



## **PCMH PRIME Certification Program Changes: Frequently Asked Questions**

### **\*Updated\* March 2019**

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**1. What is changing about the PCMH PRIME Certification program?**

The HPC will be adopting NCQA's Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration program as our certification program for primary care practices. This means that we will be phasing out the current PCMH PRIME Certification program. Starting January 1, 2019, any Massachusetts practice that achieves the Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration will also be granted HPC PCMH Certification. The last date for practices to apply for or renew their PCMH PRIME Certification under the current standards will be April 30, 2019.

**2. Why is the Health Policy Commission (HPC) making this change?**

The purpose of the HPC PCMH certification program is to set standards for primary care practices to use as a framework for advancing their behavioral health integration capabilities. The NCQA Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration program reflects the growing national consensus on and trend toward behavioral health integration (BHI) in the primary care setting. In developing its program, NCQA incorporated many of HPC's PCMH PRIME Certification standards. The Distinction program also includes additional standards that reflect the latest evidence on best practices in primary care BHI. Adopting the Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration program as the HPC PCMH Certification program aligns with the HPC's goals of continuing to advance BHI in Massachusetts and streamlining the certification process.

**3. Does this change affect my practice's current PCMH PRIME Certification or Pathway to PCMH PRIME status?**

No. Your practice can keep its PCMH PRIME Certification or Pathway to PCMH PRIME status until it expires. PCMH PRIME Certification lasts for three years; your expiration date is included in the letter you received from the HPC when your practice was certified. Pathway to PCMH PRIME status lasts for 18 months from the date of your application to the HPC. If you need help determining the expiration date of your certification or Pathway status, email us at [HPC-Certification@state.ma.us](mailto:HPC-Certification@state.ma.us)

**4. When is the last date to apply for PCMH PRIME Certification under the current standards?**

The last date to submit or renew PCMH PRIME Certification under the current (2017) standards is April 30, 2019. Practices must complete and submit a PCMH PRIME evaluation to NCQA via the Q-PASS system by that date.

**5. My practice's PCMH PRIME Certification is expiring soon. What are my options for renewing my certification?**

Your practice can re-apply for PCMH PRIME Certification by April 30, 2019, under the current (2017) PCMH PRIME Certification standards. Or, you can apply for the Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration at any time starting January 1, 2019.

**6. My practice is on the Pathway to PCMH PRIME. Can I apply for certification under the current PCMH PRIME standards, or do I have to apply for the Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration in order to be certified by the HPC?**

You may apply for certification under the current (2017) PCMH PRIME standards until April 30, 2019. After that date, your practice will need to apply for the Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration in order to be HPC certified.

**7. Where can I learn more about the requirements for NCQA's Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration?**

To learn more about the Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration program, visit <https://www.ncqa.org/programs/health-care-providers-practices/patient-centered-medical-home-pcmh/distinction-in-behavioral-health-integration/>. Please note that the detailed requirements for the Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration are included in NCQA's PCMH Standards and Guidelines (2017 Edition), as Appendix 4. That publication is available for free download at the [NCQA Store](#). You may also consult the PCMH PRIME 2017 Standards and Guidelines (also available through the NCQA Store) to understand which of the current PCMH PRIME standards are also included in the Distinction.

**8. Will my practice have to pay a fee to apply for NCQA's Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration?**

The NCQA may charge your practice a fee to apply for and maintain Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration. The HPC will not be covering any fees associated with applying for or maintaining Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration. For information about NCQA's fees for Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration, you may visit [this website](#).

**9. My practice will apply for NCQA's Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration in 2019. Is there anything else we have to do to get HPC PCMH Certification?**

Yes. If you apply for and achieve NCQA's Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration, you will need to notify the HPC to request HPC PCMH Certification by completing a form located [here](#). After we have received and processed your completed form, the HPC will send your practice a letter stating that you are HPC PCMH Certified, along with a logo that your practice may use to advertise your certification status.