Where to Mail Completed Claim Forms

Medical Claims

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas
Claims Division
P. O. Box 660044
Dallas, Texas 75266-0044

Prescription Drug Claims

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas
c/o Prime Therapeutics LLC
P. O. Box 14624
Lexington, KY 40512-4624

Who Receives Payment

Benefit payments will be made directly to contracting Providers when they bill the Claims Administrator. Written agreements between the Claims Administrator and some Providers may require payment directly to them.

Any benefits payable to you, if unpaid at your death, will be paid to your surviving spouse, as beneficiary. If there is no surviving spouse, then the benefits will be paid to your estate.

Except as provided in the section **Assignment and Payment of Benefits**, rights and benefits under the Plan are not assignable, either before or after services and supplies are provided.

Benefit Payments to a Managing Conservator

Benefits for services provided to your minor Dependent child may be paid to a third party if:

- the third party is named in a court order as managing or possessory conservator of the child; and
- the Claims Administrator has not already paid any portion of the claim.

In order for benefits to be payable to a managing or possessory conservator of a child, the managing or possessory conservator must submit to the Claims Administrator, with the claim form, proof of payment of the expenses and a certified copy of the court order naming that person the managing or possessory conservator.

The Claims Administrator for the Health Benefit Plan may deduct from its benefit payment any amounts it is owed by the recipient of the payment. Payment to you or your Provider, or deduction by the Plan from benefit payments of amounts owed to it, will be considered in satisfaction of its obligations to you under the Plan.

An *Explanation of Benefits* summary is sent to you so you will know what has been paid.

CLAIM FILING AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

When to Submit Claims

All claims for benefits under the Health Benefit Plan must be properly submitted to the Claims Administrator within 15 months of the date you receive the services or supplies. Claims not submitted and received by the Claims Administrator within (15) fifteen months after that date will not be considered for payment of benefits except in the absence of legal capacity.

Receipt of Claims by the Claims Administrator

A claim will be considered received by the Claims Administrator for processing upon actual delivery to the Administrative Office of the Claims Administrator in the proper manner and form and with all of the information required. If the claim is not complete, it may be denied or the Claims Administrator may contact either you or the Provider for the additional information.

After processing the claim, the Claims Administrator will notify the Participant by way of an *Explanation of Benefits* summary.

REVIEW OF CLAIM DETERMINATIONS

Claim Determinations

When the Claims Administrator receives a properly submitted claim, it has authority and discretion under the Plan to interpret and determine benefits in accordance with the Health Benefit Plan provisions. The Claims Administrator will receive and review claims for benefits and will accurately process claims consistent with administrative practices and procedures established in writing between the Claims Administrator and the Plan Administrator. The Claims Administrator will render an initial decision to pay or deny a claim within 30 days of receipt of the claim. If the Claims Administrator requires further information in order to process the claim, the Claims Administrator will request it within that 30-day period.

You have the right to seek and obtain a full and fair review by the Claims Administrator of any determination of a claim, any determination of a request for preauthorization, or any other determination made by the Claims Administrator in accordance with the benefits and procedures detailed in your Health Benefit Plan.

If a Claim Is Denied or Not Paid in Full

On occasion, the Claims Administrator may deny all or part of your claim. There are a number of reasons why this may happen. We suggest that you first read the *Explanation of Benefits* summary prepared by the Claims Administrator; then review this Benefit Booklet to see whether you understand the reason for the determination. If you have additional information that you believe could change the decision, send it to the Claims Administrator and request a review of the decision. Include your full name, group and subscriber numbers with the request.

If the claim is denied in whole or in part, you will receive a written notice from the Claims Administrator with the following information, if applicable:

- The reasons for denial;
- A reference to the Health Benefit Plan provisions on which the denial is based;
- A description of additional information which may be necessary to complete the claim and an explanation of why such information is necessary; and
- An explanation of how you may have the claim reviewed by the Claims Administrator if you do not agree with the denial.

Right to Review Claim Determinations

You have the right to seek and obtain a full and fair review of any determination of a claim, any determination of a request for preauthorization, or any other determination made by the Claims Administrator in accordance with the benefits and procedures detailed in your Health Benefit Plan.

CLAIM FILING AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

If you believe the Claims Administrator incorrectly denied all or part of your benefits, you may have your claim reviewed. The Claims Administrator will review its decision in accordance with the following procedure:

- Within 180 days after you receive notice of a denial or partial denial, write to the Claims Administrator's Administrative Office. The Claims Administrator will need to know the reasons why you do not agree with the denial or partial denial. Send your request to:

Claim Review Section
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas
P. O. Box 660044
Dallas, Texas 75266-0044

- You may also designate a representative to act for you in the review procedure. Your designation of a representative must be in writing as it is necessary to protect against disclosure of information about you except to your authorized representative.
- The Claims Administrator will honor telephone requests for information, however, such inquiries will not constitute a request for review.
- You and your authorized representative may ask to see relevant documents and may submit written issues, comments and additional medical information within 180 days after you receive notice of a denial or partial denial. The Claims Administrator will give you a written decision within 60 days after it receives your request for review.
- If you have any questions about the claims procedures or the review procedure, write to the Claims Administrator's Administrative Office or call the toll-free Customer Service Helpline number shown in this Benefit Booklet or on your Identification Card.

Preauthorization Appeal Procedures

If you or your Physician disagree with the determination of the preauthorization prior to or while receiving services, you may appeal that decision by contacting the Claims Administrator's Administrative Office.

In some instances, the resolution of the appeal process will not be completed until your inpatient admission or service has occurred and/or your assigned length of stay/service has elapsed. If you disagree with a decision after claim processing has taken place or upon receipt of the notification letter from the Claims Administrator, you may request a review of that decision by having your Physician call the contact person indicated in the notification letter or by submitting a written request to:

Claim Review Section
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas
P. O. Box 660044
Dallas, Texas 75266-0044

Once you have requested this review, you may submit additional information and comments on your Preauthorization decision to the Claims Administrator as long as you do so within 30 days of the date you ask for a review. Also, during this 30-day period, you may review any documents relevant to your Preauthorization decision held by the Claims Administrator.

Within 30 days of receiving your request to review, the Claims Administrator will send you its decision on the claim. In unusual situations, an additional 15 days may be needed for the review and you will be notified of this during the first 30-day period.

Interpretation of Employer's Plan Provisions

The Plan Administrator has given the Claims Administrator the initial authority to establish or construe the terms and conditions of the Health Benefit Plan and the discretion to interpret and determine benefits in accordance with the Health Benefit Plan's provisions.

CLAIM FILING AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

The Plan Administrator has all powers and authority necessary or appropriate to control and manage the operation and administration of the Health Benefit Plan.

All powers to be exercised by the Claims Administrator or the Plan Administrator shall be exercised in a non-discriminatory manner and shall be applied uniformly to assure similar treatment to persons in similar circumstances.

Claim Dispute Resolution

You must exhaust all administrative remedies as described in the **Review of Claims Determinations** section prior to taking further action under your Health Benefit Plan.

After exhaustion of all remedies offered by the Claims Administrator, you may exercise your right to appeal all adverse determinations with the Plan Administrator of your Health Benefit Plan. The Plan Administrator is the final interpreter of the Health Benefit Plan and may correct any defect, supply any omission, or reconcile any inconsistency or ambiguity in such manner as it deems advisable. All final determinations and actions concerning the Health Benefit Plan administration and interpretation of benefits shall be made by the Plan Administrator. The Claims Administrator will cooperate in providing the Plan Administrator documents relevant to the claim or preauthorization decision upon receipt of a valid written authorization from you or your representative to release the relevant information.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES, PAYMENT OBLIGATIONS, AND BENEFITS

Eligible Expenses

The Plan provides coverage for four categories of Eligible Expenses:

- Inpatient Hospital Expenses,
- Medical–Surgical Expenses,
- Extended Care Expenses, and
- Special Provisions Expenses

Wherever Schedule of Coverage is mentioned, please refer to the Schedule(s) in this Benefit Booklet. Your benefits are calculated on a Calendar Year benefit period basis unless otherwise stated. At the end of a Calendar Year, a new benefit period starts for each Participant.

Copayment Amounts

Some of the care and treatment you receive under the Plan will require that a Copayment Amount be paid at the time you receive the services. Refer to your Schedule of Coverage under “Copayment Amounts Required” for your specific Plan information.

A Copayment Amount as indicated on your Schedule of Coverage will be required for each Physician office visit charge you incur when services are received by a family practitioner, a general practitioner, an obstetrician/gynecologist, a pediatrician, an internist or a Professional Other Provider and defined in the **DEFINITIONS** section of this Benefit Booklet. A Copayment Amount is required for the initial office visit for Maternity Care, but will not be required for subsequent visits.

A different Copayment Amount as indicated on your Schedule of Coverage will be required for each Physician office visit charge you incur when services are received by a Specialty Care Provider as classified by the American Board of Medical Specialties as a Specialty Care Provider.

The following services are not payable under this Copayment Amount provision but instead are considered Medical–Surgical Expense and may be subject to any Deductible shown on your Schedule of Coverage:

- surgery performed in the Physician’s office;
- physical therapy billed separately from an office visit;
- occupational modalities in conjunction with physical therapy;
- allergy injections billed separately from an office visit;
- therapeutic injections;
- any services requiring preauthorization;
- Certain Diagnostic Procedures;
- outpatient treatment therapies or services such as radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and renal dialysis.

A Copayment Amount will be required for facility charges for each Hospital outpatient emergency room visit. If admitted to the Hospital as a direct result of the emergency condition or accident, the Copayment Amount will be waived.

Deductibles

The benefits of the Plan will be available after satisfaction of the applicable Deductibles as shown on your Schedule of Coverage. The Deductibles are explained as follows:

Calendar Year Deductible: The individual Deductible amount shown under “Deductibles” on your Schedule of Coverage must be satisfied by each Participant under your coverage each Calendar Year. This Deductible, unless otherwise indicated, will be applied to all categories of Eligible Expenses before benefits are available under the Plan.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES, PAYMENT OBLIGATIONS, AND BENEFITS

The following are exceptions to the Deductibles described above:

Your Schedule of Coverage indicates “Three–Month Deductible carryover applies.” This means that any Eligible Expenses incurred during the last three months of a Calendar Year and applied toward satisfaction of the “Calendar Year Deductible” for that Calendar Year may be applied toward satisfaction of the Deductible for the following Calendar Year.

If you have several covered Dependents, all charges used to apply toward a “per individual” Deductible amount will be applied toward the “per family” Deductible amount shown on your Schedule of Coverage. When that family Deductible amount is reached, no further individual Deductibles will have to be satisfied for the remainder of that Calendar Year. No Participant will contribute more than the individual Deductible amount to the “per family” Deductible amount.

Eligible Expenses applied toward satisfying the “per individual” and “per family” Out–of–Network Deductible will apply toward both the Out–of–Network and the In–Network Deductible. However, Eligible Expenses applied toward satisfying the “per individual” and “per family” In–Network Deductible will not apply toward satisfying the Out–of–Network Deductible.

Co–Share Stop–Loss Amount

Most of your Eligible Expense payment obligations are considered Co–Share Amounts and are applied to the Co–Share Stop–Loss Amount maximum.

Your Co–Share Stop–Loss Amount will **not** include:

- Services, supplies, or charges limited or excluded by the Plan;
- Expenses not covered because a benefit maximum has been reached;
- Any Eligible Expenses paid by the Primary Plan when the Plan is the Secondary Plan for purposes of coordination of benefits;
- Any Deductibles;
- Copayment Amounts;
- Penalties applied for failure to preauthorize;
- Any Copayment Amounts paid under the Prescription Drug Program;
- Any remaining unpaid Medical–Surgical Expense in excess of the benefits provided for Covered Drugs if “Prescription Drug Program” is shown on your Schedule of Coverage.

Individual Co–Share Stop–Loss Amount

When the Co–Share Amount for the In–Network or Out–of–Network Benefits level for a Participant in a Calendar Year equals the “per individual” “Co–Share Stop–Loss Amount” shown on your Schedule of Coverage for that level, the benefit percentages automatically increase to 100% for purposes of determining the benefits available for additional Eligible Expenses incurred by that Participant for the remainder of that Calendar Year for that level.

Family Co–Share Stop–Loss Amount

When the Co–Share Amount for the In–Network or Out–of–Network Benefits level for all Participants under your coverage in a Calendar Year equals the “per family” “Co–Share Stop–Loss Amount” shown on your Schedule of Coverage for that level, the benefit percentages automatically increase to 100% for purposes of determining the benefits available for additional Eligible Expenses incurred by all family Participants for the remainder of that Calendar Year for that level. No Participant will be required to contribute more than the individual Co–Share Amount to the family “Co–Share Stop–Loss Amount.”

The following are exceptions to the Co–Share Stop–Loss Amounts described above:

There are separate Co–Share Stop–Loss Amounts for In–Network Benefits and Out–of–Network Benefits.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES, PAYMENT OBLIGATIONS, AND BENEFITS

Eligible Expenses applied toward satisfying the “per individual” and “per family” Out-of-Network Co-Share Stop-Loss Amount maximum will apply toward both the In-Network and Out-of-Network Co-Share Stop-Loss Amount. However, Eligible Expenses applied toward satisfying the “per individual” and “per family” In-Network Co-Share Stop-Loss Amount maximum will not apply toward satisfying the Out-of-Network Co-Share Stop-Loss Maximum amount.

Copayment Amounts for In-Network Benefits and Out-of-Network Benefits will continue to be required after the benefit percentages become 100%.

Maximum Lifetime Benefits

The total amount of benefits available to any one Participant under the Plan shall not exceed the “Maximum Lifetime Benefits” amount shown on your Schedule of Coverage.

This Maximum Lifetime Benefits amount includes:

1. All payments made by the Claims Administrator under any benefit provisions of the Plan including payments toward any other benefit maximums under the Plan.
2. Any benefits provided to a Participant under a Health Benefit Plan held by the City of Laredo with the Claims Administrator immediately prior to the Participant’s Effective Date of coverage under this Plan.

Changes In Benefits

Changes to covered benefits will apply to all services provided to each Participant under the Plan. Benefits for Eligible Expenses incurred during an admission in a Hospital or Facility Other Provider that begins before the change will be those benefits in effect on the day of admission.

COVERED MEDICAL SERVICES

Inpatient Hospital Expenses

The Plan provides coverage for Inpatient Hospital Expenses for you and your eligible Dependents. Each inpatient Hospital Admission requires preauthorization. Refer to the **PREAUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS** subsection of this Benefit Booklet for additional information.

The benefit percentage of your total eligible Inpatient Hospital Expense, in excess of any Deductible, shown under “Inpatient Hospital Expenses” on the Schedule of Coverage is the Plan’s obligation. The remaining unpaid Inpatient Hospital Expense, in excess of any Deductible, is your obligation to pay.

Services and supplies provided by an Out-of-Network Provider will receive In-Network Benefits when those services and supplies are not available from a Network Provider provided the Claims Administrator acknowledges your visit to an Out-of-Network Provider **prior** to the visit. Otherwise, Out-of-Network Benefits will be paid and the claim will have to be resubmitted for review and adjustment, if appropriate.

Refer to the Schedule of Coverage for information regarding Deductibles, Co-Share percentages, and penalties for failure to preauthorize that may apply to your coverage.

Medical-Surgical Expenses

The Plan provides coverage for Medical-Surgical Expense for you and your covered Dependents. Some services require preauthorization. Refer to the **PREAUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS** subsection of this Benefit Booklet for more information.

Copayment Amounts must be paid to your Network Physician or other Network Providers at the time you receive services.

The benefit percentages of your total eligible Medical-Surgical Expense shown under “Medical-Surgical Expenses” on the Schedule of Coverage in excess of your Copayment Amounts, Co-Share Amounts, and any applicable Deductibles shown are the Plan’s obligation. The remaining unpaid Medical-Surgical Expense in excess of the Copayment Amounts, Co-Share Amounts, and any Deductibles is your obligation to pay.

To calculate your benefits, subtract any applicable Copayment Amounts and Deductibles from your total eligible Medical-Surgical Expense and then multiply the difference by the benefit percentage shown on your Schedule of Coverage under “Medical-Surgical Expenses.” Most remaining unpaid Medical-Surgical Expense in excess of the Copayment Amounts and Deductible is your Co-Share Amount.

Medical-Surgical Expense shall include:

1. Services of Physicians and Professional Other Providers. If services are received from a Licensed Professional Counselor or Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, a professional recommendation should be obtained from the Physician.
2. Consultation services of a Physician and Professional Other Provider.
3. Services of a certified registered nurse-anesthetist (CRNA).
4. Diagnostic x-ray and laboratory procedures.
5. Radiation therapy.
6. Dietary formulas necessary for the treatment of phenylketonuria (PKU) or other heritable diseases.

COVERED MEDICAL SERVICES

7. Rental of durable medical equipment required for therapeutic use unless purchase of such equipment is required by the Plan. The term “durable medical equipment (DME)” shall not include:
 - a. Equipment primarily designed for alleviation of pain or provision of patient comfort; or
 - b. Home air fluidized bed therapy.

Examples of non-covered equipment include, but are not limited to, air conditioners, air purifiers, humidifiers, physical fitness equipment, and whirlpool bath equipment.
8. Professional local ground ambulance service or air ambulance service to the nearest Hospital appropriately equipped and staffed for treatment of the Participant’s condition.
9. Anesthetics and its administration, when performed by someone other than the operating Physician or Professional Other Provider.
10. Oxygen and its administration provided the oxygen is actually used.
11. Blood, including cost of blood, blood plasma, and blood plasma expanders, which is not replaced by or for the Participant.
12. Prosthetic Appliances, including replacements necessitated by growth to maturity of the Participant.
13. Orthopedic braces (i.e., an orthopedic appliance used to support, align, or hold bodily parts in a correct position) and crutches, including rigid back, leg or neck braces, casts for treatment of any part of the legs, arms, shoulders, hips or back; special surgical and back corsets, Physician-prescribed, directed, or applied dressings, bandages, trusses, and splints which are custom designed for the purpose of assisting the function of a joint.
14. Home Infusion Therapy.
15. Services or supplies used by the Participant during an outpatient visit to a Hospital, a Therapeutic Center, or a Chemical Dependency Treatment Center, or scheduled services in the outpatient treatment room of a Hospital.
16. Certain Diagnostic Procedures.
17. Outpatient Contraceptive Services, prescription contraceptive devices, and prescription oral contraceptive medications. NOTE: Prescription oral contraceptive medications are covered under the **PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM** portion of your Plan.
18. Foot care in connection with an illness, disease, or condition, such as but not limited to peripheral neuropathy, chronic venous insufficiency, and diabetes.
19. Injectable drugs, administered by or under the direction or supervision of a Physician or Professional Other Provider.

