



Blue Advantage (Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama) is a statewide PPO plan with 98% of in-state providers in our network. In many rural areas of Alabama, Blue Advantage is the only plan offered other than one national carrier with a narrow network.

An analysis was completed on our population to evaluate differences in health outcomes and performance of rural counties compared to metropolitan and LIS to non-LIS. In reviewing the data, we saw persistent scoring differences between LIS and non-LIS populations and metropolitan and rural counties, where metropolitan is defined as MSAs. The overall gap closure rate for members in metropolitan counties was 4% higher than those in rural counties. The overall gap closure rate for members receiving no LIS subsidy was 6% higher than those members who receive LIS subsidy. The starkest difference in performance from both comparisons was seen in the following measures: Adult BMI, colon cancer screening and rheumatoid arthritis management.

The analysis identified differences in performance of LIS membership across the board, whether in rural or metropolitan areas. Evidence demonstrates how differences in LIS members' clinical, demographic and socioeconomic characteristics result in worse performance on a majority of the measures evaluated. This membership has the same access to care and clinical interventions as no-LIS, yet the performance is lower. Income status demonstrates an effect on the ability to pay for specific services, health screenings and medications. Interventions, whether conducted by the plan or providers, are the same across all membership. Every member has the same opportunity to participate and improve their health outcomes.

Although there is disparity in LIS vs non-LIS performance, we believe the noticeable difference in rural versus metropolitan should be considered as well. Instead of focusing on LIS membership, we recommend CMS consider plans who offer statewide products and have results case mix adjusted on a metropolitan versus rural county perspective.

The attached documents are a summary of the analysis conducted.

1. LIS performance, per level, of gap closure per measure
2. Gap closure rates by measure, comparing LIS membership in metropolitan versus rural.