



Doctors who meet certain standards for clinical performance and efficiency

Specialists with the Aexcel® designation

Look for doctors in the Aetna performance network

When you do, you get access to some high-performing specialty doctors and doctor groups.

These doctors:

- Are part of the Aetna network of health care providers
- Have met certain industry-accepted practices for clinical performance
- Have met Aetna's efficiency standards

No referrals, lower costs

When you visit one of these doctors, you can eliminate referrals. You may also be able to lower the costs you pay out of pocket.

12 specialty areas

Visit doctors in these 12 areas:

- Cardiology (heart and blood)
- Cardiothoracic (heart and chest) surgery
- Gastroenterology (digestive system)
- General surgery
- Neurology (nervous system)
- Neurosurgery (spinal column, spinal cord, brain and nerves)
- Obstetrics and gynecology (pregnancy and women's reproductive system)

- Orthopedics (bones and joints)
- Otolaryngology/ENT (the ears, nose, throat (ENT), and head and neck)
- Plastic surgery
- Urology (urinary tract and urogenital system)
- Vascular (veins and arteries) surgery

Get the details

Here are answers to some of your frequently asked questions.

How are specialists chosen for Aexcel designation?

We review clinical quality and efficiency.

For clinical quality, we track:

- Hospital readmission rates after 30 days
- Rates of health complications during hospital care
- Other treatments, by specialty, shown to help improve outcomes

Doctors must have a certain minimum number of Aetna cases in order to be reviewed on these measures.

The measures are based on recognized standards from groups like the National Quality Forum (NQF), AQA, National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), American Board of Medical

Specialties, American Osteopathic Association, American Heart Association, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Agency for Health Research and Quality, Society of Thoracic Surgeons, and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

In addition, doctors may pass the clinical quality criteria if:

- At least 50% of specialists in a group are recognized by either Bridges to Excellence (BTE) or the NCQA in the areas of diabetes, cardiac/stroke, low back/spine, high blood pressure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, congestive heart failure, asthma, patient Centered Medical Home or coronary artery disease; or
- At least 50% of specialists in a group completed requirements for updating their medical specialty board certifications; or
- At least 50% of specialists in a group have earned BTE or NCQA Physician Office Link recognition or apply NQF-endorsed measures on using health information technology; or
- The doctor practices at an Aetna Institutes of Quality® (IOQ) facility and his/her primary specialty is the specialty for which the facility is recognized as an IOQ.

Health insurance plans are underwritten and/or administered by Aetna Life Insurance Company (Aetna).

Efficiency

We also review the costs of treating members in each of the 12 Aexcel areas of care.

We try to include all costs — not just visits to the doctor's office. We review inpatient, outpatient, diagnostic, lab and pharmacy claims.

Then, we compare the total costs of care from each doctor to the costs of other doctors in the same region. Doctors who best meet these qualifications are chosen to receive the Aexcel designation.

How can I find an Aexcel-designated doctor?

Look in your printed Aetna directory. Aexcel-designated doctors have an asterisk (*) next to their name.

Or visit our online DocFind® directory at www.aetna.com. Aexcel-designated doctors have a blue star next to their name.

More information is available on your secure Aetna Navigator® member website, at www.aetna.com. Just log in and search for a specialist. Then look under "Provider Details." You can see if the doctor meets standards for Aexcel designation.

You also can find more information in our *Understanding Aexcel* brochure. For a complete description including performance measures, evaluation process and details about the evaluation

procedure, such as data sources, statistical significance and other technical information, see the *Aexcel/Methodology* guide. It's available online on www.aetna.com. Just search for "Aexcel" to find it.

Do I need a referral to see an Aexcel-designated doctor?

Usually not. Please check the back of your member ID card for referral requirements.

Will I pay extra?

No. In fact, your health plan may require you to use Aexcel-designated doctors to pay the least out of pocket. This means that, for some health plans with an Aexcel network, any care you receive from non-designated doctors may be paid at the out-of-network benefit level or may not be covered at all.

In other health plans with an Aexcel network, you may be allowed to visit non-designated specialists. But your out-of-pocket expenses will be higher than if you saw an Aexcel-designated doctor in that same specialty. Check your health plan for more information.

What if a doctor is part of a group?

If a doctor is part of a group, we evaluate the whole group. In this case, performance-measurement results of other doctors in the group affect each individual doctor's evaluation.

NCQA background

The NCQA is an independent non-profit group. It accredits and evaluates many health care organizations and recognizes physicians in key clinical areas. Its mission is to improve the quality of health care.

NCQA serves as an independent examiner for Aetna, reviewing how the Aexcel program meets criteria required by the state of New York and national principles of the Patient Charter established by the Consumer-Purchaser Disclosure Project.

The New York report is available on the NCQA website at <http://nyrxreport.ncqa.org>.

If you want to register a complaint about Aexcel and/or doctor measurement activities with Aetna:

- Call Member Services using the phone number on your member ID card, or
- Send a request in writing to the Appeals Resolution Team address shown on your explanation of benefits (also called an EOB) or the Member Complaint and Appeal form.

You can also register your complaint with NCQA. Send it in writing to customersupport@ncqa.org or to NCQA Customer Support, 1100 13th Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC, 20005.

Check your doctor's Aexcel status before making an appointment.

This material is for information only and is not an offer or invitation to contract. Providers are independent contractors and are not agents of Aetna. Provider participation may change without notice. Aetna does not provide care or guarantee access to health services. **Aexcel designation is only a guide to choosing a physician. Members should confer with their existing physicians and the specialists they're selecting before making a decision. Designations have the risk of error and should not be the sole basis for selecting a doctor.** Not all health services are covered. See plan documents for a complete description of benefits, exclusions, limitations and conditions of coverage. Health insurance plans contain exclusions and limitations. Information is believed to be accurate as of the production date; however, it is subject to change. For more information about Aetna plans, refer to www.aetna.com.

Policy forms issued in Oklahoma include: GR-23 and/or GR-29/GR-29N.