Extended Care Expenses

The Plan also provides benefits for Extended Care Expenses for you and your covered Dependents. All Extended Care Expenses requires preauthorization. Refer to the **PREAUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS** subsection of this Benefit Booklet for more information.

The Plan’s benefit obligation as shown on your Schedule of Coverage will be:

1. At the benefit percentage under “Extended Care Expenses,” and

COVERED MEDICAL SERVICES

- Up to the amount of the combined benefit maximums shown for each category of Extended Care Expenses on your Schedule of Coverage.

All payments made by the Plan, whether under the In–Network or Out–of–Network Benefit level, will apply toward the benefit maximums under both levels of benefits.

The benefit maximums will also include any benefits provided to a Participant for Extended Care Expenses under a Health Benefit Plan held by the City of Laredo with the Claims Administrator immediately prior to the Participant's Effective Date of coverage under the Plan.

If shown on your Schedule of Coverage, the Calendar Year Deductible will apply. Any unpaid Extended Care Expenses in excess of the benefit maximums shown on your Schedule of Coverage will not be applied to any Co–Share Stop–Loss Amount.

Any charges incurred as Home Health Care or home Hospice Care for drugs (including antibiotic therapy) and laboratory services will not be Extended Care Expenses but will be considered Medical–Surgical Expenses.

Services and supplies for Extended Care Expenses:

- For Skilled Nursing Facility:
 - All usual nursing care by a Registered Nurse (R.N.), Advanced Practice Nurse (A.P.N.), or by a Licensed Vocational Nurse (L.V.N.);
 - Room and board and all routine services, supplies, and equipment provided by the Skilled Nursing Facility;
 - Physical, occupational, speech, and respiratory therapy services by licensed therapists.
- For Home Health Care:
 - Part–time or intermittent nursing care by a Registered Nurse (R.N.), Advanced Practice Nurse (A.P.N.), or by a Licensed Vocational Nurse (L.V.N.);
 - Part–time or intermittent home health aide services which consist primarily of caring for the patient;
 - Physical, occupational, speech, and respiratory therapy services by licensed therapists;
 - Supplies and equipment routinely provided by the Home Health Agency.

Benefits will **not** be provided for Home Health Care for the following:

- Food or home delivered meals;
- Social case work or homemaker services;
- Services provided primarily for Custodial Care;
- Transportation services;
- Home Infusion Therapy;
- Durable medical equipment.

- For Hospice Care:

Home Hospice Care:

- Part–time or intermittent nursing care by a Registered Nurse (R.N.), Advanced Practice Nurse (A.P.N.), or by a Licensed Vocational Nurse (L.V.N.);
- Part–time or intermittent home health aide services which consist primarily of caring for the patient;
- Physical, speech, and respiratory therapy services by licensed therapists;
- Homemaker and counseling services routinely provided by the Hospice agency, including bereavement counseling.

Facility Hospice Care:

- All usual nursing care by a Registered Nurse (R.N.), Advanced Practice Nurse (A.P.N.), or by a Licensed Vocational Nurse (L.V.N.);

COVERED MEDICAL SERVICES

- b. Room and board and all routine services, supplies, and equipment provided by the Hospice facility;
- c. Physical, speech, and respiratory therapy services by licensed therapists.

Special Provisions Expenses

The benefits available under this **Special Provisions Expenses** subsection are generally determined on the same basis as other Inpatient Hospital Expenses, Medical–Surgical Expenses, and Extended Care Expenses, except to the extent described in each item. Benefits for Medically Necessary expenses will be determined as indicated on your Schedule(s) of Coverage. Remember that certain services require preauthorization and that any Copayment Amounts, Co–Share Amounts, and Deductibles shown on your Schedule(s) of Coverage will also apply. Refer to the **PREAUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS** section of this Benefit Booklet for more information.

Benefits for Treatment of Complications of Pregnancy

Benefits for Eligible Expenses incurred for treatment of Complications of Pregnancy will be determined on the same basis as treatment for any other sickness.

Benefits for Maternity Care

Benefits for Eligible Expenses incurred for Maternity Care will be determined on the same basis as for any other treatment of sickness. Dependent children will be eligible for Maternity Care benefits.

Services and supplies incurred by a Participant for delivery of a child shall be considered Maternity Care and are subject to all provisions of the Plan.

The Plan provides coverage for inpatient care for the mother and newborn child in a health care facility for a minimum of:

- 48 hours following an uncomplicated vaginal delivery; and
- 96 hours following an uncomplicated delivery by caesarean section.

If the mother or newborn is discharged before the minimum hours of coverage, the Plan provides coverage for *Postdelivery Care* for the mother and newborn. The *Postdelivery Care* may be provided at the mother’s home, a health care Provider’s office, or a health care facility.

Postdelivery Care means postpartum health care services provided in accordance with accepted maternal and neonatal physical assessments. The term includes:

- parent education,
- assistance and training in breast–feeding and bottle feeding, and
- the performance of any necessary and appropriate clinical tests.

Charges for well–baby nursery care, including the initial examination, of a newborn child during the mother’s Hospital Admission for the delivery will be considered Inpatient Hospital Expense of the child and will be subject to the benefit provisions and benefit maximums as described under **Inpatient Hospital Expenses**. Benefits will also be subject to any Deductible amounts shown on your Schedule of Coverage.

Benefits for Treatment of Chemical Dependency

Benefits for Eligible Expenses incurred for the treatment of Chemical Dependency will be the same as for treatment of any other sickness. Your specific benefits are shown on your Schedule of Coverage. Refer to the **PREAUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS** subsection to determine what services require preauthorization.

Coverage for treatment of Chemical Dependency will be limited to a maximum of three separate series of treatments for each covered individual. The Plan may use state guidelines to administer benefits for treatment of Chemical Dependency. Inpatient treatment of Chemical Dependency must be provided in a Chemical Dependency Treatment Center. Benefits for the medical management of acute life–threatening intoxication

COVERED MEDICAL SERVICES

(toxicity) in a Hospital will be available on the same basis as for sickness generally as described under **Benefits for Inpatient Hospital Expenses**.

All payments made by the Plan, whether under the In–Network or Out–of–Network Benefit level, will apply towards the “Maximum Lifetime Benefits” amount indicated on your Schedule of Coverage.

Mental Health Care provided as part of the Medically Necessary treatment of Chemical Dependency will be considered for benefit purposes to be treatment of Chemical Dependency until completion of the series of Chemical Dependency treatments. (Mental Health Care treatment after completion of a series of Chemical Dependency treatments will be considered Mental Health Care.)

Benefits for Serious Mental Illness

Benefits for Eligible Expenses incurred for the treatment of Serious Mental Illness are shown on your Schedule of Coverage. Refer to the **PREAUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS** subsection to determine what services require preauthorization.

Medically Necessary services for Serious Mental Illness in a Psychiatric Day Treatment Facility, a Crisis Stabilization Unit or Facility, or a Residential Treatment Center for Children and Adolescents in lieu of hospitalization will be considered Inpatient Hospital Expense. The Inpatient Hospital Expense benefit percentages for this Plan and any Deductible as shown on your Schedule of Coverage will apply.

All outpatient Physician and/or Professional Other Provider and other outpatient visit benefits used, whether In–Network or Out–of–Network, apply to outpatient visits shown on the Schedule of Coverage under each level of benefits.

The benefits provided for Serious Mental Illness will not exceed the “Maximum Lifetime Benefits” amount shown on your Schedule of Coverage.

The lifetime maximum under each level of benefits will also include any benefits provided to a Participant for Serious Mental Illness under a Health Benefit Plan held by the City of Laredo with the Claims Administrator immediately prior to the Participant’s Effective Date of coverage under this Plan.

Benefits for Mental Health Care

Benefits for Eligible Expenses incurred for the treatment of Mental Health Care are shown on your Schedule of Coverage. Refer to the **PREAUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS** subsection to determine what services require preauthorization.

Medically Necessary services for Mental Health Care in a Psychiatric Day Treatment Facility, a Crisis Stabilization Unit or Facility, or a Residential Treatment Center for Children and Adolescents in lieu of hospitalization will be considered Inpatient Hospital Expense. The Inpatient Hospital Expense benefit percentages for this Plan and any Deductible as shown on your Schedule of Coverage will apply. Each full day of treatment in such facility will be considered equal to one–half of one day of a regular Hospital Admission for Mental Health Care.

Inpatient Hospital Expenses for Mental Health Care will be limited to the number of inpatient days per Calendar Year shown on your Schedule of Coverage.

Medical–Surgical Expenses incurred for Mental Health Care will be limited to the number of inpatient Physician and/or Professional Other Provider visits per Calendar Year shown on your Schedule of Coverage.

Benefits for Medical–Surgical Expenses incurred for Mental Health Care will be limited to the combined number of outpatient Physician and/or Professional Other Provider or other outpatient visits per Calendar Year.

All inpatient benefits used, including Hospital days and Physician/Professional Other Provider visits, whether In–Network or Out–of–Network, apply to inpatient days or visits shown on the Schedule of Coverage under each level of benefits.

COVERED MEDICAL SERVICES

All outpatient Physician and/or Professional Other Provider and other outpatient visit benefits used, whether In–Network or Out–of–Network, apply to outpatient visits shown on the Schedule of Coverage under each level of benefits.

The benefits provided for Mental Health Care will not exceed the “Maximum Lifetime Benefits” amount shown on your Schedule of Coverage.

The lifetime maximum under each level of benefits will also include any benefits provided to a Participant for Mental Health Care under a Health Benefit Plan held by the City of Laredo with the Claims Administrator immediately prior to the Participant’s Effective Date of coverage under this Plan.

Benefits for Emergency Care and Treatment of Accidental Injury

The Plan provides coverage for medical emergencies wherever they occur. Examples of medical emergencies are unusual or excessive bleeding, broken bones, acute abdominal or chest pain, unconsciousness, convulsions, difficult breathing, suspected heart attack, sudden persistent pain, severe or multiple injuries or burns, and poisonings.

Benefits for Eligible Expenses for Accidental Injury or Emergency Care will be determined on the same basis as for treatment of any other sickness. If admitted for the emergency condition as a direct result of the outpatient Hospital emergency room visit, preauthorization of the inpatient Hospital admission will be required.

If reasonably possible, contact your Network Physician before going to the Hospital emergency room. He can help you determine if you need Emergency Care or treatment of an Accidental Injury and recommend that care. If not reasonably possible, go to the nearest emergency facility, whether or not the facility is in the Network.

Whether you require hospitalization or not, you should notify your Network Physician within 48 hours, or as soon as reasonably possible, of any emergency medical treatment so he can recommend the continuation of any necessary medical services.

Benefits for Eligible Expenses for Accidental Injury or Emergency Care will be determined as shown on your Schedule of Coverage. Copayment Amounts will be required for facility charges for each outpatient Hospital emergency room visit as indicated on your Schedule of Coverage. If admitted for the emergency condition immediately following the visit, the Copayment Amount will be waived. If admitted for the emergency condition immediately following the visit, preauthorization of the inpatient Hospital Admission will be required.

All treatment received during the first 72 hours following the onset of a medical emergency will be eligible for In–Network Benefits. After 72 hours, In–Network Benefits will be available only if you use Network Providers. If after the first 48 hours of treatment following the onset of a medical emergency, and if you can safely be transferred to the care of a Network Provider but are treated by an Out–of–Network Provider, only Out–of–Network Benefits will be available .

Benefits for Preventive Care

Benefits for Medical–Surgical Expense are available for the following preventive care services as indicated on your Schedule of Coverage:

- well–baby care (after the newborn’s initial examination and discharge from the Hospital);
- routine annual physical examination;
- annual hearing examinations, except for benefits as provided under ***Benefits for Screening Tests for Hearing Impairment***;
- immunizations for Participants age six and over.

Benefits for childhood immunizations will be provided as described in ***Benefits for Childhood Immunizations*** for children under the age of six. Benefits are not available for Inpatient Hospital Expense or Medical–Surgical Expenses for routine physical examinations performed on an inpatient basis, except for the initial examination of a newborn child.

COVERED MEDICAL SERVICES

Benefits for preventive care services will be calculated at the benefit percentage shown on your Schedule of Coverage for services listed above up to the maximum benefit amount shown under "Preventive Care Benefits." This maximum benefit amount is for the indicated period of time which starts on the first day an Eligible Expense is incurred. After that period of time has elapsed, a new maximum benefit amount begins again. The benefit period and maximum benefit amount are applicable to each Participant individually.

Injections for allergies are not considered immunizations under this benefit provision.

Benefits for Mammography Screening

If a Participant 35 years of age and older incurs Medical–Surgical Expenses for a screening by low–dose mammography for the presence of occult breast cancer, benefits will be determined on the same basis as for other Medical–Surgical Expense as shown on your Schedule of Coverage, except that benefits will not be available for more than one routine mammography screening each Calendar Year.

Benefits for Detection and Prevention of Osteoporosis

If a Participant is a *Qualified Individual*, Medical–Surgical Expenses benefits will be determined on the same basis as any other sickness for medically accepted bone mass measurement for the detection of low bone mass and to determine a Participant's risk of osteoporosis and fractures associated with osteoporosis.

Qualified Individual means:

- a. A postmenopausal woman not receiving estrogen replacement therapy;
- b. An individual with:
 - vertebral abnormalities,
 - primary hyperparathyroidism, or
 - a history of bone fractures; or
- c. An individual who is:
 - receiving long–term glucocorticoid therapy, or
 - being monitored to assess the response to or efficacy of an approved osteoporosis drug therapy.

Benefits for Tests for Detection of Colorectal Cancer

Benefits for Medical–Surgical Expenses incurred for a diagnostic, medically recognized screening examination for the detection of colorectal cancer, for Participants who are 50 years of age or older and who are at normal risk for developing colon cancer, will be determined under Preventive Care:

- A fecal occult blood test performed annually and a flexible sigmoidoscopy performed every five years; or
- A colonoscopy performed every ten years.

Benefits for Certain Tests for Detection of Prostate Cancer

If a male Participant incurs Medical–Surgical Expenses for diagnostic medical procedures incurred in conducting an annual medically recognized diagnostic examination for the detection of prostate cancer, benefits will be provided only for a:

- a. physical examination for the detection of prostate cancer; and
- b. prostate–specific antigen test used for the detection of prostate cancer for each male under the Plan who is at least:
 - (1) 50 years of age and asymptomatic; or
 - (2) 40 years of age with a family history of prostate cancer or another prostate cancer risk factor.

COVERED MEDICAL SERVICES

Benefits for Speech and Hearing Services

Benefits as shown on your Schedule of Coverage are available for the services of a Physician or Professional Other Provider to restore loss of or correct an impaired speech or hearing function.

Any benefit payments made by the Claims Administrator for hearing aids, whether under the In–Network Benefits or Out–of–Network Benefits level, will apply toward the benefit maximum amount indicated on the Schedule of Coverage for each level of benefits.

Benefits for Cosmetic, Reconstructive, or Plastic Surgery

The following Eligible Expenses described below for Cosmetic, Reconstructive, or Plastic Surgery will be the same as for treatment of any other sickness as shown on your Schedule of Coverage:

- Treatment provided for the correction of defects incurred in an Accidental Injury sustained by the Participant; or
- Treatment provided for reconstructive surgery following cancer surgery; or
- Surgery performed on a newborn child for the treatment or correction of a congenital defect; or
- Surgery performed on a covered Dependent child (other than a newborn child) under the age of 19 for the treatment or correction of a congenital defect other than conditions of the breast; or
- Reconstruction of the breast on which mastectomy has been performed; surgery and reconstruction of the other breast to achieve a symmetrical appearance; and prostheses and treatment of physical complications, including lymphedemas, at all stages of the mastectomy; or
- Reconstructive surgery performed on a covered Dependent child under the age of 19 due to craniofacial abnormalities to improve the function of, or attempt to create a normal appearance of an abnormal structure caused by congenital defects, developmental deformities, trauma, tumors, infections, or disease.

Benefits for Organ and Tissue Transplants

a. Subject to the conditions described below, benefits for covered services and supplies provided to a Participant by a Hospital, Physician, or Other Provider related to an organ or tissue transplant will be determined as follows, but only if all the following conditions are met:

- (1) The transplant procedure is not Experimental/Investigational in nature; and
- (2) Donated human organs or tissue or an FDA–approved artificial device are used; and
- (3) The recipient is a Participant under the Plan; and
- (4) The transplant procedure is preauthorized as required under the Plan; and
- (5) The Participant meets all of the criteria established by BCBSTX in pertinent written medical policies; and
- (6) The Participant meets all of the protocols established by the Hospital in which the transplant is performed.

Covered services and supplies “related to” an organ or tissue transplant include, but are not limited to, x–rays, laboratory testing, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, prescription drugs, procurement of organs or tissues from a living or deceased donor, and complications arising from such transplant.

b. Benefits are available and will be determined on the same basis as any other sickness when the transplant procedure is considered Medically Necessary and meets all of the conditions cited above.

Benefits will be available for:

- (1) A recipient who is covered under this Plan; and
- (2) A donor who is a Participant under this Plan.

Benefits for the recipient and the donor will be provided up to the recipient’s “Maximum Lifetime Benefits” amount shown on the Schedule of Coverage. Once the lifetime maximum amount has been exhausted, no further benefits will be available under the Plan.

