

# ELECTRONIC PROVIDER ACCESS (EPA)

## PRE-SERVICE REVIEW FOR OUT-OF-AREA MEMBERS

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### Introduction

EPA is a Blue Cross Blue Shield Association initiative to give out-of-area providers access to electronic pre-service review capabilities available to local providers, enabling them to conduct pre-service review online.

The following guide will lead you through the necessary actions to conduct pre-service reviews for out-of-area members.

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## ELECTRONIC PROVIDER ACCESS (EPA)

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### **Background**

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans are launching a new tool on **January 1, 2014**, that will give providers the ability to access out-of-area member's Blue Plan (Home Plan) provider portals to conduct electronic pre-service review. Electronic Provider Access (EPA) will enable providers to use their local Blue Plan provider portal to gain access to an out-of-area member's Home Plan provider portal, through a secure routing mechanism. Once in the Home Plan provider portal, the out-of-area provider will have the same access to electronic pre-service review capabilities as the Home Plan's local providers.

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### **Definition: Pre-Service Review**

The term pre-service review is used to refer to pre-notification, pre-certification, pre-authorization and prior approval, amongst other pre-claim processes.

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### **Current Pre- Service Review practices**

Most Blue Plans give local providers access to local portals to conduct some level of pre-service review.

Out-of-area providers generally must call the member's Home Plan for pre-service review.

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### **Benefits of EPA**

EPA will give out-of-area providers access to the member's Home Plan portal, through local Blue Plan portals, to conduct pre-service review. The provider will continue to use the local Blue Plan portal, following the local plan's authentication process. As a Highmark Delaware provider, you will initiate this process via NaviNet.

The ability to access the Home Plan's portal for pre-service review will result in:

- More efficient pre-service review process,
  - Reduce administrative costs to both the provider and the Blue Plan,
  - Improved provider and member satisfaction.
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## ELECTRONIC PROVIDER ACCESS (EPA), Continued

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**IMPORTANT!**  
**Availability**  
**effective**  
**January 1,**  
**2014**

The availability of EPA on January 1, 2014, will vary depending on the capabilities of each Home Plan. Some Home Plans will be fully implemented and have electronic pre-service review for many services, while others will not yet have implemented electronic pre-service review capabilities. The following section describes how to use EPA and what to expect when attempting to contact Home Plans at different stages of implementation.

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**Plan**  
**Implementation**  
**Schedule**

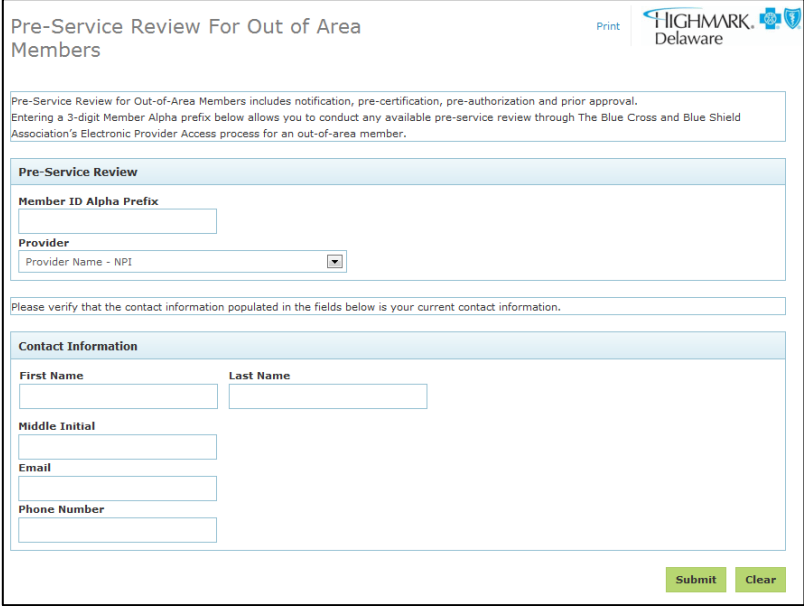
To better determine if a plan has already implemented electronic pre-service review, please reference the Plan Implementation Schedule located in the BlueCard Information Center.

