

Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association: Prefix Changes Frequently Asked Questions

What is a prefix?

The prefix is three characters on the Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan ID card required for claims processing.

The prefix can be alpha only or a combination of alpha and numeric characters. The prefix will not contain only numbers (must always have at least one alpha character) and will not include the numbers one or zero in any position.

You will continue to see three character alpha only prefixes and in the future will also see a prefix that contains a mix of letters and numbers.

How does this impact me?

Any time after April 15, 2018, you may begin to see prefixes on member ID cards that contain numeric characters. You will continue to submit the member prefix to conduct everyday transactions and to check eligibility and benefits in the same manner as you do today. Current prefixes will remain active unless cancelled by an account.

If you have implemented system changes to limit the prefix to a three digit alpha only prefix, you will need to make system modifications to allow for numeric characters effective April 15, 2018.

Where do I submit claims?

You should continue to submit claims as you do today under your current billing practices. Your provider reimbursement has not changed.

Will the alpha numeric prefix still be three positions?

Yes, the change to alpha numeric allows us to keep the current three position prefix most are accustomed to.

Will any of the prefixes be all numeric?

No, a prefix cannot be all numeric. The system edits will be modified to allow for numeric positions.

With the change to numeric, will this still be referred to as “alpha prefix?”

No, “alpha prefix” will now be referred to as “prefix.”

With the move to numeric, is there an impact to FEP?

No. FEP ID numbers start with an R, which has been taken into consideration and will be accounted for in the requirements and design process.

Are there any restrictions on the numeric character?

Yes, zero and one will not be used. The numeric character will be two through nine.

What are the new prefix combinations?

There are six combinations that will be released once the current set is exhausted.

For example, prefixes may look like any of the following:

- A2A
- 2AA
- 22A
- AA2
- 2A2
- A22

When do plans have to be able to accept an alpha numeric prefix?

Plans must be able to accept an alpha numeric prefix April 15, 2018.

More information will be shared as it becomes available. If you have any questions about the upcoming prefix changes, please contact Provider Education at 803-264-4730 or submit your question using the [Provider Education Contact Form](#).