Important Employer Update: California SB 729

New coverage requirements for fertility treatments

Effective January 1, 2026

As your trusted health coverage provider, we want to ensure you are informed about Senate Bill 729 (SB 729), a new California mandate requiring large-group health insurance policies to cover diagnosis and treatment of infertility and fertility services, including three completed oocyte (egg) retrievals. This legislation expands access to fertility care, ensuring equitable benefits for all your employees.

What this means for your business:

- **Who is affected?**
  SB 729 applies to all fully insured large-group health insurance policies issued or renewed on or after January 1, 2026. While self-funded large groups are not required to provide this coverage, they will have the ability to opt in and embed the same coverage as required for fully insured offerings.

- **Updated coverage**
  Upon your business' first renewal/issuance on or after January 1, 2026, your plan(s) will include the following benefits, subject to the terms of your plan(s):
  - Artificial insemination including intrauterine insemination (IUI)
  - Oocyte (egg) retrieval
  - In vitro fertilization (IVF)
  - Embryo transfers
  - Cryopreservation for sperm, reproductive tissue, oocytes (eggs), and embryos

- **Mandatory compliance**
  SB 729 requires large-group health plans to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of infertility and fertility services, with limited exemptions for religious employer groups. Religious employers may qualify for an exemption if they meet the state law definition of a religious employer.

How we support you:

- **Seamless implementation**
  Our team is working closely with the California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) to integrate these new requirements smoothly.

- **Plan adjustments**
  As required by SB 729, access to fertility services will be available to your employees upon renewal on or after January 1, 2026.

- **Employer support**
  Blue Shield will continue to provide resources and guidance to help you communicate these changes to your employees.

- **Cost considerations**
  We are here to help you understand and manage any financial impact associated with the expanded fertility benefits.

For details on how this mandate affects your policy, please reach out to your Blue Shield representative or benefits consultant. We are here to help you navigate these changes and provide the best possible coverage for your employees.

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