



HIGHMARK PARTNERS WITH BEST DOCTORS SECOND OPINIONS HELP IMPROVE DIAGNOSIS ACCURACY

Highmark has joined forces with Best Doctors, a global health solutions company, which gives Highmark's members in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Delaware access to second opinions on rare diseases and complex cases. Highmark members with clear symptoms and elusive diagnosis, multiple hospitalizations/ ER visits, and facing decision points in care are most appropriate for the program. While all condition categories will be considered, cardiovascular, rheumatology, gastroenterology, rare cancers, neurology, and complex musculoskeletal conditions are suspected to be highest impact.

Best Doctors' experts give treating physicians a valuable service that improves quality and cost effectiveness. And because it's virtual, Highmark members receive second opinions from the world's top specialists, regardless of their location.

With the member's permission, their Highmark case manager connects them with a case manager at Best Doctors. Best Doctors gathers the member's complete medical record, avoiding the fragmentation of records which often complicates the diagnostic picture. The information and scans are carefully compiled to provide a clearer view of the patient's entire history to the Best Doctors expert. These experts are clinically and academically accomplished, affiliated with national and global centers of excellence, and elected by their peers to the top five percent of U.S. physicians. They then undertake a structured and comprehensive review, devoting many clinical hours to each case, analyzing it from multiple angles in a criterion-based review before preparing their report which is shared with the Highmark member and their doctor.

The program is completely voluntary with no cost to the member or provider. Patients and their physicians remain in charge of all treatment decisions and may decline Best Doctor's recommendations with no impact on benefits or claims.

Dr. Marylou Buyse, a senior medical director for Medical Policy and Quality at Highmark, said, "Sometimes people with complicated problems don't have a clear diagnosis, or they need answers, or they have multiple conditions that complicate each other, and they want to get an independent opinion. The nice thing about this program is that the patient doesn't have to travel, and any changes in treatment or any other testing is up to the patient and their treating physician, so the continuity of care remains with that physician."

"Doctors consult with other doctors all the time — it's a normal part of medical care," Buyse said. "Best Doctors just expands that to a national scale in terms of who our treating physicians have access to."

Important: Best Doctors may contact you requesting that a patient's medical records be released to one of their experts. Please know that this request for documents is part of our approved agreement with Best Doctors.

To learn more, please access the recent Highmark [press release](#).