employer connection **plus**

Frequently asked questions

We've created this Q&A to make it easy for you to learn how to conveniently and securely manage your employees' Blue Shield benefits online.

General

Q: What is the new Employer Connection?

A: The new Employer Connection is Blue Shield's enhanced Web-based billing and plan administration tool that enables employer groups (and their brokers) to securely manage their employees' Blue Shield benefits online. This tool is provided at no extra charge.

Q: What can I do with Employer Connection?

A: Once registered, you can securely log in 24/7 to:

- Manage your member roster with real-time* enrollments and terminations
- View and manage medical, dental, vision and life insurance plans*** in a single place
- Create and download census and billing reports**
- Conduct open enrollment online, with an option for employees to self-enroll
- View your Blue Shield invoice**
- Make one-time payments, or set up automatic payments**
- Order Blue Shield member ID cards
- Grant additional user access to your Employer Connection account

Registration

Q: How do I register for Employer Connection?

A: Register online by visiting **blueshieldca.com/employer**. Select "Register Now", and answer a few questions.

Note: Only the Primary Contact on file can register for Employer Connection, and they would then be able to delegate access to others within the site once registered. To register, you will need your Group/Subgroup number (example: W0009999-1000) as well as your most recent bill.

Q: After registration, where do I go to log in to Employer Connection?

A: The Web address is **blueshieldca.com/employer**. We recommend that you bookmark this Web address on your computer for easier access in the future.

Q: What administration rights do I have as the Primary Contact?

A: As the Primary Contact, you automatically have the highest tier of administration rights, which includes the ability to:

- Fully view and manage the account without restrictions
- Add new users, such as other HR administrators
- Establish different levels of access for different users
- Have unrestricted access that never expires, so long as you remain employed by your organization as the designated Primary Contact

Q: How do I add new users?**

A: Once logged in, select *Manage Users* from the *Settings* tab, and then *Add User*. Continue following the on-screen instructions to complete adding the user.

* There are some instances in which a transaction may first be queued for Blue Shield review, particularly when additional documentation may be needed.

** This feature is not available for some types of groups, such as Self Accounting groups.

*** Underwritten by Blue Shield of California Life & Health Insurance Company.

**** Small Group brokers who are registered for Producer Connection (blueshieldca.com/producer) are automatically granted access to Employer Connection.

Q: What types of administration rights can I grant to users?

A: Access can be granted at the subgroup level. Formerly known as billing units, subgroups represent different segments of a group's membership that commonly delineate billing entities.

There are three types of administration rights that can be granted:

View Only: By default, all users are automatically allowed to view eligibility and benefits for the subgroups that you select.

Maintenance: You can also authorize "Maintenance" rights, which allows the user to add, update, and terminate members for the subgroups you select.

Billing View:** This access allows your delegates to view bank accounts and payments that have been set up.

Billing Maintenance:** Your delegates with this access level can set bank accounts, make one-time payments and create auto payments.

Manage Users: Finally, you can allow users the ability to create other users.

Q: How and when do a user's administration rights expire?

A: If you are the Primary Contact for your organization, your access never expires, so long as you remain employed by your organization. If the designated Primary Contact ever needs to be changed for your organization, this must be performed by Blue Shield. Please contact your Blue Shield sales representative.

If you are any other type of user besides the Primary Contact, your administration rights will expire one year after registration. However, your administration rights may be renewed annually by the group's Primary Contact. If the group's broker of record changes, or you remove your broker's access rights, all the broker's administrators' rights will also be removed*.

Billing**

Q: What online billing features does Employer Connection offer?

A: Within the Billing Center of Employer Connection, you can:

- View a single bill for all your Blue Shield medical and specialty product plans
- Search, sort, and filter your bill to quickly find information you're seeking
- Download current and past Blue Shield invoices to your computer
- Set up automatic payments, or make one-time payments
- Receive scheduled email alerts for your bill
- View payment history, including all debit and credit postings
- Generate and download Billing reports

Q: How will I know when my bill is ready to view online?

A: Your bill is typically ready to view 15 days prior to the last day of the month. You can set up an email alert within the Billing Center to notify you when it's ready.

