

New Trio HMO Plan Virtual PCP and Medical Group Option

Expanded to 28 counties effective January 1, 2025

Frequently Asked Questions December 2024

Resources for Providers:

In addition to this list of frequently asked questions, we encourage you to take advantage of the following resources available to you regarding the Trio HMO plan virtual PCP and medical group option, and how to provide and bill for services for any Trio HMO members referred to you for in-person services:

1. Register for our January 15, 2025 provider webinar

Blue Shield Trio HMO provider webinar: Providing in-person care for members assigned to virtual PCPs

Wednesday, January 15, 2025, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. PT

To register, type this URL into your web browser: TINYURL.COM/011525webinar

Or use your smartphone camera to scan this QR code:



2. Download our Provider Guide

Type this URL into your browser to go directly to the guide: TINYURL.COM/TrioHMOvirtualPCP

General information

1. In which California service areas is the virtual PCP and medical group option available to Trio HMO plan members?

Trio HMO members who reside within the designated ZIP code service areas in the counties listed below and who select or are assigned by Blue Shield to PlushCare of California, P.C, dba Accolade Care, may use this virtual care option.

Alameda	Kings	Orange	San Diego	Santa Barbara	Tulare
Contra Costa	Los Angeles	Placer	San Francisco	Santa Clara	Ventura
El Dorado	Marin	Riverside	San Joaquin	Santa Cruz	Yolo
Fresno	Monterey	Sacramento	San Luis Obispo	Solano	
Kern	Nevada	San Bernardino	San Mateo	Stanislaus	

2. Who is Accolade Care?

Accolade Care (the dba of PlushCare of California, P.C.) is a California-licensed medical group that provides virtual primary care and mental health services and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Accolade, Inc. Accolade, Inc., develops and operates the virtual platform that members will use to access virtual care services. It is the parent company of Accolade Care PlushCare of California, P.C. (dba Accolade Care).

3. What is Telemedicine Group P.C., dba TeleMed2U, Inc.?

Telemedicine Group P.C., dba TeleMed2U, Inc. is a California-licensed medical group and independent entity that operates through the Accolade, Inc. virtual care platform to deliver virtual specialist care from clinicians. When appropriate, Accolade Care may refer patients to receive virtual care from these specialists. If in-person specialist care is determined to be medically necessary, Accolade Care will refer the patient to an in-person care provider within the Trio HMO Network in most cases.

4. Are there additional out-of-pocket costs for members who are assigned to an Accolade Care virtual PCP?

No, there are no additional out-of-pocket costs for care for members assigned to the Accolade Care medical group. Those Trio HMO plan members will have the same types of copays and deductibles as a member who is assigned to an "in-person" medical group within the Trio HMO network.

5. How does the Accolade Care virtual PCP option potentially improve the healthcare experience?

Having this virtual option provides more opportunities for members to make and attend clinical appointments more quickly and conveniently, and only go to in-person visits when it is determined to be medically necessary by Accolade Care/their virtual PCP. In addition, it may help in-person medical groups in the Trio HMO Network by freeing up in-person appointment slots for others.

6. How would a Trio HMO plan member switch from Accolade Care to an in-person group/PCP?

Any members assigned to the Accolade Care medical group can switch to an in-person medical group and PCP at any time. If a member PHONES Blue Shield Member Services to switch from the Accolade Care medical group to an in-person PCP and medical group, the switch becomes effective immediately and the capitation for the member is effective retro-active to the first of the month during which the switch is made.

If the member requests the switch ONLINE (at blueshieldca.com), the switch will not become effective until the first of the following month, in accordance with Blue Shield's business rule for switching to a different medical group under an HMO plan, and the capitation funds would begin that following month.

7. Can any Trio HMO plan member use Accolade Care PCPs for virtual primary care appointments?

No. Only those Trio HMO plan members assigned to the Accolade Care virtual medical group can schedule virtual primary care appointments with Accolade Care.

8. How does an in-person provider identify Trio HMO plan members assigned to Accolade Care?

On the member's plan ID card, Accolade Care will appear as the assigned medical group. This same information will appear on the member's eligibility record online at Provider Connection, blueshieldca.com/provider.

Referrals and care coordination

9. How does Accolade Care issue referrals for in-person care?

When an Accolade Care PCP or specialist determines that in-person care is medically necessary, a member of the Accolade Care team assists the member in identifying a Trio HMO Network in-person provider. Accolade Care faxes a referral directly to the in-person provider and the Accolade Care team drives follow-up and outreach related to the referral and to associated care.

The Accolade Care referral form includes:

- Patient information and eligibility
- Name of the requesting Accolade Care virtual care provider with contact information
- Requested servicing provider/facility
- Reason for referral with diagnosis codes
- Authorization #: If Accolade Care secures authorization for an in-person service (when an authorization is required), the authorization number will be included on the referral.
- Desired services
- Referral "valid through" date
- Referring physician's signature

Once the referral is received and the patient is seen by the in-person provider, that provider submits any required authorization requests if needed, provides the care, and submits claims directly to Blue Shield for reimbursement.

10. If a Trio HMO member is referred to me by Accolade Care for an in-person office visit, does my practice need to obtain prior authorization to see the member for the office visit?

No, when you receive a referral from Accolade Care to see a Trio HMO plan member for an in-person office visit, you do not need to obtain prior authorization for that visit, and the office visit will be covered as an in-network visit for the member. You will need to submit authorization requests directly to Blue Shield, if or when applicable, for any subsequent in-person services or procedures you plan to provide.

11. How can a Trio HMO Network in-person provider contact the member's Accolade Care virtual PCP?

When an Accolade Care assigned Trio HMO plan member is referred to an in-person provider, the referral form will include contact information for the referring Accolade virtual PCP and/or care team.

Provider billing for in-person care

12. How do Trio HMO network providers bill for in-person care provided to an Accolade Care assigned member?

When the Accolade Care virtual PCP refers the member to an in-person PCP or specialist in the Trio HMO Network for medical services, billing occurs in one of the following ways:

The in-person care provider bills Blue Shield under their affiliated in-person IPA/medical group's tax identification number, and in accordance with the IPA/medical group's agreement with Blue Shield regarding services to members who are not assigned to that IPA/medical group.

OR

The in-person care provider bills Blue Shield directly, under their individual agreement as a directly contracted HMO or PPO provider, using the tax identification number associated with their agreement.

13. How do in-person providers bill if they are contracted with Blue Shield, but not for one of the Trio HMO Networks?

When referring for in-person care, Accolade Care will first work with the member to identify a Trio HMO Network provider that meets the member's needs, taking into consideration medical necessity, clinical specialty, distance, etc.

If, for any reason, it is necessary for Accolade Care to refer the Trio HMO member to a provider outside of a Trio HMO Network, but within Blue Shield's larger network, Accolade Care will work with Blue Shield to complete any necessary steps in accordance with business rules and authorizations, to ensure that the member receives covered services as "in-network" care.

The patient will not be held accountable for additional costs normally applied to out-of-network care for covered services. Blue Shield will reimburse the in-person servicing provider directly at their Blue Shield contracted rate.

Blue Shield contacts

If you have any questions about providing services or submitting claims for Trio HMO members assigned to the Accolade Care virtual medical group, please contact the Blue Shield Provider Customer Service team via Live Chat after logging in at www.blueshieldca.com/provider or by telephone at (800) 541-6652, 6 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. PT, Monday through Friday.