



STAR+PLUS Expansion Dallas and Tarrant Service Areas

Q. What is STAR+PLUS?

A. STAR+PLUS is a capitated Texas Medicaid managed care program created specifically to serve the elderly and persons with disabilities. The STAR+PLUS program began operating in 1998 and currently serves over 164,000 clients in 29 counties in the Harris, Bexar, Travis, and Nueces service areas.

The STAR+PLUS program is designed to achieve a seamless continuum of care for members by integrating acute and long-term care services, including the delivery of home and community-based services. Managed care organizations (MCOs) are responsible for coordinating acute care and long-term care services for STAR+PLUS members. Service coordination is a benefit of STAR+PLUS that is available to all STAR+PLUS members, including dual eligibles.

Q. When will STAR+PLUS begin operating in the Dallas and Tarrant service areas? What counties are included in these areas?

A. HHSC will implement STAR+PLUS in the Dallas and Tarrant service areas in early 2011. The Dallas service area includes: Dallas, Ellis, Hunt, Kaufman, Collin, Navarro, and Rockwall counties; the Tarrant service area includes: Denton, Hood, Johnson, Parker, Tarrant, and Wise counties.

Q. Who is eligible for the program?

A. Supplemental Security Income (SSI)-eligible adult clients (age 21 and over), Medical Assistance Only (MAO) clients who qualify for the 1915(c) Nursing Facility Waiver, and adult clients who are Medicaid-eligible because they are in a Social Security exclusion program are all mandatory participants in STAR+PLUS. Children under the age of 21 may voluntarily participate in the program.

HHSC estimates there will be approximately 78,000 clients enrolled in STAR+PLUS in the Dallas and Tarrant service areas at implementation in 2011.

Q. What Medicaid acute care benefits are available in STAR+PLUS?

A. The following list includes the major acute care benefits for Medicaid-only STAR+PLUS members:

- Unlimited prescription drugs
- Ambulance services
- Audiology services, including hearing aids for adults
- Behavioral health services*
- Chiropractic services
- Dialysis
- Durable medical equipment and supplies
- Emergency services
- Family planning services
- Home health care services

- Hospital services, outpatient
- Laboratory services
- Optometry, glasses, and contact lenses, if medically necessary
- Podiatry
- Prenatal care
- Preventive services including an annual adult well check for patients 21 years of age and over
- Primary care services
- Transplant of organs and tissues
- Radiology, imaging, and X-rays
- Specialty physician services
- Vision services
- Therapies – physical, occupational and speech

** Applies to members in the Tarrant service area only. Medicaid-only members in the Dallas service area receive behavioral health services through the NorthSTAR program, rather than STAR+PLUS.*

Q. What are the Community-based Long-Term Care Services available in STAR+PLUS?

A. These services include:

- Personal Assistance Services (PAS)
- Day Activity and Health Services (DAHS)
- Adaptive Aids
- Adult Foster Care
- Assisted Living
- Medical Supplies
- Minor Home Modifications
- Respite Care
- Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapies
- Emergency Response Services

Q. How do STAR+PLUS members in the Dallas and Tarrant service areas access behavioral health services?

A. Medicaid-only STAR+PLUS members in the Dallas service area will receive mental health care and chemical dependency services through the NorthSTAR program. ValueOptions is the behavioral health organization (BHO) currently contracted to provide behavioral health services in the Dallas service area.

Medicaid-only STAR+PLUS members in the Tarrant service area will receive behavioral health care from their STAR+PLUS MCO's network of behavioral health providers.

Dual eligible STAR+PLUS members (those with both Medicaid and Medicare) receive behavioral health services from Medicare, with the exception of certain counseling services, which may be covered by Medicaid as wrap-around services for this population.

Q. How will services be coordinated between the STAR+PLUS MCOs and the NorthSTAR vendor, Value Options?

A. HHSC requires the STAR+PLUS MCOs in the Dallas service area to coordinate with NorthSTAR in order to ensure members receive behavioral health services as needed. The MCOs will not directly manage behavioral health services in the Dallas service area, but are still required to provide service coordination to these members such that their needs for behavioral health are appropriately identified and referred timely to NorthSTAR. HHSC will assist the MCOs in developing and executing a Memorandum of Understanding with NorthSTAR's BHO, ValueOptions.

Estimated Project Timeline

- Nov. 25, 2009
 - Final STAR+PLUS expansion Request for Proposals (RFP) posted
- Dec. 15, 2009
 - Vendor conference conducted. Vendor questions and the state's responses are posted at:
<http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/contract/529100020/announcements.shtml>
- Feb. 11, 2010
 - Proposals due
- February - March 2010
 - Proposals evaluated and scored
- April 2010
 - Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) selected and awarded tentative contracts
- May - June 2010
 - Negotiate and execute contracts
- June - December 2010
 - Transitional activities
 - Readiness reviews of HMO operations and systems
- November 2010 – January 2011
 - Client Outreach sessions in Dallas and Tarrant
 - Client enrollment packets mailed by EB
 - Readiness review of HMO service coordinators
- **Operational Start Date – February 1, 2011**

Additional information on the STAR+PLUS Expansion in the Dallas/Tarrant service areas can be found at:

http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/medicaid/SP_DallasTarrantExpansion.shtml

Resources available on the web page include:

- Background information
- Procurement and implementation information
- Differences between STAR+PLUS and ICM
- Proposed service area map
- Public meeting presentations
- Frequently asked questions (FAQ) for Acute and Long-term Care providers

Information on upcoming STAR+PLUS Expansion Stakeholder Forums in the Dallas/Tarrant service areas will be posted at:

<http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/news/meetings.asp>