

	<i>Diagnostic Testing of Influenza</i>	
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NOTICE

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Blue KC reserves the right to review and revise these policies when necessary. When there is an update, we will publish the most current policy to: <https://providers.bluekc.com/ContactUs/PaymentPolicies>.

PROVIDER/ENTITY IMPACTED					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PROFESSIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FACILITY	<input type="checkbox"/> DME	<input type="checkbox"/> AMBULATORY SURGERY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LAB	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

LINES OF BUSINESS IMPACTED						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BLUE MEDICARE ADVANTAGE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACA QHP¹	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SMALL GROUP ACA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JAA²	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FEP³	<input type="checkbox"/> DENTAL

¹ ACA QHP: Affordable Care Act Qualified Health Plan for Individual/Family ² JAA: Joint Administrative Account ³ FEP: Federal Employee Program

Disclaimer

Blue KC has developed Provider Payment Policies to provide guidance on payment methodologies as they pertain to submitted claims. These policies are written following industry standard recommendations from sources such as:

- Current Procedural Terminology
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid
- American Medical Association
- National Correct Coding Initiative
- Other professional organizations and societies

Coverage of any service is determined by date of service, a member's eligibility and benefit limits for the service or services rendered, all terms of the Provider Service Agreement, and other standards of coding rules and guidelines.

Final payment is subject to the application of claims adjudication and edits common to the industry.

For confirmation of which services may be eligible for coverage and description of when medical services are considered medically necessary, not medically necessary, or investigational, please contact:

- Blue KC Provider Hotline for Commercial lines of Business 816-395-3929
- Affordable Care Act Provider Hotline 866-859-3822
- Blue Medicare Advantage Provider Hotline 866-508-7140

In the event of a conflict between any policies, the Member's coverage document will govern.

Description/Application

Influenza is an acute respiratory illness caused by influenza A or B viruses resulting in upper and lower respiratory tract infection, fever, malaise, headache, and weakness. It mainly occurs in outbreaks and epidemics during the winter season and is associated with increased morbidity and mortality in certain high-risk populations.

Rapid influenza diagnostic tests (RIDTs) refer to clinical laboratory improvement amendments (CLIA) waived immunoassays that can detect influenza viruses during the outpatient visit, giving results in a clinically relevant time period to inform treatment decisions. Besides RIDTs, influenza can be detected using polymerase chain reaction (PCR)-based assays as well as culture testing; however, the former is not often used in initial clinical management due to time constraints. Serologic testing is not used in outpatient settings for diagnosis.

Policy

Application of coverage criteria is dependent upon an individual’s benefit coverage at the time of the request.

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For symptomatic individuals (see Note 1) **one (see Note2)**, but **not both**, of the following **may be reimbursed**:

- One single rapid flu test (**either** a point-of-care rapid nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) **or** a rapid antigen test).
- One single traditional NAAT.

Viral culture testing for influenza **may not be reimbursed**.

For asymptomatic individuals, influenza testing (e.g., rapid antigen flu tests, rapid NAAT or RT-PCR tests, traditional RT-PCR tests, viral culture testing) **may not be reimbursed**.

Serology testing for influenza **may not be reimbursed**.

NOTES:

Note 1: Typical Influenza Signs and Symptoms:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Headaches and/or body aches
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Runny or stuffy nose

Note 2: One influenza test may detect influenza A and/or influenza B. When both influenza A and B are detected by a test represented by CPT codes 87400, 87501 or 87804, up to 2 units may be billed at a single visit

Coding

CPT	Code Description
86710	Antibody; influenza virus
87254	Virus isolation: centrifuge enhanced (shell vial) technique, includes identification with immunofluorescence stain, each virus
87275	Infectious agent antigen detection by immunofluorescent technique; influenza B virus
87276	Infectious agent antigen detection by immunofluorescent technique; influenza A virus

87400	Infectious agent antigen detection by immunoassay technique, (e.g., enzyme immunoassay [EIA], enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay [ELISA], fluorescence immunoassay [FIA], immunochemiluminometric assay [IMCA]) qualitative or semiquantitative; Influenza, A or B, each
87501	Infectious agent detection by nucleic acid (DNA or RNA); influenza virus, includes reverse transcription, when performed, and amplified probe technique, each type or subtype
87502	Infectious agent detection by nucleic acid (DNA or RNA); influenza virus, for multiple types or subtypes, includes multiplex reverse transcription, when performed, and multiplex amplified probe technique, first 2 types or sub-types
87503	Infectious agent detection by nucleic acid (DNA or RNA); influenza virus, for multiple types or subtypes, includes multiplex reverse transcription, when performed, and multiplex amplified probe technique, each additional influenza virus type or sub-type beyond 2 (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
87804	Infectious agent antigen detection by immunoassay with direct optical (i.e., visual) observation; Influenza

References and Resources

Avalon Medical Policy AHS – G2119 – Diagnostic Testing of Influenza

Related Documents

Avalon Medical Policy AHS - G2149 Pathogen Panel Testing

Avalon Medical Policy AHS – G2174 Coronavirus Testing in the Outpatient Setting

Revision History

Version	Date	Summary of Revisions
001	07/01/2025	Initial version
002	10/01/2025	Avalon Quarter 4 updates