

Reminder: How to check member eligibility and benefits in Availity Essentials without member ID or member ID prefix

As a reminder, Michigan providers don't need to include the prefix in the member ID when looking up eligibility and benefits for Michigan members in Availity EssentialsTM. It may be helpful to exclude the prefix when you aren't getting the expected results.

For example, you may want to search without the prefix when:

- The member's insurance changes between the appointment request date and the appointment date.
- The member gives you an ID card with the wrong Member ID.
 - This can happen if the member inadvertently presents an old ID card.
 - In addition, a small number of BCN commercial members received a BCN ID card for 2026 with the wrong member ID prefix. These ID cards are being replaced but members don't have their replacement cards yet.

Alternatively, you can search by the member's last name, first name and date of birth. Here's how:

1. Log in to our provider portal (availity.com).
2. Click *Patient Registration* and then click *Eligibility and Benefits Inquiry*.
3. In the *Patient Information* section, select *Member Last Name*, *Member First Name*, *Date of Birth* from the *Member Search Option(s)* field.
4. Complete the *Member Last Name*, *Member First Name* and *Date of Birth* fields.
5. Click *Search*.

You may also need to look up a member in the e-referral system without using their member ID. See the [Jan. 8 provider alert](#) for more information.

To learn more about checking benefits and eligibility within our provider portal, complete a mini module by going to Blue Cross and BCN's Provider Training site, searching on *effective searches* and launching the "Effective searches in Benefits & Eligibility" course. ([Learn how to access provider training.](#))

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Provider alert

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**Categories: Authorizations/referrals, Billing/claims/coding,
Self-service tools**

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