



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Salina Regional Health Center designated Blue Distinction® Center+ for Maternity Care by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas

(February 12, 2016) – In an effort to help prospective parents find hospitals that deliver quality, affordable maternity care, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas announced Salina Regional Health Center has been designated as one of the first hospitals to receive the Blue Distinction Center+ for Maternity Care designation, a new designation under the Blue Distinction® Specialty Care program.

Blue Distinction Centers+ for Maternity Care, an expansion of the national Blue Distinction Specialty Care program, are hospitals recognized for delivering quality specialty care safely and effectively, based on objective measures developed with input from the medical community. To receive a Blue Distinction Centers+ for Maternity Care designation, a hospital must also meet requirements for cost efficiency. Hospitals were assessed using a combination of publicly available quality information and cost measures derived from Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies' medical claims.

“At Salina Regional we are committed to a high level of care for our patients,” said Luanne Smith, vice president, chief nursing officer at Salina Regional Health Center. “We are proud to receive this designation by meeting the criteria for high quality, family centered, affordable care.”

Nearly four million babies are born in the U.S. annually, making childbirth the most common cause of hospitalization.

"Improving quality of care while also attaining cost efficiency is integral to transforming the health care system, so we are proud to recognize Salina Regional Health Center for demonstrating higher levels of quality, expertise and efficiency resulting in better maternity care for our members," said Andrew C. Corbin, BCBSKS president/CEO.

This new Blue Distinction Centers+ for Maternity Care program evaluates hospitals on several quality measures, including the percentage of newborns that fall into the category of early elective delivery, an ongoing concern in the medical community. Compared with babies born 39 weeks or later, early term infants face higher risks of infant death and respiratory ailments such as respiratory distress syndrome, pneumonia, and respiratory failure, among other conditions. These babies also have a higher rate of admission to neonatal intensive care units.

In addition, hospitals that receive a Blue Distinction Center+ for Maternity Care designation agreed to meet requirements that align with principles that support evidence-based practices of care, as well as having initiated programs to promote successful breastfeeding, as described in the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative by Baby-Friendly USA or the Mother-Friendly Hospital program by the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS) through its "Ten Steps of Mother-Friendly Care." The program also evaluates hospitals on overall patient satisfaction, including a willingness to recommend the hospital to others.

Since 2006, the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program has helped patients find quality providers for their specialty care needs in the areas of bariatric surgery, cardiac care, complex and rare cancers, knee and hip replacements, spine surgery, and transplants. Research shows that compared to other facilities, those designated as Blue Distinction Centers demonstrate better quality and improved outcomes for patients. On average, Blue Distinction Centers+ are also 20 percent more cost-efficient than non-Blue Distinction Center+ designated health care facilities.

For more information about the program, please visit www.bcbs.com/bluedistinction.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield Association

The Blue Cross Blue Shield Association is a national federation of 36 independent, community-based and locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies that collectively provide health care coverage for nearly 105 million members – one in three Americans. For more information on the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association and its member companies, please visit bcbs.com. We encourage you to connect with us on [Facebook](#), check out our videos on [YouTube](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) and check out [The BCBS Blog](#), for up-to-date information about BCBSA.

About Blue Distinction Centers

Blue Distinction Centers (BDC) met overall quality measures for patient safety and outcomes, developed with input from the medical community. A Local Blue Plan may require additional criteria for facilities located in its own service area; for details, contact your Local Blue Plan. Blue Distinction Centers+ (BDC+) also met cost measures that address consumers' need for affordable health care. Each facility's cost of care is evaluated using data from its Local Blue Plan. Facilities in CA, ID, NY, PA, and WA may lie in two Local Blue Plans' areas, resulting in two evaluations for cost of care; and their own Local Blue Plans decide whether one or both cost of care evaluation(s) must meet BDC+ national criteria. National criteria for BDC and BDC+ are displayed on [bcbs.com](https://www.bcbs.com). Individual outcomes may vary. For details on a provider's in-network status or your own policy's coverage, contact your Local Blue Plan and ask your provider before making an appointment. Neither Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association nor any Blue Plans are responsible for non-covered charges or other losses or damages resulting from Blue Distinction or other provider finder information or care received from Blue Distinction or other providers.

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