COVERED MEDICAL SERVICES

- c. Covered services and supplies include services and supplies provided for the:
- (1) Evaluation of organs or tissues including, but not limited to, the determination of tissue matches; and
 - (2) Removal of organs or tissues from living or deceased donors; and
 - (3) Transportation and short-term storage of donated organs or tissues.
- d. No benefits are available for a Participant for the following services or supplies:
- (1) Living and/or travel expenses of the recipient or a live donor;
 - (2) Donor search and acceptability testing of potential live donors;
 - (3) Expenses related to maintenance of life of a donor for purposes of organ or tissue donation;
 - (4) Purchase of the organ or tissue; or
 - (5) Organs or tissue (xenograft) obtained from another species.
- e. Preauthorization is required for any organ or tissue transplant. Review the **PREAUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS** section in this Benefit Booklet for more specific information about preauthorization.
- (1) Such specific preauthorization is required even if the patient is already a patient in a Hospital under another preauthorization authorization.
 - (2) At the time of preauthorization, the Claims Administrator will assign a length-of-stay for the admission. Upon request, the length-of-stay may be extended if the Claims Administrator determines that an extension is Medically Necessary.
- f. No benefits are available for any organ or tissue transplant procedure (or the services performed in preparation for, or in conjunction with, such a procedure) which the Claims Administrator considers to be Experimental/Investigational.

Benefits for Treatment of Diabetes

Benefits are available and will be determined on the same basis as any other sickness for those Medically Necessary items for *Diabetes Equipment* and *Diabetes Supplies* (for which a Physician or Professional Other Provider has written an order) and *Diabetic Management Services/Diabetes Self-Management Training*. Such items, when obtained for a *Qualified Participant*, shall include but not be limited to the following:

a. *Diabetes Equipment*

- (1) Blood glucose monitors (including noninvasive glucose monitors and monitors for the blind);
- (2) Insulin pumps (both external and implantable) and associated appurtenances, which include:
 - Insulin infusion devices,
 - Batteries,
 - Skin preparation items,
 - Adhesive supplies,
 - Infusion sets,
 - Insulin cartridges,
 - Durable and disposable devices to assist in the injection of insulin, and
 - Other required disposable supplies; and
- (3) Podiatric appliances, including up to two pairs of therapeutic footwear per Calendar Year, for the prevention of complications associated with diabetes.

b. *Diabetes Supplies*

- (1) Test strips for blood glucose monitors,

COVERED MEDICAL SERVICES

- (2) Visual reading and urine test strips and tablets for glucose, ketones, and protein,
- (3) Lancets and lancet devices,
- (4) Insulin and insulin analog preparations,
- (5) Injection aids, including devices used to assist with insulin injection and needleless systems,
- (6) Biohazard disposable containers,
- (7) Insulin syringes,
- (8) Prescriptive and non-prescriptive oral agents for controlling blood sugar levels, and
- (9) Glucagon emergency kits.

NOTE: *Insulin and insulin analog preparations, insulin syringes necessary for self-administration, glucometers, prescriptive and non-prescriptive oral agents along with all required test strips, tablets for glucose, ketones, and protein, lancets, and other injection aids will be covered under the Prescription Drug Program.*

- c. Repairs and necessary maintenance of insulin pumps not otherwise provided for under the manufacturer's warranty or purchase agreement, rental fees for pumps during the repair and necessary maintenance of insulin pumps, neither of which shall exceed the purchase price of a similar replacement pump.
- d. As new or improved treatment and monitoring equipment or supplies become available and are approved by the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), such equipment or supplies may be covered if determined to be Medically Necessary and appropriate by the treating Physician or Professional Other Provider who issues the written order for the supplies or equipment.
- e. Medical-Surgical Expense provided for the nutritional, educational, and psychosocial treatment of the *Qualified Participant*. Such *Diabetic Management Services/Diabetes Self-Management Training* for which a Physician or Professional Other Provider has written an order to the Participant or caretaker of the Participant is limited to the following when rendered by or under the direction of a Physician.

Initial and follow-up instruction concerning:

- (1) The physical cause and process of diabetes;
- (2) Nutrition, exercise, medications, monitoring of laboratory values and the interaction of these in the effective self-management of diabetes;
- (3) Prevention and treatment of special health problems for the diabetic patient;
- (4) Adjustment to lifestyle modifications; and
- (5) Family involvement in the care and treatment of the diabetic patient. The family will be included in certain sessions of instruction for the patient.

Diabetes Self-Management Training for the *Qualified Participant* will include the development of an individualized management plan that is created for and in collaboration with the *Qualified Participant* (and/or his or her family) to understand the care and management of diabetes, including nutritional counseling and proper use of *Diabetes Equipment* and *Diabetes Supplies*.

COVERED MEDICAL SERVICES

A *Qualified Participant* means an individual eligible for coverage under this Contract who has been diagnosed with (a) insulin dependent or non-insulin dependent diabetes, (b) elevated blood glucose levels induced by pregnancy, or (c) another medical condition associated with elevated blood glucose levels.

Benefits for Physical Medicine Services

Benefits for Medical–Surgical Expenses incurred for Physical Medicine Services are available and will be determined up to the maximum benefit amount shown on your Schedule of Coverage.

All benefit payments made by the Claims Administrator for Physical Medicine Services, whether under the In–Network or Out–of–Network Benefits level, will apply toward the benefit maximum under each level of benefits.

The Calendar Year maximum under each level of benefits will also include any benefits provided to a Participant for Physical Medicine Services under a Health Benefit Plan held by the City of Laredo with the Claims Administrator immediately prior to the Participant’s Effective Date of coverage under this Plan.

Benefits for Chiropractic Services

Benefits for Medical–Surgical Expenses incurred for Chiropractic Services are available and will be determined up to the maximum benefit amount shown on your Schedule of Coverage.

All benefit payments made by the Claims Administrator for Chiropractic Services, whether under the In–Network or Out–of–Network Benefits level, will apply toward the benefit maximum under each level of benefits.

The Calendar Year maximum under each level of benefits will also include any benefits provided to a Participant for Chiropractic Services under a Health Benefit Plan held by the City of Laredo with the Claims Administrator immediately prior to the Participant’s Effective Date of coverage under this Plan.

MEDICAL LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

The benefits as described in this Benefit Booklet are not available for:

1. Any services or supplies which are not Medically Necessary and essential to the diagnosis or direct care and treatment of a sickness, injury, condition, disease, or bodily malfunction.
2. Any Experimental/Investigational services and supplies.
3. Any portion of a charge for a service or supply that is in excess of the Allowable Amount as determined by the Claims Administrator.
4. Any services or supplies provided in connection with an occupational sickness or an injury sustained in the scope of and in the course of any employment whether or not benefits are, or could upon proper claim be, provided under the Workers' Compensation law.
5. Any services or supplies for which benefits are, or could upon proper claim be, provided under any present or future laws enacted by the Legislature of any state, or by the Congress of the United States, or any laws, regulations or established procedures of any county or municipality, except any program which is a state plan for medical assistance (Medicaid); provided, however, that this exclusion shall not be applicable to any coverage held by the Participant for hospitalization and/or medical–surgical expenses which is written as a part of or in conjunction with any automobile casualty insurance policy.
6. Any services or supplies for which a Participant is not required to make payment or for which a Participant would have no legal obligation to pay in the absence of this or any similar coverage, except services or supplies for treatment of mental illness or mental retardation provided by a tax supported institution of the State of Texas.
7. Any services or supplies provided by a person who is related to the Participant by blood or marriage.
8. Any services or supplies provided for injuries sustained:
 - As a result of war, declared or undeclared, or any act of war; or
 - While on active or reserve duty in the armed forces of any country or international authority.
9. Any charges:
 - Resulting from the failure to keep a scheduled visit with a Physician or Professional Other Provider; or
 - For completion of any insurance forms; or
 - For acquisition of medical records.
10. Room and board charges incurred during a Hospital Admission for diagnostic or evaluation procedures unless the tests could not have been performed on an outpatient basis without adversely affecting the Participant's physical condition or the quality of medical care provided.
11. Any services or supplies provided before the patient is covered as a Participant hereunder or any services or supplies provided after the termination of the Participant's coverage.
12. Any services or supplies provided for Dietary and Nutritional Services, except as may be provided under the Plan for:
 - an inpatient nutritional assessment program provided in and by a Hospital and approved by BCBSTX; or
 - ***Benefits for Treatment of Diabetes*** as described in **Special Provisions Expenses**
13. Any services or supplies provided for Custodial Care.

MEDICAL LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

14. Any non–surgical (dental restorations, orthodontics, or physical therapy) or non–diagnostic services or supplies (oral appliances, oral splints, oral orthotics, devices, or prosthetics) provided for the treatment of the temporomandibular joint (including the jaw and craniomandibular joint) and all adjacent or related muscles.
15. Any items of Medical–Surgical Expenses incurred for dental care and treatments, Covered Oral Surgery, or dental appliances, except as provided for in the *Benefits for Dental Services* provision in the **Special Provisions Expenses** portion of this Benefit Booklet.
16. Any services or supplies provided for Cosmetic, Reconstructive, or Plastic Surgery, except as provided for in the *Benefits for Cosmetic, Reconstructive, or Plastic Surgery* provision in the **Special Provisions Expenses** portion of this Benefit Booklet.
17. Any services or supplies provided for:
 - Treatment of myopia and other errors of refraction, including refractive surgery; or
 - Orthoptics or visual training; or
 - Eyeglasses or contact lenses, provided that intraocular lenses shall be specific exceptions to this exclusion; or
 - Examinations for the prescription or fitting of eyeglasses or contact lenses, except as may be provided under the *Benefits for Preventive Care* provision in the **Special Provisions Expenses** portion of this Benefit Booklet; or
 - Restoration of loss or correction to an impaired speech or hearing function, except as may be provided under the *Benefits for Speech and Hearing Services* provision in the **Special Provisions Expenses** portion of this Benefit Booklet.
18. Except as specifically included as an Eligible Expense, any Medical Social Services, any outpatient family counseling and/or therapy, bereavement counseling, vocational counseling, or Marriage and Family Therapy and/or counseling.
19. Any services or supplies provided for treatment of adolescent behavior disorders, including conduct disorders and opposition disorders.
20. Any occupational therapy services which do not consist of traditional physical therapy modalities and which are not part of an active multi–disciplinary physical rehabilitation program designed to restore lost or impaired body function.
21. Travel or ambulance services because it is more convenient for the patient than other modes of transportation whether or not recommended by a Physician or Professional Other Provider.
22. Any services or supplies provided primarily for:
 - Environmental Sensitivity;
 - Clinical Ecology or any similar treatment not recognized as safe and effective by the American Academy of Allergists and Immunologists; or
 - Inpatient allergy testing or treatment.
23. Any services or supplies provided as, or in conjunction with, chelation therapy, except for treatment of acute metal poisoning.
24. Any services or supplies provided for, in preparation for, or in conjunction with:
 - Sterilization reversal (male or female);
 - Transsexual surgery;
 - Sexual dysfunctions;
 - In vitro fertilization; and
 - Promotion of fertility through extra–coital reproductive technologies including, but not limited to, artificial insemination, intrauterine insemination, super ovulation uterine capacitation enhancement, direct intra–peritoneal insemination, trans–uterine tubal insemination, gamete intra–fallopian transfer, pronuclear oocyte stage transfer, zygote intra–fallopian transfer, and tubal embryo transfer.

MEDICAL LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

25. Any services or supplies in connection with routine foot care, including the removal of warts, corns, or calluses, or the cutting and trimming of toenails in the absence of severe systemic disease.
26. Any services or supplies in connection with foot care for flat feet, fallen arches, and chronic foot strain.
27. Any prescription antiseptic or fluoride mouthwashes, mouth rinses, or topical oral solutions or preparations.
28. Services or supplies for smoking cessation programs and the treatment of nicotine addiction.
29. Any services or supplies provided for the following treatment modalities:
 - acupuncture;
 - intersegmental traction;
 - surface EMGs;
 - spinal manipulation under anesthesia; and
 - muscle testing through computerized kinesiology machines such as Isostation, Digital Myograph and Dynatron.
30. Any *unapproved services or supplies* furnished by a Contracting Facility to the extent benefits would exceed the amount payable for those services or supplies at the Out-of-Network benefit level. *Unapproved services or supplies* are those services or supplies that have not been specifically approved to be furnished by a Contracting Facility under a written agreement between the Contracting Facility and the Claims Administrator.
31. Any items that include, but are not limited to, an orthodontic or other dental appliance; splints or bandages provided by a Physician in a non-hospital setting or purchased "over the counter" for support of strains and sprains; orthopedic shoes which are a separable part of a covered brace, specially ordered, custom-made or built-up shoes, cast shoes, shoe inserts designed to support the arch or affect changes in the foot or foot alignment, arch supports, elastic stockings and garter belts.

Note: This exclusion does not apply to podiatric appliances when provided as Diabetic Equipment.
32. Any item of expense after any specified dollar, day/visit, Calendar Year, or lifetime maximum or limit applicable to that type of expense has been paid.
33. Any services and supplies provided to a Participant incurred outside the United States if the Participant traveled to the location for the purposes of receiving medical services, supplies, or drugs, except:
 - (a) claims from Nuevo Laredo when duly verified and substantiated by the City of Laredo,
 - (b) accidents incurred in the interior of Mexico when duly verified and substantiated, or
 - (c) emergency situations (please refer to the definition of "Extenuating Circumstances").
34. Donor expenses for a Participant in connection with an organ and tissue transplant if the recipient is not covered under this Plan.
35. Replacement Prosthetic Appliances except those necessitated by growth due to maturity of the Participant.
36. Private duty nursing services, except for covered Extended Care Expenses.
37. Any Covered Drugs for which benefits are available under the Prescription Drug Program.
38. Any outpatient prescription or nonprescription drugs.
39. Any services or supplies provided for reduction mammoplasty.
40. Any services or supplies provided for reduction of obesity or weight, including surgical procedures, even if the Participant has other health conditions which might be helped by a reduction of obesity or weight.

MEDICAL LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

41. Any services or supplies provided for the following:

- Cognitive rehabilitation therapy – *Services* designed to address therapeutic cognitive activities, based on an assessment and understanding of the individual’s brain–behavioral deficits;
- Cognitive communication therapy – *Services* designed to address modalities of comprehension and expression, including understanding, reading, writing, and verbal expression of information;
- Neurocognitive rehabilitation – *Services* designed to assist cognitively impaired individuals to compensate for deficits in cognitive functioning by rebuilding cognitive skills and/or developing compensatory strategies and techniques;
- Neurocognitive therapy – *Services* designed to address neurological deficits in informational processing and to facilitate the development of higher level cognitive abilities;
- Neurofeedback therapy – *Services* that utilize operant conditioning learning procedure based on electroencephalography (EEG) parameters, and which are designed to result in improved mental performance and behavior, and stabilized mood;
- Post–acute transition services – *Services* that facilitate the continuum of care beyond the initial neurological insult through rehabilitation and community reintegration; and
- Community reintegration services – *Services* that facilitate the continuum of care as an affected individual transitions into the community.

42. Any services or supplies not specifically defined as Eligible Expenses in this Plan.

DEFINITIONS

The definitions used in this Benefit Booklet apply to all coverage unless otherwise indicated.

Accidental Injury means accidental bodily injury resulting, directly and independently of all other causes, in initial necessary care provided by a Physician or Professional Other Provider.

Acquired Brain Injury means a neurological insult to the brain, which is not hereditary, congenital, or degenerative. The injury to the brain has occurred after birth and results in a change in neuronal activity, which results in an impairment of physical functioning, sensory processing, cognition, or psychosocial behavior.

Actively at Work: An Employee will be considered actively at work with the Employer if the Employee is a regular full-time with benefits or regular part-time Employee with benefits. An Employee will also be considered actively at work on any day when on Worker's Compensation, Serious Illness Program or any other approved leave without pay as defined by the City of Laredo.

Allowable Amount means the maximum amount determined by the Claims Administrator (BCBSTX) to be eligible for consideration of payment for a particular service, supply, or procedure.

- ***For Hospitals and Facility Other Providers, Physicians, and Professional Other Providers contracting with the Claims Administrator in Texas or any other Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plan*** – The Allowable Amount is based on the terms of the Provider contract and the payment methodology in effect on the date of service. The payment methodology used may include diagnosis-related groups (DRG), fee schedule, package pricing, global pricing, per diems, case-rates, discounts, or other payment methodologies.
- ***For Hospitals and Facility Other Providers not contracting with the Claims Administrator in Texas or any other Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plan outside of Texas*** – The Allowable Amount will be the amount the Claims Administrator would have considered for payment for the same procedure, service, or supply at an equivalent contracting Hospital or Facility Other Provider, using Texas regional or state fee schedules or rate and payment methodologies. For Hospitals or Facility Other Providers where fee schedules or rate payments are not appropriate, the Allowable Amount will be the lesser of billed charge or a per diem established by the Claims Administrator.
- ***For procedures, services, or supplies provided in Texas by Physicians and Professional Other Providers not contracting with the Claims Administrator*** – The Allowable Amount will be the lesser of the billed charge or the amount the Claims Administrator would have considered for payment for the same covered procedure, service, or supply if performed or provided by a Physician or Professional Other Provider with similar experience and/or skill.

If the Claims Administrator does not have sufficient data to calculate the Allowable Amount for a particular procedure, service, or supply, the Claims Administrator will determine an Allowable Amount based on the complexity of the procedure, service, or supply and any unusual circumstances or medical complications specifically brought to its attention, which require additional experience, skill, and/or time.

- ***For procedures, services, or supplies performed outside of Texas by Physicians or Professional Other Providers not contracting with the Claims Administrator or any other Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plan*** – The Claims Administrator will establish an Allowable Amount using Texas regional or state allowable amounts applicable to procedures, services, or supplies of Physicians or Professional Other Providers with similar skills and experience.
- ***For multiple surgeries*** – The Allowable Amount for all surgical procedures performed on the same patient on the same day will be the amount for the single procedure with the highest Allowable Amount *plus* one-half of the Allowable Amount for each of the other covered procedures performed.
- ***For drugs administered by a Home Infusion Therapy Provider*** – The Allowable Amount will be the lesser of: (1) the actual charge, or (2) the Average Wholesale Price (AWP) plus a predetermined percentage mark-up or mark-down from the AWP established by BCBSTX and updated on a periodic basis.

