



UNICARE STATE INDEMNITY PLAN

## TIERING FOR SPECIALTY CARE PROVIDERS

For UniCare State Indemnity Plan/Basic, PLUS  
and Community Choice members

**Benefits effective July 1, 2019**

---

### **Important:**

**There are changes to the way specialists are tiered for the new plan year. Please read this information and check our Specialist Tier Listing for 2019-2020 at [unicarestatementplan.com](http://unicarestatementplan.com) to see if your specialist's tier will change on July 1, 2019.**

---

### **1. What is specialist tiering?**

Specialist tiering is an important part of the Massachusetts Group Insurance Commission's (GIC) interest in addressing rising health care costs. UniCare assigns Massachusetts specialty care providers (specialists) to levels or tiers. Similar tiering programs are used in other health plans across the country.

### **2. How does specialist tiering affect me?**

Specialist tiering is a part of your benefit plan. For example, you pay lower office visit copays when you use Massachusetts specialists assigned to Tier 1 than when you see specialists assigned to other tiers. We understand that our members need to choose specialists who are appropriate for them, and our tiering program does not prevent you from doing so. You'll find a chart with specialist office visit copays on page 3.

### **3. Will there be any changes to specialist tiering on July 1, 2019?**

Yes. Our tiering approach since 2006 has been to assign tiers individually to specialty care physicians. For the new plan year, UniCare will move to group tiering for specialists. This means that all specialists within a practice will have the same tier. This includes doctors, nurse practitioners and physician assistants who practice specialty care.

This will be a transitional year in the way we tier specialists. Our first step is to move to group tiering, with no changes to hospital tiers. In the future, we'll be moving to more closely match the tiers between specialty practices and the hospitals they are related to.

**4. Why is UniCare changing from individual to group tiering?**

We are making this change in response to feedback from both physician groups and members to make it easier to administer copays within practices, and to align our tiering approach with the approaches used by other GIC health plans to tier specialists.

**5. How will the tier for each group be decided?**

Each practice or group will be placed in a tier and all specialists within that practice will have the same tier. The tier for each practice will be based on the group’s relationship to a hospital. To determine the tier placement, we are using the hospital’s designation provided by the Massachusetts Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA).

**6. What are the CHIA designations?**

As part of its evaluation of total medical expenses, CHIA has developed a classification system for all hospitals in Massachusetts. Each hospital is designated as being in one of four categories:

- Community\*
- Teaching
- Specialty
- Academic Medical Center

*\*Note: CHIA’s “Community” designation includes some but not all hospitals designated as Community Choice hospitals under UniCare’s Community Choice plan. If you are a Community Choice member, it’s important to use Community Choice hospitals for your care to get the highest level of benefits. For a list of Community Choice hospitals, see our hospital listing at [unicarestatplan.com](http://unicarestatplan.com).*

**7. Why are you using the CHIA designations?**

The GIC and other state entities such as the Health Policy Commission have pointed to CHIA’s findings that the average total medical expenses (TMEs) for individuals in a practice group vary greatly across the state depending on the group’s association with a hospital. Those groups operating as part of an Academic Medical Center have the highest TMEs; those related to Community hospitals have the lowest TMEs. Our tiering approach acknowledges the importance of these findings.

**8. What are the tiers for physician practices?**

The tiers are shown in the following table:

<b>Tier 1</b>	Practices and specialty groups related to hospitals in CHIA’s <i>Community*</i> category
<b>Tier 2</b>	Practices and specialty groups not in Tier 1 or Tier 3 (including those related to hospitals in CHIA’s <i>Teaching</i> and <i>Specialty</i> categories)
<b>Tier 3</b>	Practices and specialty groups related to hospitals in CHIA’s <i>Academic Medical Center</i> category

*\*Note: CHIA’s “Community” designation includes some but not all hospitals designated as Community Choice hospitals under UniCare’s Community Choice plan. If you are a Community Choice member, it’s important to use Community Choice hospitals for your care to get the highest level of benefits. For a list of Community Choice hospitals, see our hospital listing at [unicarestatplan.com](http://unicarestatplan.com).*

**9. Will there be any changes to UniCare’s office visit copays with specialists?**

The copays for specialty care office visits for each tier in the new plan year are shown in the table below. These copays will apply to doctors, nurse practitioners and physician assistants who practice specialty care. The only copay change will be the reduction of the Tier 3 copay for Basic members from \$75 to \$60.

	Specialist office visit copays effective July 1, 2019		
	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<b>Basic</b>	\$30	\$60	\$60
<b>PLUS</b>	\$30	\$60	\$75
<b>Community Choice</b>	\$30	\$60	\$75

**10. How can I check to see what my specialist’s tier will be starting July 1, 2019?**

Check our Specialist Tier Listing for 2019-2020. Go to the Member’s page of [unicarestatplan.com](http://unicarestatplan.com) and select the link under *What’s New*.

**11. What if my specialist doesn’t appear in UniCare’s Specialist Tier Listing for 2019-2020?**

Your specialist would be Tier 2.

**12. Will UniCare be assigning tiers to primary care physicians too?**

Primary care physicians (PCPs) will not be subject to the group tiering process, as described in this document, for the new plan year. However, as shown below, members in the PLUS and Community Choice options will continue to have differing primary care copays depending on whether they see PCPs in our Patient-Centered Primary Care program.

- Basic** members will continue to have a \$20 copay for all non-preventive office visits with PCPs.
- PLUS and Community Choice** members will continue to have a \$15 copay for non-preventive office visits with PCPs who participate in UniCare’s Patient-Centered Primary Care program, and a \$20 copay for non-preventive visits with all other PCPs.

**Questions?**

If you have other questions about specialist tiering, please call UniCare Member Services at 833-663-4176 (toll free). You can also email us at [contact.us@anthem.com](mailto:contact.us@anthem.com).