

Oncology clinical pathways

Frequently asked questions

Overview

Oncology clinical pathways are defined by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) as detailed, evidence-based treatment protocols for specific disease types and stages that deliver high-quality cancer care. With the rapid approval of new therapies, along with the rising cost of cancer care, pathways aim to serve a critical role in the delivery of high-quality and high-value cancer treatments while reducing unwarranted variations in care.

UnitedHealthcare introduced the Cancer Therapy Pathways Program to help improve quality and value in cancer care by supporting the use of therapies associated with the best clinical outcomes. You can also earn rewards¹ through our UnitedHealthcare commercial Cancer Therapy Pathways Program.

Frequently asked questions

Program details

What is the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways Program?

The UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways Program is one of the ways we work with health care professionals to help improve quality and value. This program rewards you for providing your patients who are members of eligible UnitedHealthcare commercial plans with evidence-based treatments we've selected to be included in the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways after a rigorous evaluation that considers efficacy, toxicity and value.

You can find more information on how we developed the Cancer Therapy Pathways at UHCprovider.com > Resource Library > [Oncology Value-Based Programs](#) > Cancer Therapy Pathways Program.

What are UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways?

UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways are detailed, evidence-based protocols that help provide support for specific cancer disease types and stages. Pathways are important tools that can help improve quality and reduce costs.

Which cancers are included in the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways Program?

Pathways are available for a number of cancer types, such as melanoma, colon/rectal, breast, pancreatic, small cell lung, hepatobiliary, ovarian, non-small cell lung, head and neck, multiple myeloma, diffuse large b-cell lymphoma (DLBCL), high-grade b-cell lymphoma, follicular lymphoma, marginal zone lymphoma, mantel cell lymphoma, bladder (including urothelial), Hodgkin lymphoma and kidney (renal cell carcinoma, RCC).



We'll add pathways for other cancers once our UnitedHealthcare Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee reviews and approves them. You can find the list of all current cancers with pathways at UHCprovider.com > Resource Library > [Oncology Value-Based Programs](#) > Cancer Therapy Pathways Program.

Participation

What are the benefits of participating in the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways Program?

This program promotes the use of highly effective cancer treatment regimens with the objective of improving the quality and value of care for your patients. In addition, you have the opportunity to earn rewards for your practice by using the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways, where eligible.

Who is eligible to participate and earn rewards?

You're eligible to participate if:

- You're submitting prior authorization requests for chemotherapy or related therapies through Optum's Cancer Guidance Program for patients who are UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, commercial or Medicare plan members

You're eligible to earn rewards for using the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways if:

1. Your patient is part of a UnitedHealthcare commercial plan that is eligible for rewards (see UHCprovider.com for details)¹
2. You're in network for your patient's benefit plan

We recommend you communicate to your patient(s) if you're participating in this reward program. If you're out of network for your patient's plan, you're eligible to use the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways, but not eligible to earn rewards.

Where is the Cancer Therapy Pathways Program available?

Health care professionals in all states are eligible to use the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways.

Health care professionals are eligible to earn rewards for using the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways in all U.S. states and territories in which UnitedHealthcare operates, except Hawaii, North Carolina, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

When required by applicable state regulations or laws, the health care professional must also have a signed amendment with UnitedHealthcare to earn rewards for this program. The following states are currently applicable: California, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island*, Virginia, Washington and West Virginia.

*The state of Rhode Island requires review and approval by the state of this program prior to inclusion.

How do I participate in the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways Program?

If you've selected and received approval for one of the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathway regimens as part of the chemotherapy prior authorization process, you're participating in the program.

However, selection of a Cancer Therapy Pathway regimen doesn't guarantee eligibility or payment of rewards.

Am I required to participate in the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways Program?

No. The UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways Program is a voluntary program. We don't require selection of a pathway regimen, and it won't affect coverage decisions or how you're reimbursed. However, the selection of a Cancer Therapy Pathway regimen is required to be eligible for rewards.

Which members do program rewards apply to?

Members in a UnitedHealthcare commercial plan who currently require prior authorization for chemotherapy and related cancer therapies are eligible for rewards, except for the following:²

- UnitedHealthcare commercial plans identified as Indemnity/Options PPO

How do you determine pathway adherence?