DEFINITIONS

- **For procedures, services, or supplies provided to Medicare recipients** – The Allowable Amount will not exceed Medicare’s limiting charge.
- **For Covered Drugs as applied to Participating and Non-Participating Pharmacies** – The Allowable Amount for Participating Pharmacies and the Mail Service Prescription Drug Program will be based on the provisions of the contract between the Claims Administrator and the Participating Pharmacy or Pharmacy for the Mail Service Prescription Drug Program in effect on the date of service. The Allowable Amount for Non-Participating Pharmacies will be based on the Average Wholesale Price.

Average Wholesale Price means any one of the recognized published averages of the prices charged by wholesalers in the United States for the drug products they sell to a Pharmacy.

Benefit Enrollment Period means the 31-day period preceding the next Plan Anniversary Date during which Employees and Dependents may enroll for coverage.

Calendar Year means the period commencing on a January 1 and ending on the next succeeding December 31, inclusive.

Certain Diagnostic Procedures means:

- Bone Scan
- Cardiac Stress Test
- CT Scan (with or without contrast)
- MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)
- Myelogram
- PET Scan (Positron Emission Tomography)
- Ultrasound

Chemical Dependency means the abuse of or psychological or physical dependence on or addiction to alcohol or a controlled substance.

Chemical Dependency Treatment Center means a facility which provides a program for the treatment of Chemical Dependency pursuant to a written treatment plan approved and monitored by a Physician and which facility is also:

1. Affiliated with a Hospital under a contractual agreement with an established system for patient referral; or
2. Accredited as such a facility by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations; or
3. Licensed as a chemical dependency treatment program by the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse; or
4. Licensed, certified, or approved as a chemical dependency treatment program or center by any other state agency having legal authority to so license, certify, or approve.

Chiropractic Services means any services or supplies provided by or under the direction of a Doctor of Chiropractic.

Claims Administrator means Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX). BCBSTX as part of its duties as Claims Administrator, may subcontract portions of its responsibilities. Claims Administrator may also include any successor named by the Plan Administrator.

Clinical Ecology means the inpatient or outpatient diagnosis or treatment of allergic symptoms by:

1. Cytotoxicity testing (testing the result of food or inhalant by whether or not it reduces or kills white blood cells);
2. Urine auto injection (injecting one’s own urine into the tissue of the body);
3. Skin irritation by Rinkel method;
4. Subcutaneous provocative and neutralization testing (injecting the patient with allergen); or
5. Sublingual provocative testing (droplets of allergenic extracts are placed in mouth).

Complications of Pregnancy means:

DEFINITIONS

1. Conditions (when the pregnancy is not terminated) whose diagnoses are distinct from pregnancy but are adversely affected by pregnancy or are caused by pregnancy, such as acute nephritis, nephrosis, cardiac decompensation, missed abortion, and similar medical and surgical conditions of comparable severity, but *shall not include* false labor, occasional spotting, Physician-prescribed rest during the period of pregnancy, morning sickness, hyperemesis gravidarum, pre-eclampsia, and similar conditions associated with the management of a difficult pregnancy not constituting a nosologically distinct complication of pregnancy.
2. Non-elective cesarean section, termination of ectopic pregnancy, and spontaneous termination of pregnancy occurring during a period of gestation in which a viable birth is not possible.

Contracting Facility means a Hospital, a Facility Other Provider, or any other facility or institution with which the Claims Administrator has executed a written contract for the provision of care, services, or supplies furnished within the scope of its license for benefits available under the Plan. A Contracting Facility shall also include a Hospital or Facility Other Provider located outside the State of Texas, and with which any other Blue Cross Plan has executed such a written contract; provided, however, any such facility that fails to satisfy each and every requirement contained in the definition of such institution or facility as provided in the Plan shall be deemed a Non-Contracting Facility regardless of the existence of a written contract with another Blue Cross Plan.

Copayment Amount means the payment, as expressed in dollars, that must be made by or on behalf of a Participant for certain services at the time they are provided.

Co-Share Amount means the dollar amount of Eligible Expenses incurred by a Participant during a Calendar Year that exceeds benefits provided under the Plan. Refer to **Co-Share Stop-Loss Amount in ELIGIBLE EXPENSES, PAYMENT OBLIGATIONS, AND BENEFITS** of the Benefit Booklet for additional information.

Cosmetic, Reconstructive, or Plastic Surgery means surgery that:

1. Can be expected or is intended to improve the physical appearance of a Participant; or
2. Is performed for psychological purposes; or
3. Restores form but does not correct or materially restore a bodily function.

Covered Oral Surgery means maxillofacial surgical procedures limited to:

1. Excision of non-dental related neoplasms, including benign tumors and cysts and all malignant and premalignant lesions and growths;
2. Incision and drainage of facial abscess;
3. Surgical procedures involving salivary glands and ducts and non-dental related procedures of the accessory sinuses; and
4. Surgical and diagnostic treatment of conditions affecting the temporomandibular joint (including the jaw and the craniomandibular joint) as a result of an accident, a trauma, a congenital defect, a developmental defect, or a pathology.

Creditable Coverage means coverage provided under:

1. A group health plan that is a self-funded or self-insured employee welfare benefit plan that provides health benefits and that is established in accordance with the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974;
2. Health insurance coverage consisting of medical care (provided directly, through insurance or reimbursement, or otherwise) under any hospital or medical service policy or certificate, hospital, or medical service plan contract, or HMO contract offered by a health insurance issuer. Health insurance coverage includes:
 - a. group health insurance coverage;
 - b. individual health insurance coverage; and
 - c. short-term, limited-duration insurance;
3. Part A or Part B of Title XVIII of the Social Security Act (Medicare);
4. Title XIX of the Social Security Act (Medicaid) other than coverage consisting solely of benefits under section 1928 of the Social Security Act (the program for distribution of pediatric vaccines);
5. Title 10 Chapter 55, *United States Code* (medical and dental care for members and certain former members of the uniformed services and for their dependents);

DEFINITIONS

6. A medical care program of the Indian Health Service or of a tribal organization;
7. A State health benefits risk pool;
8. A health plan offered under Title 5 U.S.C. Chapter 89 (the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program);
9. A public health plan. For purposes of this section, a public health plan means any plan established or maintained by a State, the U.S. government, a foreign country, or any political subdivision of a State, the U.S. government, or a foreign country that provides health coverage to individuals who are enrolled in the plan;
10. A health benefit plan under section 5(e) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. Section 2504 (e)); or
11. Title XXI of the Social Security Act (State Children's Health Insurance Program).

Creditable Coverage does not include:

1. Coverage only for accident (including accidental death and dismemberment);
2. Disability income coverage;
3. Liability insurance, including general liability insurance and automobile liability insurance;
4. Coverage issued as a supplement to liability insurance;
5. Workers' compensation or similar coverage;
6. Automobile medical payment insurance;
7. Credit-only insurance (for example, mortgage insurance);
8. Coverage for onsite medical clinics;
9. Limited scope dental benefits, vision benefits, or long-term care benefits if they are provided under a separate policy, certificate, or contract of insurance.
10. Flexible spending accounts (FSAs) if they meet the definition of a health FSA in IRC Sec. 106(c)(2) and (a) the maximum benefit payable for the employee under the FSA for the year does not exceed two times the employee's salary reduction election under the FSA for the year; and (b) the employee has other coverage available under a group health plan of the employer for the year; and (c) the other coverage is not limited to benefits that are excepted benefits;
11. Coverage for only a specified disease or illness or Hospital indemnity or other fixed indemnity insurance;
12. Medicare supplemental health insurance (as defined under section 1882(g)(1) of the Social Security Act), also known as Medigap or MedSupp insurance);
13. Coverage supplemental to the coverage provided under Chapter 55, Title 10, *United States Code* (also known as TRICARE supplemental programs); and
14. Similar supplemental coverage provided to coverage under a group health plan.

Crisis Stabilization Unit or Facility means an institution which is appropriately licensed and accredited as a Crisis Stabilization Unit or Facility for the provision of Mental Health Care and Serious Mental Illness services to persons who are demonstrating an acute demonstrable psychiatric crisis of moderate to severe proportions.

Custodial Care means care comprised of services and supplies, including room and board and other institutional services, provided to a Participant primarily to assist in activities of daily living and to maintain life and/or comfort with no reasonable expectation of cure or improvement of sickness or injury. *Custodial Care* is care which is not a necessary part of medical treatment for recovery, and shall include, but not be limited to, helping a Participant walk, bathe, dress, eat, prepare special diets, and take medication.

Deductible means the dollar amount of Eligible Expenses that must be incurred by a Participant before benefits under the Plan will be available.

Dependent – The legal spouse or eligible unmarried child or grandchild (as defined in the definition of grandchild) of a Covered Employee who is enrolled in the Plan. An eligible dependent must be a legal resident of the United States of America and must have a Social Security Number. A child may be covered from birth to the last day of the month in which his/her 25th birthday occurs.

The term "child" shall include a natural child, legally adopted child, grandchild, or child placed for adoption with the Covered Employee for adoption, or legal guardianship, a foster child, or a stepchild who is:

1. Dependent upon the employee for financial support and maintenance. A child must be principally dependent (named as an exemption on the Employee's most current Federal Income Tax Return) upon the Employee for

DEFINITIONS

financial support and maintenance or must be required to be covered by the Employee by a Qualified Medical Child Support Order. You will be requested to show proof that the child is claimed as a dependent on the employee's Federal Income Tax Return and resides with the employee in a parent-child relationship; or

2. The employee is the child's legal guardian or is ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction to provide health benefit coverage to the child and resides with the employee in a parent-child relationship; or
3. Such term shall also include a dependent child after their 25th birthday, provided the child became totally disabled or incapacitated while covered under the plan. Proof of such disability/incapacity must be furnished to the Plan by the Covered Employee within 31 days after the child's twenty-fifth (25th) birthday and at reasonable intervals thereafter as requested by the City of Laredo.
4. Income Tax Return will also be required for a dependent child(ren) age 19 through 25.

Excluded as dependents are:

- a. A Dependent legally separated or divorced from a Covered Person; or
- b. A Dependent on active Military duty for any country, except to the extent required by applicable law; or
- c. A Dependent who is employed on a full or part-time basis and is covered under a group health benefit plan offered by his/her employer; or
- d. A child who is or has been married; or
- e. A Dependent who fails to meet any of the eligibility criteria.

For purposes of this Plan, the term *Dependent* will also include those individuals who no longer meet the definition of a Dependent, but are beneficiaries under the COC provision.

Dietary and Nutritional Services means the education, counseling, or training of a Participant (including printed material) regarding:

1. Diet;
2. Regulation or management of diet; or
3. The assessment or management of nutrition.

Disease Management – Is designed to assist the covered person(s) in becoming more educated regarding specific disease states. The covered person will have the option of opting out of this voluntary program, designed to assist the covered person with managing their condition. If Disease Management is refused all future payments will be paid at 60% and will not, at any time, pay at 100% for medical services under the out of pocket provisions of this plan.

Durable Medical Equipment Provider means a Provider that provides therapeutic supplies and rehabilitative equipment and is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

Effective Date means the date the coverage for a Participant actually begins. It may be different from the Eligibility Date.

Eligibility Date means the date a person satisfies the definition of either "Employee" or "Dependent" and is in a class eligible for coverage under the Plan as described in the **WHO GETS BENEFITS** section of this Benefit Booklet.

Eligible Expenses mean either, Inpatient Hospital Expenses, Medical-Surgical Expenses, Extended Care Expenses, or Special Provisions Expenses, as described in this Benefit Booklet.

Emergency Care means health care services provided in a Hospital emergency facility (emergency room) or comparable facility to evaluate and stabilize medical conditions of a recent onset and severity, including but not

DEFINITIONS

limited to severe pain, that would lead a prudent lay person, possessing an average knowledge of medicine and health, to believe that the person's condition, sickness, or injury is of such a nature that failure to get immediate care could result in:

1. placing the patient's health in serious jeopardy;
2. serious impairment of bodily functions;
3. serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part;
4. serious disfigurement; or
5. in the case of a pregnant woman, serious jeopardy to the health of the fetus.

Employee – An active employee who works for the City of Laredo on a regular full time or part time basis in the usual course of the employer's business. To be considered an employee, you must receive all benefits of any regular, full-time and part-time employee. A full time or part-time employee who is on an approved leave of absence will be considered an active employee for the purpose of this plan.

For purposes of this plan, the term *Employee* will also include those individuals who are no longer an Employee of the City of Laredo, but who are participants covered under the COC Provision.

Employer (City of Laredo) means, the person, firm, or institution named on this Benefit Booklet.

Environmental Sensitivity means the inpatient or outpatient treatment of allergic symptoms by:

1. Controlled environment; or
2. Sanitizing the surroundings, removal of toxic materials; or
3. Use of special non-organic, non-repetitive diet techniques.

Experimental/Investigational means the use of any treatment, procedure, facility, equipment, drug, device, or supply not accepted as *standard medical treatment* of the condition being treated or any of such items requiring Federal or other governmental agency approval not granted at the time services were provided.

Approval by a Federal agency means that the treatment, procedure, facility, equipment, drug, device, or supply has been approved for the condition being treated and, in the case of a drug, in the dosage used on the patient.

As used herein, *medical treatment* includes medical, surgical, or dental treatment.

Standard medical treatment means the services or supplies that are in general use in the medical community in the United States, and:

- have been demonstrated in peer reviewed literature to have scientifically established medical value for curing or alleviating the condition being treated;
- are appropriate for the Hospital or Facility Other Provider in which they were performed; and
- the Physician or Professional Other Provider has had the appropriate training and experience to provide the treatment or procedure.

The Claims Administrator for the Plan shall determine whether any treatment, procedure, facility, equipment, drug, device, or supply is Experimental/Investigational, and will consider the guidelines and practices of Medicare, Medicaid, or other government-financed programs in making its determination.

Although a Physician or Professional Other Provider may have prescribed treatment, and the services or supplies may have been provided as the treatment of last resort, the Claims Administrator still may determine such services or supplies to be Experimental/Investigational within this definition. Treatment provided as part of a clinical trial or a research study is Experimental/Investigational.

Extended Care Expenses means the Allowable Amount of charges incurred for those Medically Necessary services and supplies provided by a Skilled Nursing Facility, a Home Health Agency, or a Hospice as described in the **Extended Care Expenses** portion of this Benefit Booklet. Booklet.

DEFINITIONS

Extenuating Circumstances – If a covered person is out of the area served by the Network PPO (i.e. on vacation, a business trip, away at school, etc.) the Plan will pay eligible expenses at an 80% benefit percentage subject to the Network deductible and Network Out of Pocket. An Extenuating Circumstance will also include an immediate care situation, and if a specialist provider is needed, but no Network specialist providers are located within 50 miles of Laredo. If you receive services at a Network facility, all other covered related services will be considered at the Network Benefit percentage. All charges are subject to Usual, Reasonable and Customary allowances.

Grandchild – An unmarried grandchild(ren) of the Employee who is less than 25 years of age and a dependent of the Employee for Federal Income tax purposes, provided that the child(ren) is a legal resident of the United States of America. Proof that a Grandchild(ren) has been claimed as a dependent on the employees federal income tax return must be submitted at the time of application for coverage of the grandchild(ren) is made and will be required annually by the City of Laredo thereafter. Failure to provide such proof will result in the Employees being financially responsible for all health care costs incurred and paid by the City of Laredo for the grandchild(ren). A great-grandchild does not meet the definition.

Employee must provide a notarized affidavit stating that the dependent is authorizing employee to add the grandchild to the medical coverage and to claim the grandchild on their income tax return in order to enroll grandchild. Failure to provide proof of income tax return form, will cause grandchild(ren) to be dropped.

If an employee fails to notify the City of Laredo of dependent eligibility changes, the employee will be personally responsible for reimbursing the full cost of claims paid by the City of Laredo.

Group Health Plan (GHP), as applied to this Benefit Booklet means a self-funded employee welfare benefit plan. For additional information, refer to the definition of Plan Administrator.

Health Benefit Plan means a group, blanket, or franchise insurance policy, a certificate issued under a group policy, a group hospital service contract, or a group subscriber contract or evidence of coverage issued by a Health Maintenance Organization that provides benefits for health care services. The term does not include:

1. Accident only or disability income insurance, or a combination of accident-only and disability income insurance;
2. Credit-only insurance;
3. Disability insurance coverage;
4. Coverage for a specified disease or illness;
5. Medicare services under a federal contract;
6. Medicare supplement and Medicare Select policies regulated in accordance with federal law;
7. Long-term care coverage or benefits, home health care coverage or benefits, nursing home care coverage or benefits, community-based care coverage or benefits, or any combination of those coverages or benefits;
8. Coverage that provides limited-scope dental or vision benefits;
9. Coverage provided by a single service health maintenance organization;
10. Coverage issued as a supplement to liability insurance;
11. Workers' compensation or similar insurance;
12. Automobile medical payment insurance coverage;
13. Jointly managed trusts authorized under 29 U.S.C. Section 141, et seq., that;
 - contain a plan of benefits for employees
 - is negotiated in a collective bargaining agreement governing wages, hours, and working conditions of the employees, and
 - is authorized under 29 U.S.C. Section 157;
14. Hospital indemnity or other fixed indemnity insurance;
15. Reinsurance contracts issued on a stop-loss, quota-share, or similar basis;
16. Short-term major medical contracts;
17. Liability insurance, including general liability insurance and automobile liability insurance;
18. Other coverage that is:
 - similar to the coverage described by this subdivision under which benefits for medical care are secondary or incidental to other insurance benefits; and
 - specified in federal regulations;

DEFINITIONS

19. Coverage for onsite medical clinics; or
20. Coverage that provides other limited benefits specified by federal regulations.

Health Status Related Factor means:

1. Health status;
2. Medical condition, including both physical and mental illness;
3. Claims experience;
4. Receipt of health care;
5. Medical history;
6. Genetic information;
7. Evidence of insurability, including conditions arising out of acts of family violence; and
8. Disability.

Home Health Agency means a business that provides Home Health Care and is licensed, approved, or certified by the appropriate agency of the state in which it is located or is certified by Medicare as a supplier of Home Health Care.

Home Health Care means the health care services for which benefits are provided under the Plan when such services are provided during a visit by a Home Health Agency to patients confined at home due to a sickness or injury requiring skilled health services on an intermittent, part-time basis.

