

Value-based purchasing in Cascade Select

Background

The Cascade Care program was established by legislation in 2019 (SB 5526) in an effort to increase the availability of quality, affordable health care coverage in the individual market (also called the [Health Benefit Exchange](#) or the Exchange). Cascade Care plans have a standard benefit design, allowing individuals shopping for health care coverage on the Exchange to make “apples-to-apples” comparisons across different insurance carriers because the benefits are the same. Cascade Care standard plans also emphasize lower deductibles and provides access to services before having to pay the deductible. The Cascade Care legislation also established Cascade Select, the first-ever public option.

What is Cascade Select?

Cascade Select is a public option for health coverage, available on the individual market. The Cascade Select program aims to incentivize high-quality, low-cost care with an emphasis on primary care, and to ensure coverage availability statewide through the Exchange. Cascade Select plans have the same standard benefit design as Cascade standard plans, along with additional requirements, such as incorporating community quality standards, value-based purchasing, and ensuring aggregate limits on provider reimbursement. Public option plans entered the Washington marketplace starting January 1, 2021.

How does Cascade Select incorporate community quality standards?

Insurance carriers who are selected to offer Cascade Select plans on the Exchange are required to abide by several community quality standards, including two specifically called out in the program’s 2019 authorizing legislation:

1. Recommendations from the [Robert Bree collaborative](#)
2. The [health technology assessment program](#) (HTA)

In addition to the Bree and HTA requirements, Cascade Select carriers report annually to HCA on several other community quality standards:

- Primary care spending
- [Washington State Common Measure Set](#)
- Health improvement activities
- Quality Rating System (QRS) data (shared with the Exchange)
- Race, ethnicity, and language (REL) data (shared with the Exchange)

Reporting these measures to HCA is part of Cascade Select carriers’ ongoing validation and renewal process.

How does Cascade Select incorporate value-based purchasing (VBP)?

Health carriers applying to offer Cascade Select on the Exchange must demonstrate to the state that at least 50 percent (75 percent in 2023) of provider contracts for the Cascade Select plan will be value-based. Carriers who are selected for Cascade Select contracts must also be responsive to the annual [Paying for Value survey](#).

Learn more

Find more information about Cascade Care on:

- [HCA's website](#)
- [Health Benefit Exchange's website](#)