



NEWS RELEASE

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Wellmark recognizes local health care professionals for demonstrating quality, more affordable fertility care

DES MOINES, Iowa (Jan. 28, 2018) – Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield announced that two physicians in Iowa are designated as Blue Distinction® Centers+ under the Blue Distinction Centers for Fertility Care program. Blue Distinction Centers are nationally designated providers who show expertise in delivering improved patient safety and better health outcomes, based on objective measures that were developed with input from the medical community and leading accreditation and quality organizations.

Between 1987 and 2015, one million babies were born through the use of in vitro fertilization (IVF) or other assisted reproductive technology treatments, according to a study published in the 2015 Assisted Reproductive Technology National Summary Report.¹ The Blue Distinction Centers for Fertility Care program evaluates physicians on several quality measures, including requiring physicians to follow the American Society for Reproductive Medicine guidelines on single embryo transfer, which decreases the multiple pregnancy rate associated with IVF. Physicians must meet quality measures and standards set by the Society of Assisted Reproductive Technology – the country’s leading organization for assisted reproductive technology. Physicians receiving a Blue Distinction Center+ designation must also demonstrate better cost-efficiency compared to their peers.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies across the nation have recognized more than 200 physicians under the Blue Distinction Centers for Fertility Care program. Only those physicians that first meet nationally established quality measures for Blue Distinction Centers are considered for designation as Blue Distinction Centers+.

The following physicians have been designated under the Blue Distinction Centers for Fertility Care program:

<i>Provider/Health System</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Designation</i>
Dr. Brian Cooper, Mid-Iowa Fertility	Des Moines	Blue Distinction Center+
Dr. Donald Young, Mid-Iowa Fertility	Des Moines	Blue Distinction Center+

Since 2006, the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program has helped patients find quality specialty care in the areas of bariatric surgery, cancer care, cardiac care, cellular immunotherapy, fertility care, gene therapy, knee and hip replacements, maternity care, spine surgery, and transplants, while encouraging health care professionals to improve the care they deliver. Research shows that, compared to other providers, those designated as Blue Distinction Centers demonstrate better quality and improved outcomes for patients. On average, Blue Distinction Centers+ are also 20 percent more cost-efficient than non-Blue Distinction Center+ designated providers.

For more information about the program and for a complete listing of the designated providers, visit www.bcbs.com/bluedistinction.

¹ 2015 Assisted Reproductive Technology National Summary Report <https://www.cdc.gov/art/pdf/2015-report/ART-2015-National-Summary-Report.pdf>

About Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield

Wellmark, Inc. (Wellmark.com) does business as Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa. Wellmark and its subsidiaries and affiliated companies, including Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Dakota, Wellmark Health Plan of Iowa, Inc., Wellmark Synergy Health, Inc. and Wellmark Value Health Plan, Inc., insure or pay health benefit claims for more than 2 million members in Iowa and South Dakota. Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa, Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Dakota, Wellmark Health Plan of Iowa, Inc., Wellmark Synergy Health, Inc. and Wellmark Value Health Plan, Inc. are independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield Association

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association is a national federation of 36 independent, community-based and locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies that collectively provide health care coverage for one in three Americans. BCBSA provides health care insights through [The Health of America Report](#) series and the national [BCBS Health IndexSM](#). For more information on BCBSA and its member companies, please visit BCBS.com. We also encourage you to connect with us on [Facebook](#), check out our videos on [YouTube](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).

About Blue Distinction Centers

Blue Distinction Centers (BDC) met overall quality measures, developed with input from the medical community. A Local Blue Plan may require additional criteria for providers located in its own service area; for details, contact your Local Blue Plan. Blue Distinction Centers+ (BDC+) also met cost measures that address consumers' need for affordable healthcare. Each provider's cost of care is evaluated using data from its Local Blue Plan. Providers in CA, ID, NY, PA, and WA may lie in two Local Blue Plans' areas, resulting in two evaluations for cost of care; and their own Local Blue Plans decide whether one or both cost of care evaluation(s) must meet BDC+ national criteria. National criteria for BDC and BDC+ are displayed on www.bcbs.com. Individual outcomes may vary. For details on a provider's in-network status or your own policy's coverage, contact your Local Blue Plan and ask your provider before making an appointment. Neither Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association nor any Blue Plans are responsible for non-covered charges or other losses or damages resulting from Blue Distinction or other provider finder information or care received from Blue Distinction or other providers.

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