Home Infusion Therapy means the administration of fluids, nutrition, or medication (including all additives and chemotherapy) by intravenous or gastrointestinal (enteral) infusion or by intravenous injection in the home setting. Home Infusion Therapy shall include:

1. Drugs and IV solutions;
2. Pharmacy compounding and dispensing services;
3. All equipment and ancillary supplies necessitated by the defined therapy;
4. Delivery services;
5. Patient and family education; and
6. Nursing services.

Over-the-counter products which do not require a Physician's or Professional Other Provider's prescription, including but not limited to standard nutritional formulations used for enteral nutrition therapy, are not included within this definition.

Home Infusion Therapy Provider means an entity that is duly licensed by the appropriate state agency to provide Home Infusion Therapy.

Hospice means a facility or agency primarily engaged in providing skilled nursing services and other therapeutic services for terminally ill patients and which is:

1. Licensed in accordance with state law (where the state law provides for such licensing); or
2. Certified by Medicare as a supplier of Hospice Care.

Hospice Care means services for which benefits are provided under the Plan when provided by a Hospice to patients confined at home or in a Hospice facility due to a terminal sickness or terminal injury requiring skilled health care services.

Hospital means a short-term acute care facility which:

1. Is duly licensed as a Hospital by the state in which it is located and meets the standards established for such licensing, and is either accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations or is certified as a Hospital provider under Medicare;

DEFINITIONS

2. Is primarily engaged in providing inpatient diagnostic and therapeutic services for the diagnosis, treatment, and care of injured and sick persons by or under the supervision of Physicians for compensation from its patients;
3. Has organized departments of medicine and major surgery, either on its premises or in facilities available to the Hospital on a contractual prearranged basis, and maintains clinical records on all patients;
4. Provides 24-hour nursing services by or under the supervision of a Registered Nurse;
5. Has in effect a Hospital Utilization Review Plan; and
6. Is not, other than incidentally, a Skilled Nursing Facility, nursing home, Custodial Care home, health resort, spa or sanitarium, place for rest, place for the aged, place for the treatment of Chemical Dependency, Hospice, or place for the provision of rehabilitative care.

Hospital Admission means the period between the time of a Participant's entry into a Hospital or a Chemical Dependency Treatment Center as a *Bed patient* and the time of discontinuance of bed-patient care or discharge by the admitting Physician or Professional Other Provider, whichever first occurs. The day of entry, but not the day of discharge or departure, shall be considered in determining the length of a Hospital Admission. If a Participant is admitted to and discharged from a Hospital within a 24-hour period but is confined as a *Bed patient* in a bed accommodation during the period of time he is confined in the Hospital, the admission shall be considered a Hospital Admission by the Claims Administrator.

Bed patient means confinement in a bed accommodation of a Chemical Dependency Treatment Center on a 24-hour basis or in a bed accommodation located in a portion of a Hospital which is designed, staffed, and operated to provide acute, short-term Hospital care on a 24-hour basis; the term does not include confinement in a portion of the Hospital (other than a Chemical Dependency Treatment Center) designed, staffed, and operated to provide long-term institutional care on a residential basis.

Identification Card means the card issued to the Employee by the Claims Administrator of the Plan indicating pertinent information applicable to his coverage.

Imaging Center means a Provider that can furnish technical or total services with respect to diagnostic imaging services and is licensed through the Texas State Radiation Control Agency.

Independent Laboratory means a Medicare certified laboratory that provides technical and professional anatomical and/or clinical laboratory services.

In-Network Benefits means the benefits available under the Plan for services and supplies that are provided by a Network Provider or an Out-of-Network Provider when acknowledged by the Claims Administrator.

Inpatient Hospital Expense means the Allowable Amount incurred for the Medically Necessary items of service or supply listed below for the care of a Participant, provided that such items are:

1. Furnished at the direction or prescription of a Physician or Professional Other Provider; and
2. Provided by a Hospital or a Chemical Dependency Treatment Center; and
3. Furnished to and used by the Participant during an inpatient Hospital Admission.

An expense shall be deemed to have been incurred on the date of provision of the service for which the charge is made.

Inpatient Hospital Expense shall include:

1. Room accommodation charges. If the Participant is in a private room, the amount of the room charge in excess of the Hospital's average semiprivate room charge *is not* an Eligible Expense.

DEFINITIONS

2. All other usual Hospital services, including drugs and medications, which are Medically Necessary and consistent with the condition of the Participant. Personal items *are not* an Eligible Expense.

Medically Necessary Mental Health Care or treatment of Serious Mental Illness in a Psychiatric Day Treatment Facility, a Crisis Stabilization Unit or Facility, or a Residential Treatment Center for Children and Adolescents, in lieu of hospitalization, shall be Inpatient Hospital Expense.

Large Case Management – The development of alternative treatment plans which meet the medical needs of the Covered Person and are more cost effective.

Late Enrollee means any Employee or Dependent eligible for enrollment who requests enrollment in an Employer's Health Benefit Plan (1) after the expiration of the initial enrollment period established under the terms of the first plan for which that Participant was eligible through the City of Laredo, (2) after the expiration of a Benefit Enrollment Period, or (3) after the expiration of a special enrollment period.

An Employee or a Dependent is *not* a Late Enrollee if:

1. The individual:
 - a. Was covered under another Health Benefit Plan or self-funded Health Benefit Plan at the time the individual was eligible to enroll; and
 - b. Declines in writing, at the time of initial eligibility, stating that coverage under another Health Benefit Plan or self-funded Health Benefit Plan was the reason for declining enrollment; and
 - c. Has lost coverage under another Health Benefit Plan or self-funded Health Benefit Plan as a result of:
 - (1) termination of employment;
 - (2) reduction in the number of hours of employment;
 - (3) termination of the other plan's coverage;
 - (4) termination of contributions toward the premium made by the City of Laredo; or
 - (5) COBRA coverage has been exhausted;
 - (6) cessation of Dependent status; or
 - (7) the individual incurs a claim that would meet or exceed a lifetime limit on all benefits;
 - (8) the Plan no longer offers any benefits to the class of similarly situated individuals that include the individual; and
 - d. Requests enrollment not later than the 31st day after the date on which coverage under the other Health Benefit Plan or self-funded Health Benefit Plan terminates or in the event of the attainment of a lifetime limit on all benefits, the individual must request to enroll not later than 31 days after a claim is denied due to the attainment of a lifetime limit on all benefits.
2. The individual is employed by the City of Laredo who offers multiple Health Benefit Plans and the individual elects a different Health Benefit Plan during an Benefit Enrollment Period.
3. A court has ordered coverage to be provided for a spouse under a covered Employee's plan and the request for enrollment is made not later than the 31st day after the date on which the court order is issued.
4. A court has ordered coverage to be provided for a child under a covered Employee's plan and the request for enrollment is made not later than the 31st day after the date on which the City of Laredo receives notice of the court order.
5. The request for enrollment is made by the individual within the 60th day after the date on which coverage under Medicaid or CHIP terminates.
6. A Dependent child is not a Late Enrollee if the child:

DEFINITIONS

- a. Was covered under Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) at the time the child was eligible to enroll;
- b. The employee declined coverage for the child in writing, stating that coverage under Medicaid or CHIP was the reason for declining coverage;
- c. The child has lost coverage under Medicaid or CHIP; and
- d. The request for enrollment is made within the 60th day after the date on which coverage under Medicaid or CHIP terminates.

Marriage and Family Therapy means the provision of professional therapy services to individuals, families, or married couples, singly or in groups, and involves the professional application of family systems theories and techniques in the delivery of therapy services to those persons. The term includes the evaluation and remediation of cognitive, affective, behavioral, or relational dysfunction within the context of marriage or family systems.

Maternity Care means care and services provided for treatment of the condition of pregnancy, other than Complications of Pregnancy.

Medical Management – A system which includes a team of medical personnel for prospective, retrospective, and/or concurrent review of the medical necessity and appropriateness of health care services. Utilization review does not include elective requests for clarification of coverage.

Medical Social Services means those social services relating to the treatment of a Participant's medical condition. Such services include, but are not limited to assessment of the:

1. Social and emotional factors related to the Participant's sickness, need for care, response to treatment, and adjustment to care; and
2. Relationship of the Participant's medical and nursing requirements to the home situation, financial resources, and available community resources.

Medical–Surgical Expenses means the Allowable Amount for those charges incurred for the Medically Necessary items of service or supply listed under **COVERED MEDICAL SERVICES** in this Benefit Booklet for the care of a Participant, provided such items are:

1. Furnished by or at the direction or prescription of a Physician or Professional Other Provider; and
2. Not included as an item of Inpatient Hospital Expense or Extended Care Expense in the Plan.

A service or supply is furnished at the direction of a Physician or Professional Other Provider if the listed service or supply is:

1. Provided by a person employed by the directing Physician or Professional Other Provider; and
2. Provided at the usual place of business of the directing Physician or Professional Other Provider; and
3. Billed to the patient by the directing Physician or Professional Other Provider.

An expense shall have been incurred on the date of provision of the service for which the charge is made.

Medically Necessary or **Medical Necessity** means those services or supplies covered under the Plan which are:

1. Essential to, consistent with, and provided for the diagnosis or the direct care and treatment of the condition, sickness, disease, injury, or bodily malfunction; and
2. Provided in accordance with and are consistent with generally accepted standards of medical practice in the United States; and
3. Not primarily for the convenience of the Participant, his Physician, the Hospital, or the Other Provider; and
4. The most economical supplies or levels of service that are appropriate for the safe and effective treatment of the Participant. When applied to hospitalization, this further means that the Participant requires acute care as a bed patient due to the nature of the services provided or the Participant's condition, and the Participant cannot receive safe or adequate care as an outpatient.

DEFINITIONS

The medical staff of the Claims Administrator shall determine whether a service or supply is Medically Necessary under the Plan and will consider the views of the state and national medical communities, the guidelines and practices of Medicare, Medicaid, or other government–financed programs, and peer reviewed literature. Although a Physician or Professional Other Provider may have prescribed treatment, such treatment may not be Medically Necessary within this definition.

Mental Health Care means any one or more of the following:

1. The diagnosis or treatment of a mental disease, disorder, or condition listed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association*, as revised, or any other diagnostic coding system as used by the Claims Administrator, whether or not the cause of the disease, disorder, or condition is physical, chemical, or mental in nature or origin;
2. The diagnosis or treatment of any symptom, condition, disease, or disorder by a Physician or Professional Other Provider (or by any person working under the direction or supervision of a Physician or Professional Other Provider) when the Eligible Expense is:
 - a. Individual, group, family, or conjoint psychotherapy,
 - b. Counseling,
 - c. Psychoanalysis,
 - d. Psychological testing and assessment,
 - e. The administration or monitoring of psychotropic drugs, or
 - f. Hospital visits or consultations in a facility listed in subsection 5, below;
3. Electroconvulsive treatment;
4. Psychotropic drugs;
5. Any of the services listed in subsections 1 through 4, above, performed in or by a Hospital, Facility Other Provider, or other licensed facility or unit providing such care.

Morbid Obesity – A body mass index value greater than 40.

Network means identified Physicians, Professional Other Providers, Hospitals, and other facilities that have entered into agreements with BCBSTX (and in some instances with other participating Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plans) for participation in a managed care arrangement.

Network Provider means a Hospital, Physician, or Other Provider who has entered into an agreement with BCBSTX (and in some instances with other participating Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plans) to participate as a managed care Provider.

Non–Contracting Facility means a Hospital, a Facility Other Provider, or any other facility or institution which has not executed a written contract with BCBSTX for the provision of care, services, or supplies for which benefits are provided by the Plan. Any Hospital, Facility Other Provider, facility, or institution with a written contract with BCBSTX which has expired or has been canceled is a Non–Contracting Facility.

Other Provider means a person or entity, other than a Hospital or Physician, that is licensed where required to furnish to a Participant an item of service or supply described herein as Eligible Expenses. Other Provider shall include:

1. **Facility Other Provider** – an institution or entity, only as listed:
 - a. Chemical Dependency Treatment Center
 - b. Crisis Stabilization Unit or Facility
 - c. Durable Medical Equipment Provider
 - d. Home Health Agency
 - e. Home Infusion Therapy Provider

DEFINITIONS

- f. Hospice
 - g. Imaging Center
 - h. Independent Laboratory
 - i. Prosthetics/Orthotics Provider
 - j. Psychiatric Day Treatment Facility
 - k. Renal Dialysis Center
 - l. Residential Treatment Center for Children and Adolescents
 - m. Skilled Nursing Facility
 - n. Therapeutic Center
2. **Professional Other Provider** – a person or practitioner, when acting within the scope of his license and who is appropriately certified, only as listed:
- a. Advanced Practice Nurse
 - b. Doctor of Chiropractic
 - c. Doctor of Dentistry
 - d. Doctor of Optometry
 - e. Doctor of Podiatry
 - f. Doctor in Psychology
 - g. Licensed Acupuncturist
 - h. Licensed Audiologist
 - i. Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor
 - j. Licensed Dietitian
 - k. Licensed Hearing Instrument Fitter and Dispenser
 - l. Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
 - m. Licensed Clinical Social Worker
 - n. Licensed Occupational Therapist
 - o. Licensed Physical Therapist
 - p. Licensed Professional Counselor
 - q. Licensed Speech–Language Pathologist
 - r. Licensed Surgical Assistant
 - s. Nurse First Assistant
 - t. Physician Assistant
 - u. Psychological Associates who work under the supervision of a Doctor in Psychology

In states where there is a licensure requirement, other Providers must be licensed by the appropriate state administrative agency.

Out-of-Network Benefits means the benefits available under the Plan for services and supplies that are provided by an Out-of-Network Provider .

Out-of-Network Provider means a Hospital, Physician, or Other Provider who has not entered into an agreement with BCBSTX (or other participating Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan) as a managed care Provider.

Outpatient Contraceptive Services means a consultation, examination, procedure, or medical service that is provided on an outpatient basis and that is related to the use of a drug or device intended to prevent pregnancy.

Participant means an Employee or Dependent or a retired Employee whose coverage has become effective under this Plan.

Physical Medicine Services means those modalities, procedures, tests, and measurements listed in the *Physicians' Current Procedural Terminology Manual* (Procedure Codes 97010–97799), whether the service or supply is provided by a Physician or Professional Other Provider, and includes, but is not limited to, physical therapy, occupational therapy, hot or cold packs, whirlpool, diathermy, electrical stimulation, massage, ultrasound, manipulation, muscle or strength testing, and orthotics or prosthetic training.

Physician – A person acting within the scope of his/her license and holding a degree of Doctor of Medicine (M.D.), Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O.), Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S.), or Doctor of Medical Dentistry (D.M.D.) who is eligible for membership in his/her respective society or association.

DEFINITIONS

Plan means a program of health and welfare benefits established for the benefit of its participants whether the plan is subject to the rules and regulations of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) or, government and/or church plans, where compliance is voluntary.

Plan Administrator means the Group Health Plan (GHP) or a named administrator of the Plan having fiduciary responsibility for its operation. BCBSTX is not the Plan Administrator.

Plan Anniversary Date means the day, month, and year of the 12-month period following the Plan Effective Date and corresponding date in each year thereafter for as long as the Benefit Booklet is in force.

Plan Effective Date means the date on which coverage for the City of Laredo's Plan begins with the Claims Administrator.

Plan Month means each succeeding calendar month period, beginning on the Plan Effective Date.

Plan Service Area means the geographical area or areas in which a Network of Providers is offered and available and is used to determine eligibility for **Managed Health Care Plan** benefits.

Preexisting Condition: means any abnormal physical or mental condition, whether active or inactive, for which the Participant received medical advice or was treated by a Physician or Professional Other Provider, including all deformities, ailments, prior injuries and pregnancy, during the six-month period before the earlier of:

- the Participant's effective date of coverage; or
- except with respect to a Late Enrollee, the first day of the Waiting Period.

Proof of Loss means written evidence of a claim including:

1. The form on which the claim is made;
2. Bills and statements reflecting services and items furnished to a Participant and amounts charged for those services and items that are covered by the claim, and
3. Correct diagnosis code(s) and procedure code(s) for the services and items.

Prosthetic Appliances means artificial devices including limbs or eyes, braces or similar prosthetic or orthopedic devices, which replace all or part of an absent body organ (including contiguous tissue) or replace all or part of the function of a permanently inoperative or malfunctioning body organ (excluding dental appliances and the replacement of cataract lenses). For purposes of this definition, a wig or hairpiece is not considered a Prosthetic Appliance.

Prosthetics/Orthotics Provider means a certified prosthetist that supplies both standard and customized prostheses and orthotic supplies.

Provider means a Hospital, Physician, Other Provider, or any other person, company, or institution furnishing to a Participant an item of service or supply listed as Eligible Expenses.

Psychiatric Day Treatment Facility means an institution which is appropriately licensed and is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations as a Psychiatric Day Treatment Facility for the provision of Mental Health Care and Serious Mental Illness services to Participants for periods of time not to exceed eight hours in any 24-hour period. Any treatment in a Psychiatric Day Treatment Facility must be certified in writing by the attending Physician to be in lieu of hospitalization.

Regular Part-Time Employee – An employee assigned to work less than a full work week (40hours) in a position without time limitations.

Renal Dialysis Center means a facility which is Medicare certified as an end-stage renal disease facility providing staff assisted dialysis and training for home and self-dialysis.

DEFINITIONS

Residential Treatment Center for Children and Adolescents means a child-care institution which is appropriately licensed and accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations or the American Association of Psychiatric Services for Children as a residential treatment center for the provisions of Mental Health Care and Serious Mental Illness services for emotionally disturbed children and adolescents.

Retiree – An employee who has ceased regular full-time or part-time active employment with the City of Laredo and meets the City of Laredo’s guidelines to qualify as a retiree and draws all other applicable retiree benefits.

Serious Illness Program – An account of Pooled Sick Days, created by the City of Laredo to be used by eligible employees with approval, as defined by the city’s policy for extended serious illness.

