

***What is the BCBS policy in your state as it relates to direct reimbursement of audiologists for audiology diagnostic procedures?***

STATE	YES	NO	COMMENTS
AL		✓	<p>In Alabama, you must have a physician referral in order to be reimbursed as a private practice audiologist. The evaluation must be done for medical reasons rather than the purpose of evaluating for or fitting a hearing aid. Of course the "cleaning crew" could be reimbursed for doing hearing testing if its done in a physician's office. It is very frustrating. Pat LaCoste</p> <p>BC/BS of Alabama will not pay directly to Audiologists for diagnostic services. Steven D. Smith Director of Audiology ENT Associates of Alabama Physicians Hearing &amp; Balance Center Montgomery, Alabama (334) 284-5470 Extension 22</p>
AZ	✓		<p>I asked the business office here at Mayo just to be sure. BCBS of AZ does NOT have the restrictions on audiology billing that MI does. Audiologists are free to bill independently. This information was obtained from the BCBS office in AZ. Steve H. - AZ</p>
CA	✓		<p>I'm fairly certain that audiologists can bill BC/BS directly for audiological services in California. I say fairly certain because most patients in my practice have been referred to me initially by MDs, but I will then see them for many years after for audiological services. I always get paid directly for them. In some cases, I have had to submit a hearing aid prescription with the bill to the insurance company, but that is inconsistent. Marcia Raggio San Francisco, CA</p>
CO	✓		<p>Colorado Blue Cross/Blue Shield currently reimburses audiologists directly with a physician's referral for diagnostic services. DR. TERRY CUMMINGS, Au.D. STERLING, CO 970-522-8622</p>
CT	✓		<p>I am a CT BCBS provider in private practice 9 years. I have UPIN numbers and bill BCBS directly with direct reimbursement. They have many plans (+/- 30) of which I can participate with all. They have given me a different provider number for their Medicaid plan vs. regular plans. Both in and out-of state plans are billable. Cathee Alex, Au.D</p>
FL		✓	<p>I am in Florida. When I was president of the organization, we went to BCBS for the state and they still will not pay or recognize and independent audiologist. If you are in a physician's office, then there is no problem. I have forwarded this email on to others in our state in case there have been changes. To this day, we get paid when BCBS is secondary but not primary. Cindy Simon</p>

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IA		✓	We in Iowa have been fighting this battle also. Currently, BCBS does not reimburse audiologists for their services. They will reimburse for audiology testing, but only if billed by a physician. Ken Lowder
IL	✓		Sorry to learn of the problems you have had with BC/BS but I am not surprised. Dealing with them can be "challenging." First of all, they sometimes deny coverage and say that they "do not recognize this type of provider." Speaking to department heads and supervisors at BC in Chicago, we were finally able to get this corrected. Terminology seems to be important and you have to say, "audiologists are non-solicited providers." I have personally dealt with BC/BS of Michigan in the case of some retired autoworkers who've had HA benefits. It was a battle but they finally paid us. In those cases, the person we spoke with was a BC employee who worked at the Ford plant as an on-site liaison. Her name is: Mary Chambliss (1-800-482-5141 or 4047 @ ext. 8529). I am thinking that the fact that she has processed claims and paid audiologists directly does show that it is done (a precedent set, so whomever you are dealing with can't say, it just is not done). Perhaps this will help you. Also, good ole Wal-Mart is good for something-did you have this info on their battle with BC and direct audiology access? (See attachment) They even showed BC that dealing with audiologists directly was a cost savings-may be why the ENTs are giving you grief! Deb Pitcher Co-Chair Reimbursement Committee Illinois Academy of Audiology  "Wal-Mart-Audiologists Gain Ground" article.
KS	✓		In Kansas any licensed Audiologist that contracts with BCBS is reimbursed directly. Kim Sykes KSHA VP for Audiology Ksha96@aol.com
KY	✓		Kentucky has direct access for all BCBS plans. No referral is necessary.  Pam Ison  <a href="#">I get paid from BCBS in KY without having to have physician referral for Audiology and Vestibular Testing.</a> <a href="#">Marion Caldwell</a>
MA	✓		You may also hear from Brian Fligor, also of Massachusetts. About 5 years ago, we got an any willing provider law through so we have our own provider numbers. It covered indemnity insurers and HMOs. BCBSMA is happy and so are we! Craig Johnson of Virginia was the man of the hour with an actuarial report of our services. The Commonwealth of Virginia ordered it (thank you