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# USING THE EPA TOOL

Accessing the portal to request authorization for an out-of-area member

Follow the steps below to use the EPA tool:

Step	Action
1	Go to NaviNet and log-in as you do today.
2	From <b>Authorization Submission</b> , select the menu option " <b>Pre-Service Review for Out of Area Members</b> " (includes notification, pre-certification, pre-authorization and prior approval).
3	<p>You will be prompted to enter the alpha prefix from the member's ID card. The alpha prefix is the first three alpha characters that precede the member ID.</p>  <p>Entering the member's alpha prefix from the ID card will automatically route you to the Home Plan EPA landing page.</p>
4	<p>This page will welcome you to the Home Plan portal and indicate that you have left Highmark Delaware's portal. The Home Plan landing page will look similar across Home Plans, but will be customized to the particular Home Plan based on the electronic pre-service review services they offer.</p> <p>You will then conduct the pre-service review in the home portal. The pre-service review will either be <b>pending</b> or <b>authorized</b>.</p>

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## USING THE EPA TOOL, Continued

**Pre-Service Review Status** Once the relevant information has been submitted. The pre-service review will either be pended or authorized. Please refer to the table below:

Pre-Service Review Status	Possible Home Plan Messages
Authorized	<i>Authorization number 254345654.</i>
Pended	<i>Your request requires medical review. We will call you within 24 business hours with the final determination.</i>

**Potential Alert Messages** You will receive a message if you cannot be routed to the Home Plan by the alpha prefix. Although the message may vary slightly by Plan, the table below provides a *sample* of the types of messages that you may encounter:

Reason Not Routed	Possible messages
Home Plan does not offer electronic pre-service review	<i>BCBS of East Moreland does not currently offer electronic pre-service review, please call 555.376.0514 to conduct pre-service review.</i>
Home Plan does not allow providers without contracts with the local Host Plan to access its provider portal	<i>BCBS of East Moreland does not allow non-Blue providers to access its provider portal. Please call 555.376.0514 to conduct pre-service review.</i>
Alpha prefix entered is not three characters	<i>Alpha prefix is invalid format.</i>
Alpha prefix is an FEP prefix	<i>Electronic Provider Access for pre-service review does not support FEP.</i>
Alpha prefix does not exist	<i>Alpha prefix does not exist.</i>

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## USING THE EPA TOOL, Continued

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### Scenarios when a pre-service review may not be completed

Once you are routed to the Home Plan's portal after submitting a valid alpha prefix, there may be situations when a completed pre-service review is not possible. The following table describes what to expect, depending on the implementation status of the Home Plan to which you have been routed.

Situation	Action Required
Real-time electronic pre-service review is available for the service you are seeking.	The Home Plan landing page will list the services for which electronic pre-service review is available. From this page you will connect to the Home Plan's (or its vendor's) pre-service review site. Enter the necessary information and the Home Plan will approve or deny the pre-service review request in real-time.
Electronic pre-service review is available for the service you are seeking, but not in real-time.	The Home Plan landing page will list the services for which electronic pre-service review is available. From this page you will connect to the Home Plan's (or its vendor's) pre-service review processes. Enter the necessary information and the Home Plan will provide an automated response that the pre-service review has been pended and inform you as to how the results of the final review will be communicated to you. In most cases, the Home Plan will email, phone or fax you with the final determination. Keep in mind that not all Home Plans provide pre-service review 24 hours a day.
Electronic pre-service review is available, but not for the particular service for which you are seeking pre-service review.	The Home Plan landing page will list the services for which electronic pre-service review is available. For other services, the Home Plan will include instructions for how to conduct pre-service review. Home Plans will most likely list a direct phone number or provide a form that you can download and fax for pre-service review.

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## EPA REFERENCES

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**Available  
tools for  
providers**

The following resources are available for you in the BlueCard Information Center as you begin to use the EPA tool:

Resource	Description
Tip Sheet	This tip sheet can be located in the BlueCard Information Center. The tip sheet provides instructions on how to access the Home Plan portal in addition to scenarios that may be encountered.
Plan Implementation Schedule	This is a summary listing of each Home Plan's electronic pre-service review capabilities at different dates for inpatient, high-tech radiology and other services. <b>Note:</b> Although the majority of Plans are scheduled to implement on January 1, 2014 as indicated in this schedule, some may have implementation delays due to unforeseen circumstances.

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