Serious Mental Illness means the following psychiatric illnesses defined by the *American Psychiatric Association in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)*:

1. Bipolar disorders (hypomanic, manic, depressive, and mixed);
2. Depression in childhood and adolescence;
3. Major depressive disorders (single episode or recurrent);
4. Obsessive-compulsive disorders;
5. Paranoid and other psychotic disorders;
6. Pervasive developmental disorders;
7. Schizo-affective disorders (bipolar or depressive); and
8. Schizophrenia.

Skilled Nursing Facility means a facility primarily engaged in providing skilled nursing services and other therapeutic services and which is:

1. Licensed in accordance with state law (where the state law provides for licensing of such facility); or
2. Medicare or Medicaid eligible as a supplier of skilled inpatient nursing care.

Specialty Care Provider means a Physician or Professional Other Provider who has entered into an agreement with Claims Administrator (and in some instances with other participating Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plans) to participate as a managed care Provider of specialty services.

Spouse – A person legally married to an eligible employee or retiree either legally or common law with appropriate documentation of co-habitation.

Therapeutic Center means an institution which is appropriately licensed, certified, or approved by the state in which it is located and which is:

1. An ambulatory (day) surgery facility;
2. A freestanding radiation therapy center; or
3. A freestanding birthing center.

Usual, Reasonable and Customary – A usual, reasonable, and customary charge is based on the geographical area in which services were provided. The geographical area is a county or greater area as necessary to establish a representative cross-section of health care providers regularly furnishing the services:

1. A charge is usual when it is the most consistent charge by the physician or provider of service to patients for a given service.
2. A charge is reasonable when it meets the usual and customary criteria as determined by the Plan; or it may be reasonable if upon review, it merits special consideration based on the nature and extent of treatment of the particular case.
3. A charge is customary when it is within the range of usual charges for a given service billed by most physicians or providers of service.
4. A usual, reasonable and customary charge for a surgical procedure includes the total amounts allowable as an eligible expense under the Plan for the surgery, hospital visits and postoperative visits following the surgical procedure by the doctor performing the surgery and/or any associates, partners, or affiliated physicians.

DEFINITIONS

Waiting Period means a period established by an City of Laredo that must pass before an individual who is a potential enrollee in a Health Benefit Plan is eligible to be covered for benefits.

PREScription DRUG PROGRAM

This portion of your Plan provides coverage for Medically Necessary Covered Drugs prescribed to treat a Participant for a chronic, disabling, or life-threatening illness covered under the Plan if the drug:

1. Has been approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for at least one indication; and
2. Is recognized by the following for treatment of the indication for which the drug is prescribed
 - a. a prescription drug reference compendium, approved by the appropriate state agency, or
 - b. substantially accepted peer-reviewed medical literature.

As new drugs are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), such drugs, unless the intended use is specifically excluded under the Plan, are eligible for benefits. Benefits are available for Covered Drugs as indicated on your Schedule of Coverage.

How the Program Works

When you need a Prescription Order filled, you can elect to go to a Participating Pharmacy, a Non-Participating Pharmacy, or use the Mail Service Prescription Drug Program (the use of the Mail Service Prescription Drug Program is mandatory for maintenance drugs after the third fill at a retail pharmacy).

Participating Pharmacy

When you go to a Participating Pharmacy:

- present your Identification Card to the pharmacist along with your Prescription Order,
- provide the pharmacist with the birth date and relationship of the patient,
- sign the insurance claim log,
- pay the appropriate Copayment Amount for each Prescription Order filled or refilled and the pricing difference when it applies to the Covered Drug you receive.

Participating Pharmacies have agreed to accept as payment in full the least of:

- the billed charges, or
- the Allowable Amount as determined by the Claims Administrator, or
- other contractually determined payment amounts.

You are responsible for paying any Copayment Amounts and any pricing differences, when applicable. You may be required to pay for limited or non-covered services. No claim forms are required.

If you are unsure whether a Pharmacy is a Participating Pharmacy, you may access our website at www.bcbstx.com or contact the Customer Service Helpline telephone number shown in this Benefit Booklet or on your Identification Card.

Non-Participating Pharmacy

If you have a Prescription Order filled at a Non-Participating Pharmacy, you must pay the Pharmacy the full amount of its bill and submit a claim form to the Claims Administrator with itemized receipts verifying that the Prescription Order was filled. The Plan will reimburse you for Covered Drugs equal to:

- 80% of the Allowable Amount,
- less the appropriate Copayment Amount, and
- less any pricing differences that may apply to the Covered Drug you receive.

Mail Service Prescription Drug Program (Mandatory)

The City of Laredo has chosen to provide a mandatory Mail Service Prescription Drug Program to you and your covered Dependents which requires that this program must be used to fill a Prescription Order for any maintenance

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM

drug no later than after the third fill of that drug at a retail pharmacy. The Copayment Amounts applicable to any Prescription Order filled through this program are indicated on your Schedule of Coverage.

When you mail your Prescription Orders to the address provided on the *Mail Service Prescription Drug Program Claim Form*, you must send in your payment. If you need assistance in determining the amount of your payment, you may either contact the Customer Service Helpline for assistance or send the amount of payment you determine will be needed.

If you send an incorrect payment amount for the Covered Drug dispensed, you will: (a) receive a credit if the payment is too much; or (b) be billed for the appropriate amount if it is not enough.

If you have any questions about the Program or need to obtain the *Mail Service Prescription Drug Program Claim Form*, you may access our website at www.bcbstx.com or call the Customer Service Helpline at the telephone number shown in this Benefit Booklet or on your Identification Card.

Preferred Brand Name Drug List

A Preferred Brand Name Drug is subject to the Preferred Brand Name Drug Copayment Amount plus any pricing differences that may apply to the Covered Drug you receive. These drugs are identified on the *Preferred Brand Name Drug List* that is maintained by BCBSTX. This list is developed using monographs written by the American Medical Association, Academy of Managed Care Pharmacies, and other Pharmacy and medical related organizations, describing clinical outcomes, drug efficacy, and side effect profiles.

BCBSTX will routinely review the *Preferred Brand Name Drug List* and periodically adjust it to modify the Preferred or Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug status of existing or new drugs. Changes to this list will be implemented on the City of Laredo's Plan Anniversary Date. The *Preferred Brand Name Drug List* and any modifications will be made available to Participants. Participants may access our website at www.bcbstx.com or call the Customer Service Helpline at the telephone number shown in this Benefit Booklet or on your Identification Card to determine if a particular drug is on the *Preferred Brand Name Drug List*. Drugs that do not appear on the *Preferred Brand Name Drug List* may be subject to the Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug Copayment Amount plus any pricing differences that may apply to the Covered Drug you receive.

Injectable Drugs

Injectable drugs for subcutaneous self-administration are also covered under the Plan. You are responsible for any Copayment Amounts and pricing differences that may apply to the Covered Drug dispensed. Injectable drugs include, but are not limited to, insulin and Imitrex.

The Day Supply of disposable syringes and needles you will need for self-administered injections will be limited on each occasion dispensed to amounts appropriate to the dosage amounts of covered injectable drugs actually prescribed and dispensed, but cannot exceed 100 syringes and needles per Prescription Order in a 30-day period.

Step Therapy

To ensure that a drug is Medically Necessary and part of a specific treatment plan, designated drugs may require the utilization of acceptable alternative medications prior to dispensing. A list of the medications which require alternative steps to be taken before the requested Prescription Order can be filled is available to you on our website at www.bcbstx.com. Currently, only proton pump inhibitors and drugs for lowering cholesterol levels are included on that list, although other drugs may be added to the list at a later date.

When you submit a Prescription Order to a Participating Pharmacy or through the Mail Service Prescription Drug Program for one of these designated medications, the Pharmacist will review your online prescription history and determine if any acceptable alternatives are required before filling the Prescription Order. If so, he will direct you to contact your Physician or authorized Professional Other Provider to obtain an acceptable alternative Prescription Order or to discuss possible over the counter solutions. Acceptable alternatives can be Legend Drugs or over the counter medications which may or may not be in the same therapeutic category.

Non-Participating Pharmacies cannot access the criteria for step therapy online. It is important to contact the Customer Service Helpline telephone number shown in this Benefit Booklet or on your Identification Card prior to

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM

using one of these Pharmacies since Prescription Orders obtained through a Non-Participating Pharmacy may be denied for reimbursement based upon this criteria.

Limitations on Quantities Dispensed-Day Supply

Benefits for Covered Drugs obtained from a Participating Pharmacy, a Non-Participating Pharmacy, or through the Mail Service Prescription Drug Program are provided up to the maximum day supply limit indicated on your Schedule of Coverage. The Copayment Amount applicable for the designated day supply of dispensed drugs for retail Pharmacies and the Mail Service Prescription Drug Program are also indicated on your Schedule of Coverage.

If a Prescription Order is written for a certain quantity of medication to be taken in a time period directed by a Physician or an authorized Other Professional Provider, the Prescription Order will only be covered for a clinically appropriate pre-determined quantity of medication for the specified amount of time. To determine if a specific drug is subject to this limitation, contact the Customer Service Helpline telephone number shown in this Benefit Booklet or on your Identification Card.

The day supply of a given prescription drug indicates the number of units to be dispensed and is determined based on pertinent medical information and clinical efficacy and safety. Quantities of some drugs are restricted regardless of the quantity ordered by the Physician or authorized Professional Other Provider. The Claims Administrator has the right to determine the day supply at its sole discretion.

Payment for benefits covered under this Plan **may be denied** if drugs are dispensed or delivered in a manner intended to change, or having the effect of changing or circumventing, the stated maximum day supply limitation.

Participants requiring Prescription Orders in excess of the day supply limit established by the Claims Administrator may ask their Physician or authorized Professional Other Provider to submit a request for clinical review on their behalf. The Physician or authorized Professional Other Provider can obtain the *Quantity Limit Override Request* form by accessing our website at www.bcbstx.com. Any pertinent medical information along with the completed form should be faxed to Clinical Pharmacy Programs at the fax number indicated on the form. The request will be approved or denied after evaluation of the submitted clinical information.

Right of Appeal

In the event that a requested Prescription Order is still denied on the basis of step therapy criteria or a Day Supply limit after your Physician or authorized Professional Other Provider has submitted clinical documentation, you have the right to appeal as indicated under the **Review of Claim Determinations** section of this Benefit Booklet.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM

Copayment Amounts

Copayment Amounts

Copayment Amounts for a Participating Pharmacy or a Non-Participating Pharmacy, or the Mail Service Prescription Drug Program are shown on your Schedule of Coverage. The amount you pay depends on the Covered Drug dispensed. If the Covered Drug dispensed is a:

1. Generic Drug – You pay the Generic Drug Copayment Amount
2. Preferred Brand Name Drug – You pay the Preferred Brand Name Drug Copayment Amount
3. Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug – You pay the Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug Copayment Amount

If the Allowable Amount of the Covered Drug is less than the Copayment Amount, the Participant will pay the lower cost.

How Copayment Amounts Apply

When your Physician has marked the Prescription Order “Brand Necessary” or “Brand Medically Necessary,” the pharmacist may *only* dispense the Brand Name Drug and you pay the appropriate Brand Name Drug Copayment Amount.

If the Physician has not stipulated a dispensing directive prohibiting substitution of a generic equivalent (Brand Necessary or Brand Medically Necessary), you may still choose to buy the Brand Name Drug instead of the Generic Drug.

If the Brand Name Drug dispensed is on the *Preferred Brand Name Drug List*, your payment amount will be the sum of:

- (a) the Preferred Brand Name Drug Copayment Amount, **plus**
- (b) the difference between the Allowable Amount of the Generic Drug and the Allowable Amount of the Preferred Brand Name Drug.

If the Brand Name Drug dispensed is a Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug, your payment amount will be the sum of:

- (a) the Preferred Brand Name Drug Copayment Amount, **plus**
- (b) the difference between the Allowable Amount of the Generic Drug and the Allowable Amount of the Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM

Limitations and Exclusions

The benefits of the Prescription Drug Program are not available for:

1. Drugs which do not by law require a Prescription Order from a Provider (**except** insulin, insulin analogs, insulin pens, and prescriptive and non-prescriptive oral agents for controlling blood sugar levels); and drugs or covered devices for which no valid Prescription Order is obtained.
2. Devices or durable medical equipment of any type (even though such devices may require a Prescription Order,) such as, but not limited to, contraceptive devices, therapeutic devices, artificial appliances, or similar devices (**except** disposable hypodermic needles and syringes for self-administered injections). NOTE: Coverage for contraceptive devices is provided under the medical portion of this Plan.
3. Administration or injection of any drugs.
4. Vitamins (**except** those vitamins which by law require a Prescription Order and for which there is **no** non-prescription alternative).
5. Drugs dispensed in a Physician's or authorized Professional Other Provider's office or during confinement while a patient is in a Hospital, or other acute care institution or facility, including take-home drugs; and drugs dispensed by a nursing home or custodial or chronic care institution or facility.
6. Covered Drugs, devices, or other Pharmacy services or supplies provided or available in connection with an occupational sickness or an injury sustained in the scope of and in the course of employment whether or not benefits are, or could upon proper claim be, provided under the Workers' Compensation law.
7. Covered Drugs, devices, or other Pharmacy services or supplies for which benefits are, or could upon proper claim be, provided under any present or future laws enacted by the Legislature of any state, or by the Congress of the United States, or the laws, regulations or established procedures of any county or municipality, except any program which is a state plan for medical assistance (Medicaid), or any prescription drug which may be properly obtained without charge under local, state, or federal programs, unless such exclusion is expressly prohibited by law; provided, however, that the exclusions of this section shall not be applicable to any coverage held by the Participant for prescription drug expenses which is written as a part of or in conjunction with any automobile casualty insurance policy.
8. Any special services provided by the Pharmacy, including but not limited to, counseling and delivery.
9. Covered Drugs for which the Pharmacy's usual and customary charge to the general public is less than or equal to the Participant's cost share determined under this Plan.
10. Contraceptive devices, non-prescription contraceptive materials, (**except** prescription contraceptive drugs which are Legend Drugs.) NOTE: Coverage for contraceptive devices is provided under the medical portion of this Plan.
11. Oral and injectable infertility and fertility medications.
12. Any prescription antiseptic or fluoride mouthwashes, mouth rinses, or topical oral solutions or preparations.
13. Drugs required by law to be labeled: "Caution – Limited by Federal Law to Investigational Use," or experimental drugs, even though a charge is made for the drugs.
14. Drugs dispensed in quantities in excess of the day supply amounts stipulated in your Schedule of Coverage, or refills of any prescriptions in excess of the number of refills specified by the Physician or authorized Professional Other Provider or by law, or any drugs or medicines dispensed more than one year following the Prescription Order date.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM

15. Legend Drugs which are not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for a particular use or purpose or when used for a purpose other than the purpose for which the FDA approval is given, except as required by law or regulation.
16. Fluids, solutions, nutrients, or medications (including all additives and chemotherapy) used or intended to be used by intravenous or gastrointestinal (enteral) infusion or by intravenous, intramuscular (in the muscle), intrathecal (in the spine), or intraarticular (in the joint) injection in the home setting. NOTE: This exception does not apply to dietary formula necessary for the treatment of phenylketonuria (PKU) or other heritable diseases.
17. Drugs prescribed and dispensed for the treatment of obesity or for use in any program of weight reduction, weight loss, or dietary control.
18. Drugs, that the use or intended use of which would be illegal, unethical, imprudent, abusive, not Medically Necessary, or otherwise improper.
19. Drugs obtained by unauthorized, fraudulent, abusive, or improper use of the Identification Card.
20. Drugs used or intended to be used in the treatment of a condition, sickness, disease, injury, or bodily malfunction which is not covered under your Employer's group health care plan, or for which benefits have been exhausted.
21. Rogaine, minoxidil, or any other drugs, medications, solutions, or preparations used or intended for use in the treatment of hair loss, hair thinning, or any related condition, whether to facilitate or promote hair growth, to replace lost hair, or otherwise.
22. Services and supplies for smoking cessation programs and the treatment of nicotine addiction.
23. Compounded drugs that do not meet the definition of Compound Drugs in this portion of your Benefit Booklet.
24. Cosmetic drugs used primarily to enhance appearance, including, but not limited to, correction of skin wrinkles and skin aging.
25. Prescription Orders for which there is an over-the-counter product available with the same active ingredient(s).
26. Retin A or pharmacologically similar topical drugs.
27. Athletic performance enhancement drugs.
28. Drugs to treat sexual dysfunction, including, but not limited to, sildenafil citrate (Viagra), phentolamine (Regitine), alprostadil (Prostin, Edex, Caverject), and apomorphine in oral and topical form.
29. Allergy serum and allergy testing materials.
30. Injectable drugs, except those self-administered subcutaneously.
31. Any Prescription Order for a maintenance drug filled at a retail pharmacy after the third fill of such drug.
32. Prescription Orders which do not meet the required step therapy criteria.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM

Definitions

(In addition to the applicable terms provided in the **DEFINITIONS** Section of the Benefit Booklet, the following terms will apply specifically to this **PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM** section.)

Allowable Amount means the maximum amount determined by the Claims Administrator to be eligible for consideration of payment for a particular Covered Drug.

1. As applied to Participating Pharmacies and the Mail Service Prescription Drug Program, the Allowable Amount is based on the provisions of the contract between the Claims Administrator and the Participating Pharmacy or Pharmacy for the Mail Service Prescription Drug Program in effect on the date of service.
2. As applied to Non-Participating Pharmacies, the Allowable Amount is based on the Average Wholesale Price.

Average Wholesale Price means any one of the recognized published averages of the prices charged by wholesalers in the United States for the drug products they sell to a Pharmacy.

Compound Drugs means those drugs that meet the following requirements:

1. The drugs in the compounded product are Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved;
2. The approved product has an assigned National Drug Code (NDC); and
3. The primary active ingredient is a Covered Drug under the Prescription Drug Program.

Copayment Amount, with respect to the Prescription Drug Program, means the dollar amount paid by the Participant for each Prescription Order filled or refilled through a Participating Pharmacy, Non-Participating Pharmacy or through the Mail Service Prescription Drug Program.

