

# **National Healthcare Cost Transparency**

## **Introduction**

The National Consumer Cost Transparency (NCCT) initiative powers the BCBS Axis® Provider Insights platform, delivering healthcare cost estimates for more than 110 million Blue Cross Blue Shield members. By aggregating standardized cost data submitted by plans nationwide, the platform enables members to better understand treatment costs and make more informed healthcare decisions.

## **The Challenge**

Healthcare cost transparency has long been a challenge for both consumers and health plans. While claims data contains valuable insights into healthcare pricing and utilization, translating this data into meaningful cost estimates requires standardized methodologies and coordination across multiple health plans.

The NCCT initiative required collecting and integrating cost data from dozens of independent Blue Cross Blue Shield plans while ensuring consistent calculation methodologies and reliable data quality. The platform needed to support accurate cost estimates across hundreds of procedures while enabling regular refresh cycles to keep the data current. In addition to the technical complexity of managing large healthcare datasets, the project required extensive coordination between participating health plans, Blue Cross

Blue Shield Association (BCBSA), and internal analytics teams.

## **My Role**

As **Program Manager**, I was responsible for leading the delivery and operational execution of the NCCT / Axis Refresh initiative.

Key responsibilities included:

- Leading a cross-functional team of analysts and developers responsible for the platform refresh
- Managing release planning and execution for recurring national data refresh cycles
- Coordinating with 36 participating Blue Cross Blue Shield plans
- Serving as the primary liaison between internal teams and stakeholders at BCBSA
- Ensuring alignment across technical teams, plan stakeholders, and program leadership

In total, the project involved more than 150 stakeholders across participating plans and BCBSA, requiring extensive coordination and communication to ensure successful delivery.

## **The Approach**

### **Data Standardization & Integration**

Participating BCBS plans submitted healthcare cost data using a nationally recognized methodology designed to ensure consistent cost comparisons across plans. These datasets were integrated into a centralized data warehouse environment where cost calculations and benchmarking logic were applied.

The platform analyzed cost estimates across up to 1,700 procedures, organized into four major healthcare product categories.

## **Program Delivery & Release Planning**

The NCCT platform relied on recurring refresh cycles to maintain accurate cost estimates. Over the course of the initiative, I managed **six refresh cycles**, ensuring that updated cost data from participating plans was validated, processed, and integrated into the platform.

The development approach combined elements of Waterfall program governance with Kanban-style Agile delivery, enabling structured release planning while maintaining flexibility for ongoing operational updates.

## **Stakeholder Coordination**

One of the most complex aspects of the initiative was coordinating data submissions and validation across the BCBS ecosystem. With 36 participating plans nationwide, each refresh cycle required coordination between plan representatives, analytics teams, and BCBSA leadership. Regular communication and stakeholder alignment ensured that methodology standards were followed and that participating plans had confidence in the accuracy and consistency of the cost transparency data.

## **The Solution**

The NCCT / Axis platform provides a centralized resource for healthcare cost transparency across the BCBS network. The platform aggregates standardized cost data from participating plans and delivers estimates through a consumer-facing interface that allows users to explore treatment costs, estimate out-of-pocket expenses, and identify opportunities for healthcare savings.

By combining national healthcare data with standardized methodologies and recurring refresh cycles, the platform

ensures that cost estimates remain both accurate and comparable across plans.

Procedure	Provider A	Provider B	Difference
MRI of the Brain	\$682 <sup>1</sup>	\$3,849 <sup>1</sup>	<b>\$3,167</b>
Hysterectomy	\$12,371 <sup>2</sup>	\$20,578 <sup>2</sup>	<b>\$8,207</b>
Hernia Repair	\$4,142 <sup>2</sup>	\$11,692 <sup>2</sup>	<b>\$7,550</b>
Knee Replacement	\$16,997 <sup>1</sup>	\$55,155 <sup>1</sup>	<b>\$38,158</b>

\*Note that costs are examples and may not apply to every member's situation.

## Results & Impact

### 110M+ Members Represented

Cost transparency data supporting healthcare decisions for over 110 million BCBS members.

### 36 Participating BCBS Plans

Nationwide data contributions enabling standardized cost comparisons across the network.

### 1,700+ Procedures Analyzed

Cost estimates generated across a broad range of healthcare services and treatment categories.

### 6 National Data Refresh Cycles

Managed recurring refresh cycles to maintain accurate and up-to-date cost estimates.

### 150+ Stakeholders Coordinated

Cross-plan collaboration involving BCBS plans, BCBSA leadership, and internal analytics teams.

## Key Takeaways

The NCCT / Axis Refresh initiative demonstrates the complexity of delivering national healthcare analytics programs that rely on coordination across multiple organizations. By successfully managing recurring refresh cycles and aligning dozens of participating health plans, the

project established a reliable platform for healthcare cost transparency across the BCBS ecosystem.

The initiative highlights the importance of strong program leadership, standardized data methodologies, and effective stakeholder management in delivering large-scale healthcare analytics solutions.