We determine pathway adherence based on how often you've selected a UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathway as part of the authorization process when we offer one.

- We'll base the calculation on the number of approved authorizations where you selected a Cancer Therapy Pathway, compared to the total number of authorizations where we offered a Cancer Therapy Pathway during the authorization process
- In determining pathway adherence, we won't include authorization requests for cancer types where a Cancer Therapy Pathway isn't available

Cancer Therapy Pathways are not a substitute for the experience and judgment of a physician or other health care professional. Any physician participating in the program must use independent medical judgment in the context of individual clinical circumstances to determine any patient's care or treatment. Care decisions are between the physician and the patient. We don't make decisions about the kind of care that should or shouldn't be received.

Is a pre-determination request eligible for pathways?

Some member plans don't require a prior authorization but do allow for a pre-determination. Pre-determination requests will count toward adherence.

Is an oral-only regimen eligible for pathways?

Oral-only regimens that need to be authorized through the Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) will not count toward pathway adherence.

Is a supportive drug eligible for pathways?

Pathways only exist for chemotherapy regimens. If you select a pathway regimen and are offered the option to add a supportive drug, it will count toward adherence. If you submit a request using "create custom requests" with a supportive drug, it will not count toward adherence.

How do I find out the results of my practice's participation in the program?

The Cancer Therapy Pathways dashboard contains information about your practice's participation and adherence by tax ID number (TIN).

This dashboard is available for viewing through Optum's Cancer Guidance Program online portal accessible through the UnitedHealthcare Provider Portal at UHCprovider.com > Sign In. The data presented in this dashboard isn't a guarantee of a reward payment, nor does it represent what the reward payment may be if all program criteria are met.



Why do the numbers on the provider dashboard not reflect my authorization records?

- The dashboard only reflects authorizations submitted for members of UnitedHealthcare commercial plans
- The dashboard timeline reflects the current reward period to date
- The dashboard reflects authorizations based on the TIN that submitted the request
- Due to National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) updates or new evidence, a regimen's pathway designation may have changed

Rewards

How do you determine rewards for participating in the program?

To be eligible for rewards, you must meet the following criteria:

- At a practice (TIN) level, there must be a pathway adherence of 75% or greater during the measurement period
- A minimum of 5 authorization requests must be submitted and approved for a cancer type where a Cancer Therapy Pathway is available, at the time the authorization request was submitted and during the measurement period
- You must confirm participation within 30 days of the end of the measurement period
- Your practice must be in network for eligible commercial plans (see Terms and Conditions for more details)

How do you determine payments?

Once your practice meets the criteria, we pay the rewards at \$1,000 per authorization where a Cancer Therapy Pathway was selected and approved during the performance period at the practice level.

For example, if a particular practice received 10 approved authorizations where a Cancer Therapy Pathway was available and a Cancer Therapy Pathway was used for 8 of those authorizations, the reward would be \$8,000 (8 X \$1,000).

When will rewards be available for participating in the program?

There are 2 performance reward periods: Jan. 1–June 30 and July 1–Dec. 31.

Following the close of a performance period, the practice has 30 days to confirm participation to be eligible for rewards

if all other criteria have been met. We'll pay rewards within 120 days following the close of the 30-day participation confirmation period.

Pathways development

How do you develop the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways?

We develop pathways based on a comprehensive review of clinical data and national evidence-based guidelines.

We first summarize this information into evidence tables. Then, we augment the tables with drug costs and real-world evidence on the frequency of hospitalizations during treatment, duration of therapy and total cost of care.



The Oncology Advisory Committee uses these evidence summaries to select pathway regimens, which are based on clinical benefit (efficacy) and side-effect profile (toxicity). Among regimens with comparable efficacy and toxicity, we give additional consideration to the frequency of hospitalizations during treatment, duration of therapy, drug costs and total cost of care.

You can find more information about how we develop pathways and a complete list of pathways at [UHCprovider.com](#) > Resource Library > [Oncology Value-Based Programs](#) > Cancer Therapy Pathways Program.

Who develops UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways?

