

Cancer Therapy 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, Cancer Therapy Pathways aims to serve a critical role in the delivery of high quality and value cancer treatments while reducing unwarranted variations in care.

We created our Cancer Therapy Pathways to help improve quality and value in cancer care by supporting the use of therapies associated with the best clinical outcomes.

Our pathways are detailed, evidence-based protocols that help provide support for specific cancer disease types and stages. Pathways can help improve quality and reduce costs.

For more information, see our [Cancer Therapy Pathways](#) page.

Frequently asked questions

Program details

Which cancers are included in the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways?

Pathways are available for the following cancer types:

- Bladder (including urothelial)
- Breast
- Chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL)/small lymphocytic lymphoma (SLL)
- Chronic myeloid leukemia (CML)
- Colon/rectal
- Endometrial carcinoma
- Esophageal and esophagogastric
- Gastric
- Head and neck
- Hepatobiliary
- Kidney
- Lung (non-small cell, small cell)
- Lymphoma (classic Hodgkin, diffuse large B-cell, follicular, mantle cell and marginal zone)
- Melanoma
- Multiple myeloma
- Ovarian (fallopian and primary peritoneal)
- Pancreatic
- Prostate



Questions?

If you have questions, contact your provider advocate or email unitedoncology@uhc.com.

Participation

What are the benefits of Cancer Therapy Pathways?

Cancer Therapy Pathways promotes the use of highly effective cancer treatment regimens with the objective of improving the quality and value of care for your patients.

Who is eligible to use Cancer Therapy Pathways?

You're eligible to participate if you submit prior authorization requests for chemotherapy or related therapies through the Optum® Cancer Guidance Program (CGP) for patients who are UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, UnitedHealthcare® Medicare Advantage or UnitedHealthcare commercial plans members.

Where are the Cancer Therapy Pathways available?

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

How do you determine pathway adherence?

We determine pathway adherence based on how often you've selected a 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 aren't 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 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 are authorized through the Cancer Guidance Program will 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 won't count toward adherence.

How do I find 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 the CGP online portal accessible through the [UnitedHealthcare Provider Portal](#).

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 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

Pathways development

How do you develop the UnitedHealthcare Cancer Therapy Pathways?

We develop the 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 Optum 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.

Who are the members of the Optum 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 aren't 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 pathways?

We base our pathways 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 the ASCO, National Comprehensive Cancer Network and other professional and scientific organizations.

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 for each cancer type, wherever applicable.

How will I know if a regimen is part of the program?

Pathway regimens are clearly labeled with a special icon during selection of NCCN-supported regimens within the CGP.

How often do you update the pathways?

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

Do you consider external clinical data from pharmaceutical companies when developing the pathways?

We develop pathways based on a comprehensive review of clinical information and national evidence-based guidelines available publicly. We don't accept data from pharmaceutical companies.

Insurance coverage provided by or through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or its affiliates. Health plan coverage provided by UnitedHealthcare of Arizona, Inc., UHC of California DBA UnitedHealthcare 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.