

Preferred Lab Network

Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

UnitedHealthcare will launch the Preferred Lab Network on July 1, 2019. The Preferred Lab Network will feature currently contracted laboratory care providers that have met higher standards for access, cost, data, quality and service based upon a rigorous application and review process. We will work with these distinguished labs to continue our efforts to improve the care provider and member experience.

We reached out to 269 independent freestanding participating labs in the UnitedHealthcare network and invited them to apply to join the Preferred Lab Network program. We received 91 completed applications that were assessed against access, cost, data, quality and service criteria. The criteria are proprietary to UnitedHealthcare and, at a minimum, include advanced certifications beyond Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA), online capabilities and data security requirements.

The following labs were selected to the Preferred Lab Network, effective July 1, 2019:

- AmeriPath
- BioReference Laboratories
- GeneDx
- Invitae
- LabCorp
- Mayo Clinic Laboratory
- Quest Diagnostics, Inc.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is UnitedHealthcare starting a Preferred Lab Network?

We started the UnitedHealthcare Preferred Lab Network as a way for us to work in a value-based care model with selected lab service providers. This means that participating labs can offer physicians and members improved quality, access and service, at a lower cost of care. Focused on the Triple Aim, we selected the Preferred Lab Network care providers based on rigorous review criteria that we believe will indicate for our members and physicians which outpatient labs are conveniently located, high quality and offer the best value for their dollar.

How does the preferred lab network work?

The Preferred Lab Network is a subset of the existing UnitedHealthcare laboratory network. The physician and member will not need to do anything differently to access services from these care providers. These care providers participating in the preferred lab network will be designated in the UnitedHealthcare care provider directories.

Key Points

Effective July 1, 2019, UnitedHealthcare launches the Preferred Lab Network.

The Preferred Lab Network won't change a member's access to labs or lab services.

Using the Preferred Lab Network may offer additional advantages for UnitedHealthcare members.

Will UnitedHealthcare steer members to use Preferred Lab Network care providers?

When we highlight labs participating in the Preferred Lab Network, we're giving members and physicians information about a lab provider's quality, access and potential cost. The Preferred Lab Network doesn't limit a member's or physician's choices. They can continue to use any lab in our network.

Which types of labs were eligible to apply to be a part of the Preferred Lab Network?

Freestanding independent labs that currently participate in the UnitedHealthcare network were eligible to apply for the Preferred Lab Network. To be accepted into the Preferred Lab Network, labs are required to meet access, cost, data, quality, and service criteria.

If a hospital lab would like to apply to be part of the Preferred Lab Network, they'll need to contract with us as a freestanding lab provider and meet the Preferred Lab Network criteria. Hospital labs can contact their network contract manager for more information.

Why did labs have to apply to be a part of the Preferred Lab Network?

We required labs to apply to help ensure that the labs chosen for the Preferred Lab Network met requirements based on a new set of access, cost, quality and service criteria.

What happens if a lab applied but isn't accepted into the Preferred Lab Network?

We notified the labs on April 17, 2019, that their application was not accepted. Labs that are not part of the Preferred Lab Network are still part of our extensive lab network and our members continue to have access to these labs for services.

How often will UnitedHealthcare evaluate labs to be part of the Preferred Lab Network?

Contracted independent freestanding labs may reapply each year to be evaluated against the criteria. We'll announce the opening of the next application window in the Network Bulletin. You can see the monthly Network Bulletin at UHCprovider.com/news.

Will Preferred Lab Network labs be able to perform all lab tests/services for members?

Preferred Lab Network labs will perform covered tests. However, available services may vary by lab. The lab's Preferred Lab Network directory listing will include the type of testing available. The lab's website will also list the type of tests performed and their locations.

If a lab is not part of the Preferred Lab Network, will that affect their UnitedHealthcare Participation Agreement?

Labs that did not meet criteria for the Preferred Lab Network will continue to participate in UnitedHealthcare's network as outlined in their Participation Agreement.

Does the Preferred Lab Network affect notification or prior authorization requirements?

No. Any updates to plan notification/prior authorization requirements will be posted at UHCprovider.com/priorauth and in the Administrative Guide at UHCprovider.com/guides.

Will an ordering care provider have to do anything differently to request services from a lab in the Preferred Lab Network?

No. We want to help make the overall process as simple as possible, so ordering care providers will continue to interact as usual with all UnitedHealthcare participating labs.

Will claims from labs in the Preferred Lab Network be processed differently?

No. Claims for Preferred Lab Network care providers will continue to process as they do today. You can find the information on submitting claims at UHCprovider.com/claims and in the Administrative Guide at UHCprovider.com/guides.

What criteria did UnitedHealthcare use to determine if a lab can join the Preferred Lab Network?

The criteria are proprietary to UnitedHealthcare and, at a minimum, include advanced certifications beyond CLIA, online capabilities and data security requirements.

Will all markets have access to the Preferred Lab Network?

UnitedHealthcare is establishing a Preferred Laboratory Network so that physicians and their patients receive improved access, quality and service at lower cost. There are some limitations on where and to whom we can offer the Preferred Lab Network because of preexisting contractual arrangements.

Will members or physicians be penalized for using a lab that is not part of the Preferred Lab Network?

No. Members and physicians can choose any network lab, even if it's not in the Preferred Lab Network.

Is UnitedHealthcare terminating labs from its network as part of the establishment of the Preferred Lab Network?

No. Any termination of an existing network lab agreement is separate from the establishment of the Preferred Lab Network.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

You can send questions to us at preferred_lab@uhc.com.

Insurance coverage provided by or through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company, All Savers Insurance Company, Oxford Health Insurance, Inc. or their affiliates. Health Plan coverage provided by UnitedHealthcare of Arizona, Inc., UHC of California DBA UnitedHealthcare of California, UnitedHealthcare Benefits Plan of California, UnitedHealthcare of Colorado, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of Oklahoma, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of Oregon, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of Texas, LLC, UnitedHealthcare Benefits of Texas, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of Utah, Inc. and UnitedHealthcare of Washington, Inc., Oxford Health Plans (NJ), Inc. and Oxford Health Plans (CT), Inc. or other affiliates. Administrative services provided by United HealthCare Services, Inc., OptumRx, OptumHealth Care Solutions, LLC, Oxford Health Plans LLC or their affiliates. Behavioral health products are provided by U.S. Behavioral Health Plan, California (USBHPC), United Behavioral Health (UBH) or its affiliates.