



**BlueCross BlueShield  
of Alabama**

## **New Wait Time Requirements From CMS**

**Beginning January 1, 2025**, CMS has ruled that Qualified Health Plan (QHP) issuers must ensure patients can schedule appointments within the following time frames at least 90% of the time:

- **Behavioral Health:** 10 business days
- **Primary Care (Routine):** 15 business days
- **Specialty Care (Non-Urgent):** 30 business days

To assess compliance with these wait time standards, CMS is requiring third-party entities to conduct “secret shopper” calls to **primary care** and **behavioral health** providers. These calls will be used to evaluate how easily new patients can schedule appointments with in-network providers.

As part of this process, your practice may be selected for a secret shopper survey. **Surveys will begin in January 2025 and will be completed by May 31, 2025.**

Review your scheduling practices to ensure new patients can be seen within the required time frames. This includes ensuring that your office staff is prepared for these calls and understands the importance of complying with the new standards.

Please do not reply to this email. Questions? [Contact Us](#).

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