

## Availity<sup>®</sup> Essentials - Frequently Asked Questions

BCBSTX is committed to providing our network of quality physicians with the tools and resources they need. Availity Essentials offers various online services and a secure provider portal for BCBSTX providers to assist in claim processing and management. Learn all about Availity in these frequently asked questions.

- **What is Availity Essentials?**

Availity Essentials offers online service for BCBSTX health care providers. Availity is the nation's largest network, connecting providers to multiple health plans. Availity is also a leading provider of electronic health care transactions and provides health care professionals access to a wider range of Web-based products and services.

- **What is the Availity Essentials Portal?**

The Availity Essentials portal is a secure, Web-based, full-service information exchange that offers a claims clearinghouse and real-time transactions at no charge to our providers. Transactions include eligibility and benefits, claim status, claim submission, electronic remittance, and authorizations and referrals. The Availity Essentials portal encompasses administrative, financial, and clinical services, supports both real-time and batch transactions and is HIPAA compliant.

- **Who can benefit from Availity Essentials?**

Availity Essentials benefits all health care providers, including:

- Physician offices, from single providers to multi-specialty practices
- Hospitals and integrated delivery networks
- Pharmacies
- Laboratories, imaging centers, and other ancillary providers

- **If I already have access to BCBSTX services for providers, will I need register for the Availity Essentials portal?**

Yes, the Availity Essentials portal requires that you sign up and obtain a user ID and password for each individual user with the provider organization.

- **How do I register for Availity Essentials?**

To register, go to [Availity](#) and select "Get Started" and completed the guided online-registration process. Before you register you will need the following information:

- Your organization's name, address and federal tax ID number.
- Primary Controlling Authority (PCA) — This person has legal authority to sign agreements for your organization and, typically, is an owner or senior partner. Availity will work with this person should any legal or policy questions arise.
- Administrator — This person is legally responsible for verifying staff identities and roles, assigning Availity access to staff as appropriate to role, and maintaining user access and information. This person is typically an office or department manager or administrator and is appointed by the PCA. although the PCA may take on this role if desired.

## Availity Essentials - FAQ

- **How will my user ID and password be communicated?**

Once the information with registration is verified for completeness and accuracy, Availity will notify the Organization via email to the assigned Administrator that access to the Availity Essentials portal is now available and will provide a temporary password. This process usually takes between two to three business days.

- **What services does Availity offer?**

Availity offers a suite of services via a secure provider portal connection such as real-time and EDI batch transactions, including eligibility and benefits, claim status, claim submission, electronic remittance and authorizations and referrals. Your organization will also have access to all self-service functions that are available including EDI File Management, Account Administration, Provider Directories, Reference Documents, and Connection Information. Refer to the [Provider Tools](#) page to view a full list of services and capabilities available to BCBSTX providers via Availity.

- **Are there any set-up fees, monthly fee or per-claim fees?**

There are no set-up fees or monthly fees. Availity is free to providers for eligibility and benefits, direct data entry claim submission, claim status, authorizations and referrals and remittance, and much more.

- **Does our organization need to purchase software?**

No, all you need is a computer and a high-speed Internet connection. Availity supports integration with most major practice management system vendors as well. Please visit the Vendor Partners page at [availity.com](http://availity.com) for a list of vendors that have successfully tested transactions with Availity.

- **Is Availity HIPAA Compliant?**

Yes. Availity is committed to adopting procedures and protocols that comply with HIPAA Privacy and Security Regulations. Availity understands the impact HIPAA continues to have on your organization and has taken the following steps to demonstrate our commitment to assisting you:

- Appointment of a Privacy and Security Officer.
- Monitor changes to HIPAA regulations.
- Participation in leadership roles in regional and national HIPAA workgroups and other health care forums.
- Enforcement of extensive HIPAA Privacy and Security Policies and Procedures.

Please refer to [Availity's Privacy Policy](#) on their website for more details.

## Availity Essentials - FAQ

- **How do I send claims to Availity?**

Availity Essentials supports direct data-entry of claims on the portal and supports secure transfer/upload of batch claim files from most practice management systems. To upload a batch of claims on the portal:

- Create a claim file using your current billing software.
- Log into [availity.com](https://www.availity.com).
- Select "EDI File Management/Send and Receive EDI Files".
- Select the "Send Files" mailbox.
- Browse your computer for the batch claim file and click on it.
- Select "Upload File" Availity sends the claims to the appropriate payers.
- Access responses, including claim error reports, in the "Receive Files" mailbox.

Availity supports claims for hundreds of payers at no charge to you. Additional information can be located on the [Availity](https://www.availity.com) website.

- **Will I continue to use the same password that I established when I originally signed up?**

For your protection, passwords expire every 60 days, after which you are prompted to change it. You can also reset your own password at any time. You must know the answer to your secret prompt question to change your password. Availity verifies your identity by asking you the secret prompt question you selected when you became a new user.

- **If I should have any questions, who do I call?**

Availity Client Services at **1-800-282-4548** is available Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time. Comprehensive help and tutorials also are available within the Availity Essentials "Get Trained" portal. Free web-based training is also available.

- **What if I am a billing service?**

Billing Services who submit claims or other transactions on behalf of one or more providers or groups that need to exchange information with a health plan can register and access for Availity services. For more information refer to [Availity Essentials Billing Service Registration](#). If you need additional registration assistance, contact Availity Client Services at **1-800-282-4548**.

- **Who should I contact for customized training on the various tools and capabilities?**

Contact our [Provider Education Consultants](#) for assistance and further education.

*Availity is a trademark of Availity, LLC, a separate company that operates a health information network to provide electronic information exchange services to medical professionals. Availity provides administrative services to BCBSTX.*

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