

PREFIX TO INCLUDE NUMBERS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What's changing?

Effective April 15, 2018, all BCBS plans and providers must be able to accept alphanumeric prefixes, which combine letters and numbers. Premera and all other Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) companies will use these prefixes for new plans. Existing BCBS plans won't change existing alpha prefixes.

What does my organization need to do?

If your IT system limits the BCBS prefix to a 3-character, alpha-only prefix, you'll need to make any needed changes before April 15.



What's a prefix?

A prefix is a 3-character code that appears on each BCBS member's ID card. Currently, prefixes feature alphabet letters and are known as alpha prefixes. As a BCBS company, Premera is participating in a change to alphanumeric prefixes across our national association.

Where is the prefix located on the member ID card, and how is it used?

The 3-character prefix is located below the member's name, on the upper left side of the card. It's followed by a longer ID number. Each prefix represents a different BCBS health plan. For example, Premera provides health plans for national and local employers, labor unions, associations, and through the state healthcare exchange. Each of these health plans is represented by a prefix. Providers and BCBS plans use the prefix to confirm each member's eligibility and coverage, and to correctly route claims for processing. See examples of prefixes below.

Alpha prefix

PREMERA  BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF ALASKA <small>An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association</small>	
Member IMA MEMBER	Medical Network AK HERITAGE
Prefix Identification # Suffix ZKF 123456789 01	Rx Plan B4
Group # 1234567	
Rx Group # BCWAPDP BIN# 610014	OFFICE VISIT COPAY \$30 EMERGENCY ROOM \$100
BCBS 430	RETAIL RX \$10/\$30/\$50/30% MAIL-ORDER RX \$25/\$75/\$125/30%
Rx	

Alphanumeric prefix

PREMERA |
BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF ALASKA
An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association

Member
IMA MEMBER
Prefix **Identification #** **Suffix**
ZK2 123456789 01

Medical Network AK HERITAGE

Rx Plan B4

Group # 1234567
Rx Group # BCWAPDP
BIN# 610014
BCBS 430

OFFICE VISIT COPAY \$30
EMERGENCY ROOM \$100
RETAIL RX \$10/\$30/\$50/30%
MAIL-ORDER RX \$25/\$75/\$125/30%

Rx

Why is Blue Cross Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) changing the alpha prefix to an alphanumeric prefix?

Since the prefixes use letters, there are a limited number of combinations and a growing number of plans. Switching to letter-number combinations gives us many more options.

Who in my organization should be notified about this change?

You'll want to communicate this information to your IT leaders and vendors, front desk, patient scheduling team, claims team, and others whose work could be affected. BCBSA has been working with healthcare information technology vendors to prepare them to assist their customers with the changes to our prefix system. Several other insurers also use alphanumeric prefixes, so your IT systems may already be ready to accept the change.

Will front desk interactions change?

Front desk interactions will remain the same. When BCBS members arrive at your office or facility, continue to ask to see their current member identification cards (ID cards) at each visit. This will help you:

- Identify the member's product
- Obtain health plan contact information
- Speed claims processing

Remember: ID cards are for identification purposes only; they don't guarantee eligibility or payment of the claim. You should always verify patient eligibility. For Premera members, use our eligibility and benefits tool, available on our website through OneHealthPort access. You can verify eligibility for members of other BCBS plans by calling 1.800.676.BLUE (2583).

You'll continue to submit the member prefix to conduct everyday transactions and to check eligibility and benefits in the same manner as you do today. Current prefixes will remain active unless cancelled by an account.

Will the alphanumeric prefix still have 3 characters?

Yes, the change to alphanumeric allows us to keep the current 3-character prefix.

Will the whole prefix be numeric?

No, a prefix can't be all numeric.

Are there any restrictions on the numeric characters?

Yes, zero and one won't be used. The numeric characters will be 2 through 9.

Who can I contact with a question?

If you have a question, please email PlanPrefixUpdates@premera.com.

Please include the following in your request:

- "Plan Prefix Question" in the subject line
- Contact name and phone number
- How you want us to respond to your question (via email or phone call)

Note: It may take us 5 business days to respond to your question.