



NEWS RELEASE

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Wellmark recognizes two Iowa facilities for demonstrating care in knee and hip replacement surgeries

DES MOINES, Iowa (Sept. 21, 2023) — Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield announced that select health care facilities in Iowa have received Blue Distinction® Centers or Blue Distinction Centers+ for Knee and Hip Replacement programs, as part of the [Blue Distinction Specialty Care program](#).

Blue Distinction Centers are nationally designated health care facilities that show expertise in delivering high-quality patient safety and better health outcomes, based on objective measures that were developed with input from the medical community and leading accreditation and quality organizations. Only those facilities that first meet nationally established quality and cost measures for Blue Distinction Centers are considered for designation as Blue Distinction Centers+.

Facilities designated as Blue Distinction Centers for knee and hip replacement demonstrate expertise in total knee and total hip replacement surgeries, resulting in fewer patient complications and readmissions. In addition to meeting these quality thresholds, facilities designated as Blue Distinction Centers+ are, on average, 20 percent more cost-efficient in an episode of care compared to other facilities.

Knee and hip replacement procedures remain some of the most commonly performed, elective surgical procedures in the U.S., [according to a study released by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons](#). In 2014, there were 370,770 total hip replacements and 680,150 total knee replacements.

The following health care facilities have been designated under the Blue Distinction Centers for Knee and Hip Replacement programs:

- **Iowa Lutheran Hospital** — Blue Distinction Center+
- **Mahaska Health Partnership** — Blue Distinction Center

Since 2006, the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program has helped patients find quality specialty care in the areas of bariatric surgery, cancer care, cardiac care, cellular immunotherapy, fertility care, gene therapy, knee and hip replacements, maternity care, spine surgery, substance use treatment and recovery, and transplants, while encouraging health care professionals to improve the care they deliver.

For more information about the program and for a complete listing of the designated health care providers, visit www.bcbs.com.

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About Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield

Wellmark, Inc. (Wellmark.com) does business as Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa. Wellmark and its subsidiaries and affiliated companies, including Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Dakota, Wellmark Health Plan of Iowa, Inc., Wellmark

Value Health Plan, Inc., and Wellmark Advantage Health Plan, Inc., insure or pay health benefit claims for more than 2 million members in Iowa and South Dakota. Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa, Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Dakota, Wellmark Health Plan of Iowa, Inc., Wellmark Value Health Plan, Inc., and Wellmark Advantage Health Plan, Inc. are independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

About Blue Distinction Centers

Blue Distinction Centers (BDC) met overall quality measures, developed with input from the medical community. A local Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) company may require additional criteria for providers located in its own service area; for details, contact your local BCBS company. Blue Distinction Centers+ (BDC+) also met cost measures that address consumers' need for affordable healthcare. Each provider's cost of care is evaluated using data from its local BCBS company. Providers in CA, ID, NY, PA, and WA may lie in two local BCBS company's areas, resulting in two evaluations for cost of care; and their own local BCBS company's decide whether one or both cost of care evaluation(s) must meet BDC+ national criteria. National criteria for BDC and BDC+ are displayed on www.bcbs.com. Individual outcomes may vary. For details on a provider's in-network status or your own policy's coverage, contact your local BCBS company and ask your provider before making an appointment. Neither Blue Cross Blue Shield Association nor any BCBS company are responsible for non-covered charges or other losses or damages resulting from Blue Distinction or other provider finder information or care received from Blue Distinction or other providers.