



Blue Shield of California Launches Virtual Blue Benefit Plan Incorporating Primary, Mental Health, and Specialty Care

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The nonprofit health plan teams up with Accolade and TeleMed2U to connect members to virtual and in-person care through a new, virtual-first plan.

OAKLAND, Calif., Jan. 30, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Blue Shield of California today unveiled its [Virtual Blue health benefits plan](#) offering members easy-to-access, comprehensive care through a team of "virtual-first" primary, behavioral, and specialist healthcare professionals.

In addition to virtual care, members can access Blue Shield of California's statewide preferred provider organization (PPO) network for in-person care, plus national BlueCard and global GeoBlue coverage when care is needed outside of California. The plan, effective April 1, 2023, is now available to be selected by Blue Shield's employer customers as a benefits offering for employees.

A dedicated care team, right at members' fingertips

Key features of Virtual Blue include \$0 out-of-pocket cost (no copay, nor deductible charges) for the following virtual care services:

- Primary care, including pediatrics, family medicine, and internal medicine
- Specialty care that includes 20 specialties
- Integrated mental health care for members ages 4 and older, including access to psychologists, psychiatrists, licensed clinical social workers (LCSW), and marriage and family therapists (MFT)
- 24/7 urgent care

The benefit plan offers simple online booking for virtual appointments. Copays and deductibles will apply when using an in-person provider or a virtual provider outside of Virtual Blue's platform.

"This is health care the way it should be – integrated and accessible care that puts the member and their health at the center," said Tim Lieb, senior vice president at Blue Shield of California. "The access to behavioral health services is especially important as our members cope and overcome the impact of the pandemic on their own lives. As a mission-driven nonprofit health plan, Blue Shield is committed to creating a healthcare system worthy of our family and friends that's sustainably affordable, and Virtual Blue is the latest example of that."

Accessible, integrated care experience that emphasizes doctor-patient relationships to support whole-person care

In Accolade's Advanced Primary Care model, physicians work with a team of certified health coaches, care coordinators, and nurses who help members pursue health and wellness goals, manage chronic conditions and coordinate specialty and in-person care.

Virtual Blue members can choose an Accolade primary care physician based on criteria such as gender, race, years of experience, and language. All virtual care, including mental health and specialty care, is available on a single platform. Accolade's virtual primary care physicians have achieved a 90% patient satisfaction score. They are 62% female and nearly 40% Black, Indigenous, or people of color. All physicians are board certified in a primary care specialty, and members can choose physicians with experience in providing support to LGBTQIA+ individuals.

"We believe that health care should be available to everyone and that primary care and mental health services are critical to making health care work for people," said Rajeev Singh, Accolade CEO. "We are excited to collaborate with Blue Shield of California on this virtual-first plan designed to make care available in new and innovative ways. Together, we aim to deliver better access, improved health outcomes, and personalized experiences for members."

Virtual Blue also offers 20 types of virtual specialists through California-based TeleMed2U.

Members preferring in-person provider visits can still access Blue Shield's Tandem PPO Network of nearly 40,000 physicians across California. While virtual care accessed through the Virtual Blue platform comes at no out-of-pocket cost to the member, copay and deductible costs will apply for in-person care and virtual care outside of the platform.

To learn more about Virtual Blue, go to <https://www.blueshieldca.com/virtualblue>. Commercial groups interested in offering Virtual Blue for employees can visit the product web page: <https://group.blueshieldca.com/coverage-solutions/virtual-blue/>.

About Blue Shield of California

Blue Shield of California strives to create a healthcare system worthy of its family and friends that is sustainably affordable. Blue Shield of California is a tax-paying, nonprofit, independent member of the Blue Shield Association with 4.7 million members, 7,800 employees, and \$22.9 billion in annual revenue. Founded in 1939 in San Francisco and now headquartered in Oakland, Blue Shield of California and its affiliates provide health, dental, vision, Medicaid, and Medicare healthcare service plans in California. The company has contributed \$120 million to Blue Shield of California Foundation in the last three years to have an impact on California communities.

For more news about Blue Shield of California, please visit news.blueshieldca.com.

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About Accolade

Accolade (Nasdaq: ACCD) provides millions of people and their families with an exceptional healthcare experience that is personal, data driven, and value-based to help every person live their healthiest life. Accolade solutions combine virtual primary care, mental health support, and expert medical opinion services with intelligent technology and best-in-class care navigation. Accolade's Personalized Healthcare approach puts humanity back in healthcare by building relationships that connect people and their families to the right care at the right time to improve outcomes, lower costs and deliver consumer satisfaction. Accolade consistently receives consumer satisfaction ratings of over 90%. For more information, visit accolade.com.

About TeleMed2U

TeleMed2U is revolutionizing the way patients access specialty care, providing real-time access to over 275+ specialist care providers across 20 Specialties. TeleMed2U's clinical team of experts, with decades of experience, are passionate about combining technology and quality care to offer the best experience for the patients. With end-to-end patient care, TeleMed2U ensures high continuity of care for recurring patients by providing access to a single, sustained, patient care team. TeleMed2U has developed a transformational multispecialty patient care platform that serves businesses, PCPs, payor networks, health systems, and employer groups, making an array of specialties including behavioral health, endocrinology, infectious diseases and many more readily available to the patient. TeleMed2U is dedicated to providing quality and affordable care, visit telem2u.com to learn more.

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