

Frequently Asked Questions for Providers Lactation Consultant Benefits

Effective **June 1, 2023**, Tennesseans enrolled in TennCareSM Medicaid and CoverKids plans have lactation benefits. This includes our BlueCare, TennCare^{Select} and CoverKids members.

We developed these FAQs to share more information about the importance of breastfeeding and the new benefits. We hope you find the information useful.

Q. Where can I learn more about the most recent breastfeeding recommendations?

You can find the most recent American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations on breastfeeding in the July 2022 issue of [Pediatrics](#).

Q. When should a lactation consultant be used?

Lactation consultants may be helpful in educating parents during pregnancy, especially when discussing factors that may impact successful breastfeeding.

Following birth, lactation consultants can provide support related to:

- Promoting successful breastfeeding and related practices
- Infant positioning and latching
- Expressing and storing milk
- Common breastfeeding issues, like fussy infants, poor latching, nipple or breast pain, and insufficient transfer of milk
- Tandem feeding
- Maintaining breastfeeding while teething or transitioning back to work/school
- Introducing solid foods with breastfeeding and eventually weaning from breastfeeding

Q. What's the difference between a Certified Lactation Counselor, Certified Lactation Educator, Certified Lactation Specialist, Certified Breastfeeding Specialist and International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant?

Certified Lactation Counselors (CLCs) complete 45-55 hours of classroom training, while Certified Lactation Educators (CLEs) complete 45 hours of didactic training. Certified Lactation Specialists (CLSs) also complete 45 hours of classroom training, and Certified Breastfeeding Specialists (CBSs) complete either 45 or 90 hours of self-paced online learning. All four provider types must also take an exam to complete certification.

CLCs, CLEs, CBSs and CLSs may provide breastfeeding counseling and support for healthy, term infants with minimal complications, and offer education related to latch, positioning and anatomy.

International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) complete more than 90 hours of lactation-specific education, more than 300 hours of clinical practice and 14 credits of college-level health sciences courses. IBCLCs may offer a full range of care related to breastfeeding, as well as care for complex issues.

For more information, refer to the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee's [Lactation Support Provider Chart](#).

Q. How can I find an in-network IBCLC?

To identify providers in our network, please visit bluecare.bcbst.com and select **Find Care**. Using our **Find Care** tool:

- Search for **Lactation Services**, which will generate a search, by specialty, for in-network IBCLCs **or**
- Use the **All Expertise** filter to find in-network providers who offer lactation services at their location

Q. I have a lactation consultant on staff. How can they bill for reimbursement?

Under the lactation benefit, IBCLCs with medical licensure can register and contract with a health plan as an independent TennCare provider. This means they can submit claims for eligible services. To become a TennCare provider, visit TennCare’s [Provider Registration](#) page. This page includes a step-by-step overview of the process and links to the TennCare Provider Registration Portal.

For information about contracting with BlueCare Tennessee, visit provider.bcbst.com/working-with-us. If you have questions about our contracting process, please call **1-800-924-7141**.

CLCs, CLEs, CBSs and CLSs can provide services to TennCare enrollees as an employee of an in-network practice or group while under the supervision of a licensed, in-network TennCare provider. The National Provider Identifier (NPI) of the in-network, supervising provider must be reported when billing for services provided by a non-licensed CLC, CLE, CBS or CLS that’s employed by the practice group.

- Supervising providers include medical doctors (MDs), doctors of osteopathic medicine (DOs), nurse practitioners (NPs), physician assistants (PAs), certified nurse midwives and IBCLCs. Supervision of a CLC, CLE, CBS or CLS doesn’t need to be in person and can be provided remotely or off site. Clinical supervision doesn’t require the continuous and constant presence of the clinical supervisor, but the clinical supervisor must always be available for consultation or arrange for a substitute provider to be available.

Q. Lactation support is within my scope of practice, but I’m not a CLC, CLE, CBS, CLS or IBCLC. Can I still bill for this service?

