

The Washington Hospital Has Been Designated as a Blue Distinction Center for Knee and Hip ReplacementSM

Washington, PA - Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Pittsburgh, PA has designated The Washington Hospital as a Blue Distinction Center for Knee and Hip Replacement. Blue Distinction Centers for Knee and Hip Replacement are part of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association's expansion of its Blue Distinction[®] designation.

"We are honored to receive this distinction from Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield. Our patients, physicians, staff and community now have further evidence that The Washington Hospital's clinical quality is at an exceptional level," said Telford W. Thomas, president and CEO of The Washington Hospital.

The Washington Hospital Center for Orthopedics and Neurosciences offers comprehensive knee and hip replacement services, including board-certified orthopedic surgeons, pre-operative education, and an individualized in-patient recovery process with support and assistance through the entire continuum of care.

"This program supports Highmark's consumerism approach to give members a greater hand in their health by providing tools to help members make informed choices about their health care," said Carey Vinson, M.D., Vice President for Quality and Medical Performance Management at Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield. "The Blue Distinction Centers designation offers members reliable quality-based information pertaining to Blue network-participating facilities when selecting a provider."

"Blue Distinction puts a high value on research and evidence-based health and medical information," said Allan Korn, MD, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association Chief Medical Officer. "Blue Distinction Centers show our commitment to working with doctors and hospitals in communities across the country to identify leading institutions that meet clinically validated quality standards and deliver better overall outcomes in patient care."

The selection criteria used to evaluate facilities were developed with input from a panel of expert physicians. To be designated as a Blue Distinction Center for Knee and Hip Replacement, the following types of criteria were evaluated. More information on selection criteria is available on www.bcbs.com:

- Established acute care inpatient facility, including intensive care, emergency care, and a full range of patient support services with full accreditation by a CMS-deemed national accreditation organization
- Experience and training of program surgeons, including case volume
- Quality management programs, including surgical checklists as well as tracking and evaluation of clinical outcomes and process of care
- Multi-disciplinary clinical pathways and teams to coordinate and streamline care, including transitions of care
- Shared decision making and preoperative patient education

The Blue Distinction designation is awarded by the Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield plans to medical facilities that have demonstrated expertise in delivering quality healthcare in the areas of bariatric surgery, cardiac care, complex and rare cancers, knee and hip replacement, spine surgery and transplants. The program is part of The Blues[®] efforts to collaborate with physicians and medical facilities to improve the overall quality and safety of specialty care.

The additional Blue Distinction Centers for Knee and Hip Replacement designations will bring the nation's number of Blue Distinction designations to more than 1,600—and this number is expected to increase in the coming years.

Note: Designation as Blue Distinction Centers means these facilities' overall experience and aggregate data met objective criteria established in collaboration with expert clinicians' and leading professional organizations'

recommendations. Individual outcomes may vary. To find out which services are covered under your policy at any facilities, please call your local Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan.