

# Anthem Spine COE Study Results

## Value-designated spine centers of excellence yield 19% cost savings: 5 insights

Written by Megan Wood | Wednesday, 16 November 2016

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Spine centers of excellence deliver cost savings of 19 percent compared to other centers, **according** to a HealthCore study. HealthCore is Anthem's outcomes research subsidiary.

*Managed Care* published the study, which analyzed data on providers in the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association's Blue Distinction Plus program. The researchers compared value (90-day episodic costs for surgery, postoperative care and readmissions) and quality (complication and readmission rates) of these providers with providers not participating in the BCBSA program. The study included 33,827 adults who underwent spine surgery at value-designated centers and 27,686 adults who underwent spine surgery other centers.

Here are five insights:

1. Value-designated centers had the following episodic costs per surgery:
  - \$3,157 for lumbar discectomy/decompression, reflecting a 16 percent cost decrease compared to other centers
  - \$6,784 for cervical simple fusion, reflecting a 19 percent cost decrease compared to other centers
  - \$11,134 for lumbar simple fusion, reflecting an 18 percent cost decrease compared to other centers
2. Value-based centers had complication rates of 1.5 percent, compared to 2 percent at other centers.
3. All other quality measures were similar between value-designated centers and other centers.
4. The study found more value-designated centers were larger-bed centers in metropolitan areas. These centers tended to be affiliated with medical schools that performed more surgeries and offered more nursing hours.
5. Centers are deemed Blue Distinction Center Plus if they meet clinical requirements and have spine surgery costs under 1.05 times the national average.