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			<p>AAA - we met at a state luncheon!). This convinced our legislature to pass the law. We also used an article by Barry Freeman and I think Ian Windmill that appeared in Seminars on Hearing in the mid to late 90s. It discussed how direct access to us saved money. I may have kept it, but I'm sure it can be found. HMOs had been allowing us to bill for quite awhile and I think they helped our cause. I will see if I can dig up any fact sheets we used. The bill took over a decade to pass so it caught ENT totally off-guard. David Citron, my boss, negotiated codes with BCBSMA, also with Craig's help. Mass state law for provider status - also as a word doc attachment. Go to <a href="http://www.mass.gov">www.mass.gov</a> if more laws desired.</p> <p>Mary Ellen Curran Past President MSHA Voice 781-337-6860</p>  <p>"GENERAL LAWS OF MASSACHUSETTS.do</p> <p>BCBS of Massachusetts allows their members to access an audiologist directly. I spoke with the BCBS of MA contact person just a couple weeks ago asking if there have been any complaints or problems that he was aware of since their change in policy, and he said no. This change was precipitated by passing of legislation here in MA: Chapter 345 of the Acts of 2000 - <a href="http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw00/sl000345.htm">http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw00/sl000345.htm</a> Brian Fligor</p> <p>BCBS Massachusetts reimburses directly to audiologists. No referral is necessary, even when there is an HMO program. All Patients have direct access to diagnostic audiology services. My experience with BCBS Massachusetts has been great. Dierdre Anderson Au.D Audiology Network Services</p>
ME	✓		<p>In Maine, we bill under our own provider numbers but need to have a physician's referral - the doctor's name and their UPIN number have to be on the claim form. Caroline Hyde</p> <p>In Maine BCBS recognizes audiologists as independent providers. They reimburse us directly and not only pay for the diagnostic services 92557, 92567, etc., but also for an office visit. Carolyn Gaiero, AuD</p>
MN	✓		<p>In Minnesota, audiologists are recognized as providers and reimbursed at the same rate as physicians by all insurance companies. I am also a preferred provider with BCBS, as are most audiologists, I believe. If BCBS is reviewing</p>

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			<p>this, they may also be directed to the CMS web site or published materials, which very specifically state what codes an audiologist can bill with them. I suspect that the AMA may also have some similar things published through the cpt Assistant, but that would take some checking. That would be a powerful argument against the ENTs, however, if their own national organization (one which also created the CPT codes) supported audiologists billing certain codes. I would think that would be worth someone's time.</p> <p>I can also ask a favor of a watchdog/consulting organization to see if they know of AMA published statements to this effect. If I hear anything, I will let you know.</p> <p>John Coverstone</p> <p>Audiologists are recognized and paid directly by BCBS in Minnesota for diagnostic audiology evaluations. Most, but not all, BCBS plans in Minnesota require a physician referral.</p> <p>Julie Perrault</p>
MO	✓		<p>I am in private practice in Missouri, and have had no difficulty becoming a provider for diagnostic services with BCBS. My partner and I each have our own provider number as allied health professionals and a physician referral is not required for reimbursement. In addition to basic diagnostics, we also provide and receive reimbursement for OAE's. We do not provide ENG or ABR, but assume that they would also be reimbursed. Just a note - in Missouri - cerumen management was placed into our scope of practice and we also bill for and receive reimbursement for this procedure. We recently began billing for office visits and have thus far been reimbursed for those as well.</p> <p>Steve Brown, AuD Brown and Willen Audiology Center Cape Girardeau, MO</p>
MT	✓		<p>BCBS provides direct reimbursement to audiologists for hearing and balance procedures in the state of Montana. They have been since I started in 1979.</p> <p>Doug Rehder</p>
ND	✓		<p>Audiologists in ND have their own provider number and can bill directly.</p> <p>Brian Qvammen</p>
NH	✓		<p>In New Hampshire, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield recognizes licensed audiologists as direct access for diagnostic procedures. We complete a standard allied health provider application. We do not need to bill under a physician.</p> <p>Carol Manning</p> <p>Anthem BCBS, in NH, does directly recognize and reimburse audiologists, even those in practice without an associated physician (private practice).</p> <p>Laura Robertson</p>
NJ	✓		<p>In New Jersey, I am direct provider of audiology services for BCBS. Some of their contracts call for referral from the PCP (not an ENT) but most of them accept me as a direct provider. You might suggest that by going the ENT route, the BCBS incurs a higher expense. Since many ENTs employ audiologists to do</p>