Covered Drugs means any Legend Drug (except insulin, insulin analogs, insulin pens, and prescriptive and non-prescriptive oral agents for controlling blood sugar levels, including disposable syringes and needles needed for self-administration):

1. Which is Medically Necessary and is ordered by a Physician or authorized Professional Other Provider naming a Participant as the recipient;
2. For which a written or verbal Prescription Order is provided by a Physician or authorized Professional Other Provider;
3. For which a separate charge is customarily made;
4. Which is not entirely consumed at the time and place that the Prescription Order is written;
5. For which the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has given approval for at least one indication; and
6. Which is dispensed by a Pharmacy and is received by the Participant while covered under the Plan, **except when** received from a Provider's office, or during confinement while a patient in a hospital or other acute care institution or facility (refer to **Limitations and Exclusions**).

Generic Drug means a drug which is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as pharmaceutically and therapeutically equivalent for a particular use or purpose to the brand name drug prescribed.

Legend Drugs means drugs, biologicals, or compounded prescriptions which are required by law to have a label stating "Caution – Federal Law Prohibits Dispensing Without a Prescription," and which are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for a particular use or purpose.

National Drug Code (NDC) means a national classification system for the identification of drugs.

Non-Participating Pharmacy means a retail Pharmacy which has not entered into an agreement to provide prescription drug services to Participants under the Prescription Drug Program.

Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug means a brand name drug which does not appear on the *Preferred Brand Name Drug List*.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM

Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug Copayment Amount means the Copayment Amount applicable if a Non-Preferred Brand Name Drug is dispensed.

Participating Pharmacy means an independent retail Pharmacy or chain of retail Pharmacies which have entered into an agreement to provide prescription drug services to Participants under the Prescription Drug Program.

Pharmacy means a state and federally licensed establishment where the practice of pharmacy occurs, that is physically separate and apart from any Provider's office, and where Legend Drugs and devices are dispensed under Prescription Orders to the general public by a pharmacist licensed to dispense such drugs and devices under the laws of the state in which he practices.

Preferred Brand Name Drug means a Brand Name Drug which appears on the *Preferred Brand Name Drug List*.

Preferred Brand Name Drug Copayment Amount means the Copayment Amount applicable if a Preferred Brand Name Drug is dispensed.

Prescription Order means a written or verbal order from a Physician or authorized Professional Other Provider to a pharmacist for a drug or device to be dispensed. Orders written by Physicians or authorized Professional Other Providers located outside the United States to be dispensed in the United States are not covered under the Plan.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Agent

The City of Laredo is not the agent of the Claims Administrator.

Amendments

The Plan may be amended or changed at any time by agreement between the City of Laredo and the Claims Administrator. No notice to or consent by any Participant is necessary to amend or change the Plan.

Assignment and Payment of Benefits

Rights and benefits under the Plan shall not be assignable, either before or after services and supplies are provided.

In the absence of a written agreement with a Provider, the Claims Administrator reserves the right to make benefit payments to the Provider or the Employee, as the Claims Administrator elects. Payment to either party discharges the Plan's responsibility to the Employee or Dependents for benefits available under the Plan.

Claims Liability

BCBSTX, in its role as Claims Administrator, provides administrative claims payment services only and does not assume any financial risk or obligation with respect to claims.

Disclosure Authorization

If you file a claim for benefits, it will be necessary that you authorize any health care Provider, insurance carrier, or other entity to furnish the Claims Administrator all information and records or copies of records relating to the diagnosis, treatment, or care of any individual included under your coverage. If you file claims for benefits, you and your Dependents will be considered to have waived all requirements forbidding the disclosure of this information and records.

Medicare

Special rules apply when you are covered by this Plan and by Medicare. Generally, this Plan is a Primary Plan if you are an active Employee, and Medicare is a Primary Plan if you are a retired Employee.

Participant/Provider Relationship

The choice of a health care Provider should be made solely by you or your Dependents. The Claims Administrator does not furnish services or supplies but only makes payment for Eligible Expenses incurred by Participants. The Claims Administrator is not liable for any act or omission by any health care Provider. The Claims Administrator does not have any responsibility for a health care Provider's failure or refusal to provide services or supplies to you or your Dependents. Care and treatment received are subject to the rules and regulations of the health care Provider selected and are available only for sickness or injury treatment acceptable to the health care Provider.

The Claims Administrator, Network Providers, and/or other contracting Providers are independent contractors with respect to each other. The Claims Administrator in no way controls, influences, or participates in the health care treatment decisions entered into by said Providers. The Claims Administrator does not furnish medical, surgical, hospitalization, or similar services or supplies, or practice medicine or treat patients. The Providers, their employees, their agents, their ostensible agents, and/or their representatives do not act on behalf of BCBSTX nor are they employees of BCBSTX.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Refund Of Benefit Payments

If the Claims Administrator pays benefits for Eligible Expenses incurred by you or your Dependents and it is found that the payment was more than it should have been, or was made in error, the Plan has the right to a refund from the person to or for whom such benefits were paid, any other insurance company, or any other organization. If no refund is received, the Claims Administrator may deduct any refund due it from any future benefit payment.

Subrogation

If the Plan pays or provides benefits for you or your Dependents, the Plan is subrogated to all rights of recovery which you or your Dependent have in contract, tort, or otherwise against any person, organization, or insurer for the amount of benefits the Plan has paid or provided. That means the Plan may use your rights to recover money through judgment, settlement, or otherwise from any person, organization, or insurer.

For the purposes of this provision, *subrogation* means the substitution of one person or entity (the Plan) in the place of another (you or your Dependent) with reference to a lawful claim, demand or right, so that he or she who is substituted succeeds to the rights of the other in relation to the debt or claim, and its rights or remedies.

Right of Reimbursement

In jurisdictions where subrogation rights are not recognized, or where subrogation rights are precluded by factual circumstances, the Plan will have a right of reimbursement.

If you or your Dependent recover money from any person, organization, or insurer for an injury or condition for which the Plan paid benefits, you or your Dependent agree to reimburse the Plan from the recovered money for the amount of benefits paid or provided by the Plan. That means you or your Dependent will pay to the Plan the amount of money recovered by you through judgment, settlement or otherwise from the third party or their insurer, as well as from any person, organization or insurer, up to the amount of benefits paid or provided by the Plan.

Right to Recovery by Subrogation or Reimbursement

You or your Dependent agree to promptly furnish to the Plan all information which you have concerning your rights of recovery from any person, organization, or insurer and to fully assist and cooperate with the Plan in protecting and obtaining its reimbursement and subrogation rights. You, your Dependent or your attorney will notify the Plan before settling any claim or suit so as to enable us to enforce our rights by participating in the settlement of the claim or suit. You or your Dependent further agree not to allow the reimbursement and subrogation rights of the Plan to be limited or harmed by any acts or failure to act on your part.

Coordination of Benefits

The availability of benefits specified in This Plan is subject to Coordination of Benefits (COB) as described below. This COB provision applies to This Plan when a Participant has health care coverage under more than one Plan.

If this COB provision applies, the order of benefit determination rules should be looked at first. Those rules determine whether the benefits of This Plan are determined before or after those of another Plan. The benefits of This Plan shall not be reduced when This Plan determines its benefits before another Plan; but may be reduced when another Plan determines its benefits first.

Coordination of Benefits – Definitions

1. **Plan** means any group insurance or group-type coverage, whether insured or uninsured. This includes:
 - a. group or blanket insurance;
 - b. franchise insurance that terminates upon cessation of employment;
 - c. group hospital or medical service plans and other group prepayment coverage;

GENERAL PROVISIONS

- d. any coverage under labor–management trustee arrangements, union welfare arrangements, or the City of Laredo organization arrangements;
- e. governmental plans, or coverage required or provided by law.

Plan does not include:

- a. any coverage held by the Participant for hospitalization and/or medical–surgical expenses which is written as a part of or in conjunction with any automobile casualty insurance policy;
- b. a policy of health insurance that is individually underwritten and individually issued;
- c. school accident type coverage; or
- d. a state plan under Medicaid (Title XIX, Grants to States for Medical Assistance Programs, of the United States Social Security Act, as amended).

Each contract or other arrangement for coverage is a separate Plan. Also, if an arrangement has two parts and COB rules apply only to one of the two, each of the parts is a separate Plan.

2. **This Plan** means the part of this Benefit Booklet that provides benefits for health care expenses.

3. **Primary Plan/Secondary Plan**

The order of benefit determination rules state whether This Plan is a Primary Plan or Secondary Plan covering the Participant. A *Primary Plan* is a Plan whose benefits are determined before those of the other Plan and without considering the other Plan’s benefit. A *Secondary Plan* is a Plan whose benefits are determined after those of a Primary Plan and may be reduced because of the other Plan’s benefits.

When there are more than two Plans covering the Participant, This Plan may be a Primary Plan as to one or more other Plans, and may be a Secondary Plan as to a different Plan or Plans.

4. **Allowable Expense** means a necessary, reasonable, and customary item of expense for health care when the item of expense is covered at least in part by one or more Plans covering the Participant for whom claim is made.
5. **Claim Determination Period** means a Calendar Year. However, it does not include any part of a year during which a Participant has no coverage under This Plan, or any part of a year before the date this COB provision or a similar provision takes effect.
6. **We or Us** means Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas.

Order of Benefit Determination Rules

1. **General Information**

- a. When there is a basis for a claim under This Plan and another Plan, This Plan is a Secondary Plan which has its benefits determined after those of the other Plan, unless (a) the other Plan has rules coordinating its benefits with those of This Plan, and (b) both those rules and This Plan’s rules require that This Plan’s benefits be determined before those of the other Plan.
- b. If this Benefit Booklet contains any dental or vision benefits, the benefits provided by the health portion of This Plan will be the Secondary Plan.

2. **Rules**

This Plan determines its order of benefits using the first of the following rules which applies:

- a. **Non–Dependent/Dependent.** The benefits of the Plan which covers the Participant as an Employee, member or subscriber are determined before those of the Plan which covers the Participant as a Dependent. However, if the Participant is also a Medicare beneficiary, and as a result of the rule established by Title XVIII of the Social Security Act and implementing regulations, Medicare is

- (1) secondary to the Plan covering the Participant as a Dependent and

GENERAL PROVISIONS

(2) primary to the Plan covering the Participant as other than a Dependent (e.g., a retired Employee), then the benefits of the Plan covering the Participant as a Dependent are determined before those of the Plan covering that Participant other than a Dependent.

b. ***Dependent Child/Parents Not Separated or Divorced.*** Except as stated in Paragraph c below, when This Plan and another Plan cover the same child as a Dependent of different parents:

(1) The benefits of the Plan of the parent whose birthday falls earlier in a Calendar Year are determined before those of the Plan of the parent whose birthday falls later in that Calendar Year; but

(2) If both parents have the same birthday, the benefits of the Plan which covered one parent longer are determined before those of the Plan which covered the other parent for a shorter period of time.

However, if the other Plan does not have the rule described in this Paragraph b, but instead has a rule based on gender of the parent, and if, as a result, the Plans do not agree on the order of benefits, the rule in the other Plan will determine the order of benefits.

c. ***Dependent Child/Parents Separated or Divorced.*** If two or more Plans cover a Participant as a Dependent child of divorced or separated parents, benefits for the child are determined in this order:

(1) First, the Plan of the parent with custody of the child;

(2) Then, the Plan of the spouse of the parent with custody, if applicable;

(3) Finally, the Plan of the parent not having custody of the child.

However, if the specific terms of a court decree state that one of the parents is responsible for the health care expense of the child, and the entity obligated to pay or provide the benefits of the Plan of that parent has actual knowledge of those terms, the benefits of that Plan are determined first. The Plan of the other parent shall be the Secondary Plan. This paragraph does not apply with respect to any Calendar Year during which any benefits are actually paid or provided before the entity has that actual knowledge.

d. ***Joint Custody.*** If the specific terms of a court decree state that the parents shall share joint custody, without stating that one of the parents is responsible for the health care expenses of the child, the Plans covering the child shall follow the order of benefit determination rules outlined in Paragraph b.

e. ***Active/Inactive Employee.*** The benefits of a Plan which covers a Participant as an Employee who is neither laid off nor retired are determined before those of a Plan which covers that Participant as a laid off or retired Employee. The same would hold true if a Participant is a Dependent of a person covered as a retired Employee and an Employee. If the other Plan does not have this rule, and if, as a result, the Plans do not agree on the order of benefits, this Paragraph e does not apply.

f. ***Continuation Coverage.*** If a Participant whose coverage is provided under a right of continuation pursuant to federal or state law is also covered under another Plan, the following shall be the order of benefit determination:

(1) First, the benefits of a Plan covering the Participant as an Employee, member or subscriber (or as that Participant's Dependent);

(2) Second, the benefits under the continuation coverage.

If the other Plan does not have this rule, and if, as a result, the Plans do not agree on the order of benefits this Paragraph f does not apply.

g. ***Longer/Shorter Length of Coverage.*** If none of the above rules determine the order of benefits, the benefits of the Plan which covered an Employee, member or subscriber longer are determined before those of the Plan which covered that Participant for the shorter period of time.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Effect on the Benefits of This Plan

1. **When This Section Applies**

This section applies when This Plan is the Secondary Plan in accordance with the order of benefits determination outlined above. In that event, the benefits of This Plan may be reduced under this section.

2. **Reduction in this Plan's Benefits**

The benefits of This Plan will be reduced when the sum of:

- a. The benefits that would be payable for the Allowable Expense under This Plan in the absence of this COB provision; and
- b. The benefits that would be payable for the Allowable Expense under the other Plans, in the absence of provisions with a purpose like that of this COB provision, whether or not claim is made exceeds those Allowable Expenses in a Claim Determination Period.

In that case, the benefits of This Plan will be reduced so that they and the benefits payable under the other Plans do not total more than those Allowable Expenses.

When the benefits of This Plan are reduced as previously described above, each benefit is reduced in proportion. It is then charged against any applicable benefit limit of This Plan.

Right to Receive and Release Needed Information

We assume no obligation to discover the existence of another Plan, or the benefits available under the other Plan, if discovered. We have the right to decide what information we need to apply these COB rules. We may get needed information from or release information to any other organization or person without telling, or getting the consent of, any person. Each person claiming benefits under This Plan must give us any information concerning the existence of other Plans, the benefits thereof, and any other information needed to pay the claim.

Facility of Payment

A payment made under another Plan may include an amount that should have been paid under This Plan. If it does, We may pay that amount to the organization that made that payment. That amount will then be treated as though it were a benefit paid under This Plan. We will not have to pay that amount again.

Right to Recovery

If the amount of the payments We make is more than We should have paid under this COB provision, We may recover the excess from one or more of:

1. the persons We have paid or for whom We have paid;
2. insurance companies; or
3. Hospitals, Physicians, or Other Providers; or
4. any other person or organization.

Termination of Coverage

The Claims Administrator for the Plan is not required to give you prior notice of termination of coverage. The Claims Administrator will not always know of the events causing termination until after the events have occurred.

Termination of Individual Coverage

Coverage under the Plan for you and/or your Dependents will automatically terminate when:

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Your contribution for coverage under the Plan is not received timely by the Plan Administrator; or
2. You no longer satisfy the definition of an Employee as defined in this Benefit Booklet, including termination of employment; or
3. The Plan is terminated or the Plan is amended, at the direction of the Plan Administrator, to terminate the coverage of the class of Employees to which you belong; or
4. A Dependent ceases to be a Dependent as defined in the Plan.

However, when any of these events occur, you and/or your Dependents may be eligible for continued coverage. See **Continuation Privilege** in the **GENERAL PROVISIONS** section of this Benefit Booklet.

The Claims Administrator may terminate and refuse to renew the coverage of an eligible Employee or Dependent for fraud or intentional misrepresentation of a material fact by that individual.

Coverage for a child of any age who is medically certified as *Disabled* and dependent on the parent will not terminate upon reaching the limiting age shown in the Schedule of Coverage if the child continues to be both:

1. *Disabled*, and
2. Dependent upon you for more than one-half of his support as defined by the Internal Revenue Code of the United States.

Disabled means any medically determinable physical or mental condition that prevents the child from engaging in self-sustaining employment. The disability must begin while the child is covered under the Plan and before the child attains the limiting age. You must submit satisfactory proof of the disability and dependency through your Plan Administrator to the Claims Administrator within 31 days following the child's attainment of the limiting age. As a condition to the continued coverage of a child as a *Disabled* Dependent beyond the limiting age, the Claims Administrator may require periodic certification of the child's physical or mental condition but not more frequently than annually after the two-year period following the child's attainment of the limiting age.

Termination of the Group

The coverage of all Participants will terminate if the group is terminated in accordance with the terms of the Plan.

Notice of Creditable Coverage

A Certificate of Creditable Coverage will be issued to each person whose coverage under this Plan is terminated. A Certificate of Creditable Coverage may also be requested by or on behalf a terminated individual within 24 months following their termination of coverage.

Continuation Privilege

COBRA Continuation – Federal

Under the provisions of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA), Participants may have the right to continue coverage after the date coverage ends. Participants will not be eligible for COBRA continuation if the City of Laredo is exempt from the provisions of COBRA.

Minimum Size of Group

The Group must have normally employed more than twenty (20) employees on a typical business day during the preceding Calendar Year. This refers to the number of full-time and part-time employees employed, not the number of employees covered by a Health Benefit Plan.

Loss of Coverage

If coverage terminates as the result of termination (other than for gross misconduct) or reduction of employment hours, then the Participant may elect to continue coverage for eighteen (18) months from the date coverage would otherwise cease.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

A covered Dependent may elect to continue coverage for thirty–six (36) months from the date coverage would otherwise cease if coverage terminates as the result of:

1. divorce from the covered Employee,
2. death of the covered Employee,
3. the covered Employee becomes eligible for Medicare, or
4. a covered Dependent child no longer meets the Dependent eligibility requirements.

COBRA continuation under the Plan ends at the earliest of the following events:

1. The last day of the eighteen (18) month period for events which have a maximum continuation period of eighteen (18) months.
2. The last day of the thirty–six (36) month period for events which have a maximum continuation period of thirty–six (36) months.
3. The Participant fails to make timely contribution payments.
4. The Group Health Plan is canceled.
5. The Participant becomes eligible after the date of election for coverage under any other group plan providing similar benefits or Medicare.

Extension of Coverage Period

The eighteen (18) month coverage period may be extended if an event which could otherwise qualify a Participant for the thirty–six (36) month coverage period occurs during the eighteen (18) month period, but in no event may coverage be longer than thirty–six (36) months from the initial qualifying event.

