To: All PCPs and Specialists (MD, DO) and Hospitals
Contracts Affected: All Lines of Business

Board Certification Requirement

Effective July 1, 2007 BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York requires all new physician practitioners other than those who have completed their training within the previous five (5) years to be board certified in their specialty. This requirement also applies to practitioners who leave the panel and reapply at a future date.

For physicians who have completed their training within five (5) years prior to their seeking participation with BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York, a certificate from an accredited training program will be required. These physicians must submit documentation of board certification within five (5) years following completion of their training. Failure to do so will result in termination of the practitioner.

For physicians who have completed their training more than five (5) years prior to their seeking participation with BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York, accreditation by a specialty board recognized by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) is required. RCPSC certification is not accepted in the following specialties: Colorectal Surgery, Medical Genetics, Otolaryngology, Thoracic Surgery, and Urology.

Board certification exceptions may be granted to physician practitioners under the following conditions:

A) If there is a demonstrated access issue (e.g., rural area), individual consideration may be given by the plan Medical Director or designee.

B) BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York, recognizes that some applicants may not meet the board certification standards, yet they possess extraordinary credentials and potentially unique abilities worthy of consideration. Circumstances of this nature will be reviewed for consideration by the plan Medical Director or designee.
C) Physicians who are not board certified on July 1, 2007, but were participating prior to July 1, 2002, are considered “grandfathered” and will not require board certification.

D) Participating physicians who are not board certified on July 1, 2007, but were not participating prior to July 1, 2002, must become board certified if they are qualified to do so by their specialty’s board. They will have five (5) years to obtain their board certification.

E) Physicians that are currently board certified or obtain their board certification after July 1, 2007, but fail to recertify, will have three (3) testing cycles or three (3) years (whichever comes first in their specialty) to retake and obtain their board certification.

F) Physicians who are board certified in both general and sub-specialty boards must maintain both board certifications unless they attest that at least 75% of their practice is either general practice or in their specialty. In this situation, they will only be required to maintain board certification pertinent to their activities that represent 75% of their practice.

If you have any questions, you may contact our Corporate Credentialing Department at 1-716-887-7500.