Yes, in-network providers for whom lactation services are within the scope of practice may submit a claim using the specified codes and modifier after June 1, 2023. There’s no additional registration or contract amendment required.

Q. I’m an in-network provider, and I have a CLC, CLE, CBS, CLS or IBCLC. Am I required to complete additional registration?

If lactation support is within your scope of practice, no additional provider registration is necessary. If you’d like to have the lactation support taxonomy added to your registration, you may update your profile at [TennCare Provider Registration](#). The new taxonomy codes are:

- **IBCLC:** 163WL0100X (Lactation Consultant – IBCLC/RLC)
- **CLC/CLE/CBS/CLS:** 174N00000X (Lactation Counselor/Educator – Certified (CLC/CLE/CBS, CLS))

Q. What changes are related to the lactation benefit?

The benefit carves out separately reimbursable lactation support, which may be provided in-person or through telehealth and may include individual or small-group support sessions. In addition, IBCLCs with medical licensure will be able to enter the TennCare network and become an independent provider to TennCare enrollees.

Q. How do I code for the benefit?

Use the appropriate CPT® code plus the modifier U8 (as shown below):

- 98960 U8 [single individual per 30 min.]
- 98961 U8 [2-4 patients per 30 min.]
- 98962 U8 [5-8 patients per 30 min.]

Please also use the appropriate number of units to signify the length of the visit:

- 1 unit = visit 16-45 min.
- 2 units = visit 46-75 min.
- 3 units = visit 76-105 min.

Services may be conducted through telehealth or at home using the appropriate place of service code. For more information on place of service codes, please see our [BlueCare Tennessee Provider Administration Manual](#). See question 5 above about how to become an in-network provider.

Q. Is there a limit on the number of visits allowed?

Each lactation support visit is billed in units equivalent to 30 minutes (e.g., a 60-minute visit would be two units). There's no limit on the number of visits allowed, but additional information may be requested if a provider submits more than 15 units per enrollee.

Q. Do patients enrolled in CoverKids have the same lactation consultant benefits as those with TennCare Medicaid coverage?

Yes, the lactation benefits are the same for those covered by CoverKids and those enrolled in a TennCare Medicaid plan. However, there are differences in the length of the postpartum period during which members can receive benefits. Members covered by TennCare Medicaid may use their benefits for 12 months after giving birth, or as long as medically appropriate, if they remain eligible for TennCare. Adults covered by CoverKids may use their lactation consultant benefits during the two-month postpartum period.

Q. What other breastfeeding-related benefits are available to TennCare enrollees?

TennCare's MCOs, including BlueCare Tennessee, provide various resources to support breastfeeding. These include:

- Electric breast pumps and related supplies (e.g., storage bottles and tubing)
 - These supplies are available through an in-network Durable Medical Equipment (DME) provider. DME providers will work with the patient's primary care or OB provider or to complete the authorization process 30 days before the patient's due date. For more information about our DME providers, please call the appropriate Provider Service number for your patient's plan:
 - **BlueCare** – 1-800-468-9736
 - **TennCareSelect** – 1-800-276-1978
 - **CoverKids** – 1-800-924-7141
- Digital education tools and online communities
- Case management
- Referrals to lactation providers including the Tennessee Breastfeeding Hotline, WIC, La Leche League and designated breastfeeding experts at local health departments

For more information about specific breastfeeding resources available to our members, call the Provider Service numbers listed above. To find additional, non-TennCare resources that may be available to Tennesseans, please visit the Tennessee Department of Health's [Breastfeeding](#) page.

Are prenatal breastfeeding classes covered?

Classes provided by an in-network provider for whom lactation classes are under their scope of practice are covered by codes 98961 [2-4 patients per 30 min.] or 98962 [5-8 patients per 30 min.].

TennCare doesn't cover the cost of fees associated with prenatal breastfeeding education classes offered by third-party organizations.