Our Cancer Therapy Pathways are developed by the Optum Oncology Advisory Committee that:

- Advises UnitedHealthcare and its respective clients by reviewing evidence and providing consultation
- Recommends regimens to the UnitedHealthcare Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee that it believes should be included in the United Healthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways Program
- Supports our pharmacy and medical benefits by promoting clinically appropriate, safe and cost-effective regimens that are based on clinical evidence, and community and national standards of practice

Who are the members of the Oncology Advisory Committee?

The Oncology Advisory Committee includes a diverse group of medical oncologists and hematologists who are actively treating patients at academic medical centers and in community oncology practices. Some of the members have also contributed to research by participating as investigators in clinical trials and/or publications in major oncology journals. We select external advisors based on their clinical expertise and diverse perspectives.

Does UnitedHealthcare have a process to manage conflicts of interest for external advisors?

We screen all of our advisors for potential financial conflicts of interest. Experts who have a substantive financial relationship with a company that develops or markets products that could benefit from pathways are not invited to participate. Additionally, at the start of every meeting, we remind our advisors to disclose any potential financial conflicts of interest so they can be evaluated by the committee chair.

On which scientific evidence do you base your Cancer Therapy Pathways?

UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways are based on the best available high-quality evidence published in leading scientific journals (*e.g.*, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *Journal of Clinical Oncology*) as well as recommendations in clinical guidelines published by ASCO, NCCN, and other professional and scientific organizations.

We include a list of references with each pathway and make the information available at [UHCprovider.com](#) > Resource Library > [Oncology Value-Based Programs](#) > Cancer Therapy Pathways Program.

Do you provide information on the specific cancer type, stage and molecular profile that the pathway is intended to cover?

Pathways are specific to molecular subtype, stage, line(s) of therapy or genetic aberrations per cancer type, wherever applicable.

How will I know if a regimen is part of the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways Program?

Pathway regimens are clearly labeled with a special icon during selection of NCCN-supported regimens within the Optum Cancer Guidance Program. You can find more resources and a complete list of pathway regimens per cancer type in Optum's Cancer Guidance Program and at [UHCprovider.com](https://uhcprovider.com).

How often will you update the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways?

We review our pathways at least annually and more frequently, as needed, when we discover new data or updated guidelines.

Does UnitedHealthcare consider external clinical data from pharmaceutical companies when developing the pathways?

United Healthcare develops pathways based on a comprehensive review of clinical information and national evidence-based guidelines available publicly and does not accept any data from pharmaceutical companies.

Resources

Where can I find regimens that are included in the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways Program?

You can find UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways at [UHCprovider.com](https://uhcprovider.com) > Resource Library > [Oncology Value-Based Programs](#) > Cancer Therapy Pathways Program.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

If you have questions, you can reach out to your provider advocate or email unitedoncology@uhc.com.

UnitedHealthcare reserves the right to change, cancel or modify the program and its features, including reward eligibility, at any time and to temporarily suspend the program at any time without prior notice. If there is any suspected fraud or abuse, UnitedHealthcare reserves the right to stop or discontinue reward payment(s).

¹ Restrictions apply. Eligibility varies by health plan and state and is subject to all applicable laws and regulations.

² This is not an all-inclusive list and is subject to change. Eligibility varies by health plan and state and is subject to all applicable laws and regulations.

Insurance coverage provided by or through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or its affiliates. Health plan coverage provided by United Healthcare of Arizona, Inc., UHC of California DBA United Healthcare of California, UnitedHealthcare Benefits Plan of California, UnitedHealthcare of Colorado, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of the Mid-Atlantic, Inc., MAMSI Life and Health Insurance Company, UnitedHealthcare of New York, Inc., UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company of New York, UnitedHealthcare of Oklahoma, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of Oregon, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of Pennsylvania, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of Texas, Inc., UnitedHealthcare Benefits of Texas, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of Utah, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of Washington, Inc., Optimum Choice, Inc., Oxford Health Insurance, Inc., Oxford Health Plans (NJ), Oxford Health Plans (CT), Inc., All Savers Insurance Company, Tufts Health Freedom Insurance Company or other affiliates. Administrative services provided by OptumHealth Care Solutions, LLC, OptumRx, Oxford Health Plans LLC, United HealthCare Services, Inc., Tufts Health Freedom Insurance Company or other affiliates. Behavioral health products provided by U.S. Behavioral Health Plan, California (USBHPC), United Behavioral Health (UBH), or its affiliates.