If a Participant is determined to be disabled as defined under the Social Security Act and the Participant notifies the City of Laredo before the end of the initial eighteen (18) month period, coverage may be extended up to an additional eleven (11) months for a total of twenty–nine (29) months. This provision is limited to Participants who are disabled at any time during the first sixty (60) days of COBRA continuation and only if the qualifying event is termination of employment (other than for gross misconduct) or reduction of employment hours.

Notice of COBRA Continuation Rights

The City of Laredo is responsible for providing the necessary notification to Participants as required by the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 and the Tax Reform Act of 1986.

For additional information regarding your rights under COBRA continuation, refer to the Continuation Coverage Rights Notice in the **NOTICES** section of this Benefit Booklet.

AMENDMENTS

NOTICES

NOTICE

Other Blue Cross and Blue Shields' Separate Financial Arrangements with Providers

BlueCard

Blue Cross and Blue Shield hereby informs you that other Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans outside of Texas ("Host Blue") may have contracts similar to the contracts described above with certain Providers ("Host Blue Providers") in their service area.

When you receive health care services through BlueCard outside of Texas and from a Provider which does not have a contract with Blue Cross and Blue Shield, the amount you pay for Covered Services is calculated on the lower of:

- The billed charges for your covered services, or
- The negotiated price that the Host Blue passes on to Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

Often, this "negotiated price" will consist of a simple discount which reflects the actual price paid by the Host Blue. Sometimes, however, it is an estimated price that factors into the actual price increased or reduced to reflect aggregate payment from expected settlements, withholds, any other contingent payment arrangements and non-claims transactions with your health care provider or with a specified group of providers. The negotiated price may also be billed charges reduced to reflect an average expected savings with your health care provider or with a specified group of providers. The price that reflects average savings may result in greater variation (more or less) from the actual price paid than will the estimated price. The negotiated price will also be adjusted in the future to correct for over- or underestimation of past prices. However, the amount you pay is considered a final price.

Statutes in a small number of states may require the Host Blue to use a basis for calculating your liability for covered services that does not reflect the entire savings realized or expected to be realized on a particular claim or to add a surcharge. Should any state statutes mandate your liability calculation methods that differ from the usual BlueCard method noted above or require a surcharge, Blue Cross and Blue Shield would then calculate your liability for any covered health care services in accordance with the applicable state statute in effect at the time you received your care.

NOTICE

The Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998 requires this notice. This Act is effective for plan year anniversaries on or after October 21, 1998. This benefit may already be included as part of your coverage.

In the case of a covered person receiving benefits under their plan in connection with a mastectomy and who elects breast reconstruction, coverage will be provided in a manner determined in consultation with the attending physician and the patient for:

1. Reconstruction of the breast on which the mastectomy was performed;
2. Surgery and reconstruction of the other breast to produce a symmetrical appearance; and
3. Prostheses and treatment of physical complications at all stages of the mastectomy, including lymphedemas.

Deductibles, coinsurance and copayment amounts will be the same as those applied to other similarly covered medical services, such as surgery and prostheses.

NOTICE

CONTINUATION COVERAGE RIGHTS UNDER COBRA

NOTE: Certain employers may not be affected by CONTINUATION OF COVERAGE AFTER TERMINATION (COBRA). See your employer or Group Administrator should you have any questions about COBRA.

INTRODUCTION

You are receiving this notice because you have recently become covered under your employer's group health plan (the Plan). This notice contains important information about your right to COBRA continuation coverage, which is a temporary extension of coverage under the Plan. **This notice generally explains COBRA continuation coverage, when it may become available to you and your family, and what you need to do to protect the right to receive it.**

The right to COBRA continuation coverage was created by a federal law, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA). COBRA continuation coverage may be available to you when you would otherwise lose your group health coverage. It can also become available to other members of your family who are covered under the Plan when they would otherwise lose their group health coverage.

For additional information about your rights and obligations under the Plan and under federal law, you should review the Plan's Summary Plan Description or contact the Plan Administrator.

WHAT IS COBRA CONTINUATION COVERAGE?

COBRA continuation coverage is a continuation of Plan coverage when coverage would otherwise end because of a life event known as a "qualifying event." Specific qualifying events are listed later in this notice. After a qualifying event, COBRA continuation coverage must be offered to each person who is a "qualified beneficiary." You, your spouse, and your dependent children could become qualified beneficiaries if coverage under the Plan is lost because of the qualifying event. Under the Plan, qualified beneficiaries who elect COBRA continuation coverage must pay for COBRA continuation coverage.

If you are an employee, you will become a qualified beneficiary if you lose your coverage under the Plan because either one of the following qualifying events happens:

- Your hours of employment are reduced; or
- Your employment ends for any reason other than your gross misconduct.

If you are the spouse of an employee, you will become a qualified beneficiary if you lose your coverage under the Plan because any of the following qualifying events happens:

- Your spouse dies;
- Your spouse's hours of employment are reduced;
- Your spouse's employment ends for any reason other than his or her gross misconduct;
- Your spouse becomes enrolled in Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both); or
- You become divorced or legally separated from your spouse.

Your dependent children will become qualified beneficiaries if they will lose coverage under the Plan because any of the following qualifying events happens:

- The parent-employee dies;
- The parent-employee's hours of employment are reduced;
- The parent-employee's employment ends for any reason other than his or her gross misconduct;
- The parent-employee becomes enrolled in Medicare (Part A, Part B, or both);
- The parents become divorced or legally separated; or
- The child stops being eligible for coverage under the Plan as a "dependent child."

If the Plan provides health care coverage to retired employees, the following applies: Sometimes, filing a proceeding in bankruptcy under title 11 of the United States Code can be a qualifying event. If a proceeding in bankruptcy is filed with respect to your employer, and that bankruptcy results in the loss of coverage of any retired employee covered under the Plan, the retired employee will become a qualified beneficiary with respect to the bankruptcy. The retired employee's spouse, surviving spouse, and dependent children will also become qualified beneficiaries if bankruptcy results in the loss of their coverage under the Plan.

WHEN IS COBRA COVERAGE AVAILABLE?

The Plan will offer COBRA continuation coverage to qualified beneficiaries only after the Plan Administrator has been notified that a qualifying event has occurred. When the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of hours of employment, death of the employee, in the event of retired employee health coverage, commencement of a proceeding in bankruptcy with respect to the employer, or the employee's becoming entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both), the employer must notify the Plan Administrator of the qualifying event.

YOU MUST GIVE NOTICE OF SOME QUALIFYING EVENTS

For the other qualifying events (divorce or legal separation of the employee and spouse or a dependent child's losing eligibility for coverage as a dependent child), you must notify the Plan Administrator within 60 days after the qualifying event occurs. Contact your employer and/or COBRA Administrator for procedures for this notice, including a description of any required information or documentation.

HOW IS COBRA COVERAGE PROVIDED?

Once the Plan Administrator receives notice that a qualifying event has occurred, COBRA continuation coverage will be offered to each of the qualified beneficiaries. Each qualified beneficiary will have an independent right to elect COBRA continuation coverage. Covered employees may elect COBRA continuation coverage on behalf of their spouses, and parents may elect COBRA continuation coverage on behalf of their children.

COBRA continuation coverage is a temporary continuation of coverage. When the qualifying event is the death of the employee, the employee's becoming entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both), your divorce or legal separation, or a dependent child's losing eligibility as a dependent child, COBRA continuation coverage lasts for up to 36 months.

When the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of the employee's hours of employment, and the employee became entitled to Medicare benefits less than 18 months before the qualifying event, COBRA continuation coverage for qualified beneficiaries other than the employee lasts until 36 months after the date of Medicare entitlement. For example, if a covered employee becomes entitled to Medicare 8 months before the date on which his employment terminates, COBRA continuation coverage for his spouse and children can last up to 36 months after the date of Medicare entitlement, which is equal to 28 months after the date of the qualifying event (36 months minus 8 months). Otherwise, when the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of the employee's hours of employment, COBRA continuation coverage generally lasts for only up to a total of 18 months. There are two ways in which this 18-month period of COBRA continuation coverage can be extended.

DISABILITY EXTENSION OF 18-MONTH PERIOD OF CONTINUATION COVERAGE

If you or anyone in your family covered under the Plan is determined by the Social Security Administration to be disabled and you notify the Plan Administrator in a timely fashion, you and your entire family may be entitled to receive up to an additional 11 months of

COBRA continuation coverage, for a total maximum of 29 months. The disability would have to have started at some time before the 60th day of COBRA continuation coverage and must last at least until the end of the 18-month period of continuation coverage. Contact your employer and/or the COBRA Administrator for procedures for this notice, including a description of any required information or documentation.

SECOND QUALIFYING EVENT EXTENSION OF 18-MONTH PERIOD OF CONTINUATION COVERAGE

If your family experiences another qualifying event while receiving 18 months of COBRA continuation coverage, the spouse and dependent children in your family can get up to 18 additional months of COBRA continuation coverage, for a maximum of 36 months if notice of the second qualifying event is properly given to the Plan. This extension may be available to the spouse and dependent children receiving continuation coverage if the employee or former employee dies, becomes entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both), or gets divorced or legally separated or if the dependent child stops being eligible under the Plan as a dependent child, but only if the event would have caused the spouse or dependent child to lose coverage under the Plan had the first qualifying event not occurred.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

Questions concerning your Plan or your COBRA continuation coverage rights, should be addressed to your Plan Administrator. For more information about your rights under ERISA, including COBRA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and other laws affecting group health plans, contact the nearest Regional or District Office of the U. S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) in your area or visit the EBSA website at www.dol.gov/ebsa. (Addresses and phone numbers of Regional and District EBSA Offices are available through EBSA's website.)

KEEP YOUR PLAN INFORMED OF ADDRESS CHANGES

In order to protect your family's rights, you should keep the Plan Administrator informed of any changes in the addresses of family members. You should also keep a copy, for your records, of any notices you send to the Plan Administrator.

PLAN CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact your employer for the name, address and telephone number of the party responsible for administering your COBRA continuation coverage.

Medical Preauthorization Helpline

Your City of Laredo Health and Wellness program provides a Chemical Dependency Outpatient benefit. Consult your Employee Health Nurse in the Administrative Services Department for more information. To avail yourself of this benefit, you may contact the Employee Health Nurse.

Who Gets Benefits

1. Survivors of Peace Officers
2. Retiree's must enroll for coverage within 31 days of their retirement or the date of notification of their retirement status, or they will be ineligible. Retirees who elect Continuation of Coverage can not later elect Retiree coverage.
3. Active Duty Reservists and their Dependents can maintain eligibility on the plan for up to 18 months. Eligibility will meet or exceed USERRA.

Termination of Individual Coverage

Coverage for a dependent can not extend beyond the coverage date for the Employee unless required by Article 615.071 of Chapter 615 of the Government Code for survivors of certain peace officers killed in the line of duty.

NOTICE OF PLAN PARTICIPANTS
REGARDING THE CITY OF LAREDO
ELECTION UNDER 42 U.S.C. 300gg-21

THIS IS TO NOTIFY YOU THAT FEDERAL LAW HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 1996 IMPOSES UPON GROUP HEALTH PLAN (SUCH AS THE CITY OF LAREDO PLAN) TITLE I WHICH PERTAINS TO INSURANCE REFORM OF CERTAIN LIMITATIONS OF PREEXISTING CONDITION EXCLUSION PERIODS, SPECIAL ENROLLMENT PERIODS FOR INDIVIDUALS (AND DEPENDENTS) LOSING OTHER COVERAGE, PROHIBITIONS AGAINST DISCRIMINATING AGAINST INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT AND BENEFICIARIES BASED ON HEALTH STATUS, STANDARDS RELATING TO BENEFITS FOR MOTHERS AND NEWBORNS, PARITY IN THE APPLICATION OF CERTAIN LIMITS TO MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS AND A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO TREATMENT OF THE UNAFFECTED BREAST FOLLOWING A MASTECTOMY. FEDERAL LAW ALLOWS A NON-FEDERAL GOVERNMENTAL PLAN (SUCH AS THE CITY OF LAREDO PLAN) TO EXEMPTIONS PLAN IN WHOLE OR IN PART FROM THESE REQUIREMENTS. THE CITY OF LAREDO HAS ELECTED TO BE EXEMPT FROM THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS: LIMITATIONS ON PRE-EXISTING CONDITION EXCLUSION PERIODS, SPECIAL ENROLLMENT PERIODS FOR COVERED PERSONS (AND DEPENDENTS) LOSING OTHER COVERAGE, PROHIBITIONS AGAINST DISCRIMINATING AGAINST INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS AND BENEFICIARIES BASED ON HEALTH STATUS, STANDARDS RELATING TO BENEFITS FOR MOTHERS AND NEWBORNS, PARITY IN THE APPLICATION OF CERTAIN LIMITS TO MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS AND TREATMENT OF THE NON-AFFECTED BREAST FOLLOWING A MASTECTOMY. BECAUSE OF THIS ELECTION, EMPLOYEES AND DEPENDENTS WILL BE SUBJECT TO BENEFIT LIMITS EVEN IF THEY HAD 12 OR 18 MONTHS OF COVERAGE UNDER ANOTHER PLAN WITHIN THE 63 DAYS PRIOR TO ENROLLMENT IN THIS PLAN. THE DURATION OF A HOSPITAL CONFINEMENT FOR A MOTHER AND NEWBORN FOLLOWING THE BIRTH OF A CHILD WILL BE DETERMINED BASED ON MEDICAL NECESSITY. MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS HAVE THE SAME LIFETIME MAXIMUM AS OTHER MEDICAL CONDITIONS. MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS HAVE ANNUAL MAXIMUMS. EVEN THOUGH THE PLAN IS EXEMPT, EMPLOYEES AND DEPENDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO ENROLL IF THEY HAVE ANNUAL MAXIMUMS. EVEN THOUGH THE PLAN IS EXEMPT, EMPLOYEES AND DEPENDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO ENROLL IF THEY HAVE A QUALIFYING EVENT DURING THE PLAN YEAR AS SET OUT IN THIS BOOKLET, AND NO COVERED PERSON WILL BE DECLINED COVERAGE OR CHARGED A HIGHER RET BASED ON A MEDICAL CONDITION. THE PLAN'S QUALIFYING EVENTS ARE MORE LIBERAL THAN ON THE FEDERAL LAW. THE PLAN WILL PAY FOR TREATMENT OF THE AFFECTED BREAST AND NON-AFFECTED BREAST FOLLOWING A MASTECTOMY. THE ENTIRE PLAN IS SUBJECT TO THIS EXEMPTION. THE PLAN CANNOT EXEMPT ITSELF FROM THE REQUIREMENT TO FURNISH CERTIFICATES OF CREDITABLE COVERAGE.

IN ADDITION TO TITLE I, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IMPOSED TITLE II ON APRIL 14, 2003 WHICH PERTAINS TO ADMINISTRATIVE SIMPLIFICATION ON HEALTH PLANS (SUCH AS THE CITY OF LAREDO PLAN). THE ADMINISTRATIVE SIMPLIFICATION PROCESS INCLUDES: STANDARDS FOR ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS AN CODE SETS, NATIONAL IDENTIFIERS (COVERED PERSONS, EMPLOYERS, HEALTH PLANS, AND HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS), SECURITY AND ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE STANDARDS (FINAL RULE WAS PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 20, 2003), AND STANDARDS FOR PRIVACY OF INDIVIDUALLY IDENTIFIABLE HEALTH INFORMATION (PRIVACY RULE).

A SELF-FUNDED, NON-FEDERAL, GOVERNMENTAL HEALTH PLAN CANNOT EXEMPT ITSELF FROM THE REQUIREMENTS FOR TITLE II OF THE HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT.

PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

A Federal regulation, called the "Privacy Rule," requires The City of Laredo to protect the privacy of each Covered Person's identifiable health information. Under the Privacy Rule, the Plan may use and disclose a Covered Person's identifiable health information only for certain permitted purposes, such as the payment of claims under the health plan. If the Plan needs to use or disclose a Covered Person's health information for a purpose not permitted under the Privacy Rule. The Plan must first obtain a written authorization signed by the Covered Person.

In addition to restrictions on how the Plan may use and disclose a covered person's identifiable health information, the Privacy Rule gives each Covered Person certain rights. These include the right of a Covered Person to access his or her health information, to amend his or her health information, and to receive an accounting of certain disclosures of his or her health information.

The City of Laredo's Notice of Privacy Practices explain fully how TML Intergovernmental Employee Benefits Pool and the Plan may use and disclose a Covered Person's identifiable health information and a Covered Person's rights under the Privacy Rule. The City of Laredo's Notice of Privacy Practices is included with each covered employee's enrollment information.

HIPAA – is a Federal law referred to as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. HIPAA went into effect for most group health plans on the anniversary that occurs on or after July 1, 1997. HIPAA provides individuals certain rights and protection relating to healthcare coverage. Federal law gives the plan sponsor of non-Federal governmental plan the right to exempt the plan in whole or in part from requirements of Title I, except for the creditable coverage certificate requirements. The City of Laredo has opted out of HIPAA and is exempt from the Title I HIPAA requirements.

Title I:

Refers to creditable coverage, restrictions on pre-existing, special enrollments, non-discrimination based on Health Status Factors, Newborns' and Mothers' Protection Act, Mental Health Protection Act, Mental Health Parity Act and Women's Health Cancer Rights;

Has an exemption option for self-funded, non-federal, governmental plans.

Title II:

Effective April 14, 2003, Administrative Simplification guidelines have been mandated. The administrative simplification process includes standards for electronic transactions and code sets, national identifiers (for individuals, employers, health plan and providers), Security and Electronic Signature Standards (Final Rule was published on February 20, 2003) and Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information (Privacy Rule);

A self-funded, non-federal, governmental health plan cannot exempt itself from the Title II requirement.

Administered by:



BlueCross BlueShield of Texas

Experience. Wellness. Everywhere.SM

www.bcbstx.com

A Division of Health Care Service Corporation, a Mutual Legal Reserve Company, an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas provides administrative services only and does not assume any financial risk or obligation with respect to claims.
44111.0108