

## Blue Distinction Centers for Bariatric Surgery®

---

### ***The Comprehensive Bariatric Center at Providence Has Been Designated as a Blue Distinction Center for Bariatric Surgery®***

**WACO, TEXAS** - Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas has designated ***the Comprehensive Bariatric Center at Providence*** as a Blue Distinction Center for Bariatric Surgery. To date, more than 230 facilities nationwide have received a Blue Distinction Center for Bariatric Surgery designation.

Obesity is widely recognized as a contributor to serious health risks. According to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), the total number of bariatric surgeries increased 400 percent from 1998 to 2004. Bariatric surgery may help some individuals reduce extreme obesity and its associated health risks, and Blue Distinction provides objective information to help them make informed decisions when choosing a provider.

***The Comprehensive Bariatric Center at Providence*** provides a full range of bariatric surgery care services, including inpatient care, post-operative care, outpatient follow-up and patient education.

*“We are pleased that the designation of Blue Distinction Centers provides our members with practical information to help them make better health care decisions when they are faced with the need for bariatric surgery,” says Dr. Eduardo Sanchez, vice president and chief medical officer, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas. “The designation of Blue Distinction Centers also provides another opportunity for Blue Cross to demonstrate our commitment to working with physicians and hospitals in our network who deliver care that meets the high quality standards of this special program.”*

*Blue Distinction puts a high value on research and evidence-based health and medical information,” says 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.”*

To be designated as a Blue Distinction Center for Bariatric Surgery, ***the Comprehensive Bariatric Center at Providence*** met the selection criteria posted at [www.BCBS.com](http://www.BCBS.com), which, includes:

- an established bariatric surgery program, actively performing these procedures for the most recent 12-month period and performing a required minimum volume of 125 such surgeries annually
- appropriate experience of its bariatric surgery team
- an acute care inpatient facility, including intensive care and emergency services
- full accreditation by The Joint Commission, Healthcare Facilities Accreditation Program (HFAP) or national equivalent\*\*
- a comprehensive quality management program

Blue Distinction is a designation awarded by Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies to medical facilities that have demonstrated expertise in delivering quality healthcare. The designation is based on rigorous, evidence-based selection criteria established in collaboration with expert physicians' and medical organizations recommendations. Today, more than 800 Blue Distinction

Center designations have been awarded to facilities nationwide, providing consumers with a framework for making informed decisions on where to go for specialty care in the areas of bariatric surgery, cardiac care, complex and rare cancers, and transplants.

*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.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas -- the only statewide, customer-owned health insurer in Texas -- is the largest provider of health benefits in the state, working with nearly 40,000 physicians and 400 hospitals to serve over 4.5 million members in all 254 counties. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas is a Division of Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC), the country's largest customer-owned health insurer and fourth largest health insurer overall. HCSC is a Mutual Legal Reserve Company and an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.