Q: How many months of invoice history can I view?

A: For new Employer Connection accounts, you can view past invoices as of the date that your group was established on our new system of record. Moving forward, your viewing history will be available for the life of the account.

Q: What are the advantages of viewing my invoice online?

A: Your online bill has more details than your paper bill, as it breaks out the details on dependents. Your online bill also allows you to search, sort, and filter to quickly find the specific information you're looking for.

Q: Can I pay my invoice online?

A: Yes, you can set up automatic payments, or make one-time payments within Employer Connection. See the Online Billing FAQ for further information.

* Does not apply to Small Group employers.

** This feature is not available for some types of groups, such as Self Accounting groups.

Managing your member roster

Q: What does it mean to have transactions processed in "real time"?

A: Transactions submitted in real time are simultaneously updated in Blue Shield's membership system. So, what you see reflected on your computer screen will also be what our records show. At the end of the transaction, you'll receive a confirmation number.

If a transaction cannot be completed in real time, the transaction will be pended and displayed as *In Process/Queued* in your *Transaction History*, which you can navigate to from the *Plan Administration* tab.

Q: Are all transactions processed in real time? What types of transactions might not be processed in real time?

A: For the most part, you can expect the majority of your enrollments and member updates to be processed in real time. However, there are certain transactions that may first require review and approval by Blue Shield, and possibly additional documentation.

Although not a comprehensive list, such transactions include Social Security number or date of birth changes, adding coverage for over-age disabled dependents, and any court-ordered enrollments. To view the status of your transaction, go to your *Transaction History* found under the *Plan Administration* tab.

Q: Can I still use Employer Connection if our organization already uses a third-party administrator (TPA) or an HRIS system (like PeopleSoft or ADP) to electronically submit our member enrollment and maintenance transactions?

A: Absolutely. You can still benefit from the site's Billing Center features*. You can also use the site to view your member roster details, as displayed in our Blue Shield source system, and compare with your system of record.

However, we strongly recommend that you continue to submit your member transactions (enrollments, updates, terminations) electronically via your current system, as this will continue to be your system of record. You should only make updates via Employer Connection on an emergency basis, as these updates will not automatically sync with your system of record.

If you choose to submit a member enrollment or maintenance transaction via Employer Connection, you need to be sure to also make the same change to your system of record prior to your next electronic submission or your data will become out-of-sync.

Q: Can Employer Connection be used to process COBRA enrollments?

A: Yes. After you terminate a subscriber within Employer Connection, you are able to enroll the subscriber into COBRA at the end of the termination transaction workflow.

Q: Will my employees have access to Employer Connection?

A: No. This site can only be used by your Primary Contact or by the other HR administrators and/or brokers to whom your organization has granted administration rights. Your employees and their dependents with Blue Shield coverage can view their benefits on our member portal website by visiting **blueshieldca.com/member**.

Q: Will I be able to view and manage our Blue Shield specialty plans online, such as dental, vision, and life insurance coverage for my employees?

A: Yes. You can manage enrollment in these plans by adding, updating, and terminating coverage online. However, you cannot view the same level of detailed benefits as you can with our medical plans. For details on your specialty plans, please call the following Customer Service numbers.

Dental HMO **(800) 585-8111**

Dental PPO **(888) 702-4171**

Life insurance **(888) 800-2742**, Fax: **(800) 329-2742**

Vision **(877) 601-9083**, Fax: **(714) 619-4662**

Reports

Q: What are the Census & Billing* Reports?

A: The Census Report is a report you can create to view the complete member roster and enrollment information. This report can be downloaded in PDF, Excel or CSV format.

The Billing Report is a report you can create to view the current and retroactive charges on your billing statement. This report is available for each of your subgroups and each of the months that you've been billed. The report will be available for you to export to an Excel format.

Contact Us

We're here to help with your Employer Connection needs!

For groups 1-50, call Group Employer Services at **(800) 325-5166**.
For groups 51-3000, call Large Group Client Services at **(855) 747-5809**.

* This feature is not available for some types of groups, such as Self Accounting groups.