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			the real work, the ENT is enriched by charging for the physician's services and the audiology service. Gran Brady, Au.D.
PA	✓		In PA, we need to participate with BCBS and do not need to have physician referral to be able to submit for reimbursement. That is the same in Fla and for Federal BS. Please note that this is a cost savings to BCBS (multiple office visit charges) without a reduction of patient quality of care as Audiologists perform (or should) all tests in the ENT office. We have licensure that allows us to participate with BCBS. Jim Shafer, Au.D.  Pennsylvania audiologists have direct reimbursement for audiology services. Susan Parr Au.D.
RI	✓		BCBS of Rhode Island recognizes audiologists as providers (if they have a provider number) and audiologists can be directly reimbursed for services rendered. Rachel Baboian, AuD, FAAA, CCC-A Doctor of Audiology
SC	✓		In South Carolina we bill directly and are reimbursed directly. Bob Poland Greenville  In South Carolina, audiologists are recognized as participating providers with state BCBS. We have our own provider number and do not have to bill under a physician. Lynn Llehman
SD		✓	South Dakota is the same as Michigan. We do not get reimbursed as a private practice even with a physician referral. We are not recognized as providers. I have just begun the preliminary work on this to force a change. Todd Decker
TN	✓		I am replying for my partner, Helen Hallenbeck, who is president of the TN Academy of Audiology.  BC/BS of TN recognizes private practice audiologists as providers. We are directly reimbursed by them for diagnostic procedures. Unfortunately, BC/BSTN more or less adopted the Medicare fee schedule a year ago and have dropped their reimbursement rates quite a bit. Also, unfortunately, they are trying to tie our provider status to the CCC-A. Reed Norwood, Au.D. Board Certified in Audiology <a href="mailto:amsi@citlink.net">amsi@citlink.net</a>
TX	✓		In Texas, audiologists may apply for and receive a personal identification number (PIN) from Blue Cross Blue Shield, and may then bill directly for services rendered to patients according to the patient's contract with Blue Cross Blue Shield. It is not necessary for audiologists in Texas to bill incident to a

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			<p>physician. Phillip L. Wilson, Au.D., CCC/A VP of Professional Issues Texas Academy of Audiology (214) 905-3036</p> <p>There are five different BC/BS plans in Texas (HMO Blue, Choice, Choice-Select, BC/BS, and on other I cannot remember). I am a contracted provider for all of the five of them. It took many years of constant talking and educating the local BC/BS representative on what an audiologist is and what I do and what I bill for. There are still bumps occasionally regarding what they pay for hearing aids. There is no consistency. Very frustrating at times. Kerry Ormson Amarillo, Texas</p> <p>In Texas, audiologists may be contracted with BCBST as independent service providers and are paid directly by BCBST for diagnostic services. Covered services may vary from plan to plan within the BCBST network. We do need to have a referral generated by the primary care physician, usually a family practice physician. With most PCP's it is not necessary for the patient to see the physician, a referral can be generated within the BCBST network. In addition to diagnostic services, some BCBST plans cover hearing aids. The level of coverage for hearing aids depends on the plan that the employer as purchased from BCBST. Todd H. Porter, AuD</p>
UT	✓		<p>In Utah, audiologists do receive direct reimbursement from BCBS of Utah. At our particular facility (IHC Hearing and Balance Center), we have apparently signed a contract with BCBS. The testing does not have to be directed by a physician nor do they require a physician referral although we do prefer having a physician referral. Bryan J Layton, Au.D. Assistant Director IHC Hearing and Balance Center SLC, UT 801-595-1700 <a href="mailto:hbblayto@ihc.com">hbblayto@ihc.com</a></p>
VT	✓		<p>Vermont BCBS does pay Audiologist directly Bob Hartenstein</p>
WI	✓		<p>In Wisconsin, BC/BS reimburses independently billing audiologists for diagnostics and hearing aids when ordered by physician. Meredy Hase, Au.D. Doctor of Audiology President Hearing Services Limited Waukesha, Wisconsin</p>

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