

## Update: Living Well Program for Members with Advanced Illnesses

Your Florida Blue **commercial and Medicare Advantage** patients are offered the Living Well Program to help them think through and discuss topics of advanced care and planning.

As of January 1, 2024, Living Well is now offered by **Evolent Specialty Services** (Evolent), the parent company of Vital Decisions – the group that used to provide the Living Well services to our members. The Living Well Program is a voluntary, patient-centered service, offered at no extra cost, designed to:

- Help individuals identify quality-of-life preferences and values.
- Assist in actively and effectively communicating priorities to family and physicians.
- Ensure a more effective shared decision-making process occurs during this difficult time.

### Here Is What You Should Know

Evolent specialists will not, at any time, interfere with the physician-patient relationship, provide medical advice, or provide an opinion regarding the care plan or team in place.

The Living Well Program is conducted through a series of telephonic or video sessions over the course of the patient's illness. This is done by master-level clinicians using unbiased methodology rooted in the fields of counseling and behavior modification. The specialists collaborate with the patient and if appropriate, the family, in processing and applying the information shared by providers. This helps ensure everyone is on the same page throughout the patient's care journey.

Through motivational interviewing techniques, Evolent specialists focus on:

1. Supporting dialogue around the often-unexpressed priorities and preferences of each patient.
2. Helping individuals develop the right skills and confidence needed to clearly express desires, goals, and wishes.
3. Improving the readiness of patients to engage in discussions with family members and doctors.

We have included answers in the **Frequently Asked Questions** below. If you have additional questions about the program, please call Evolent, at the same number used for Vital Decisions: **1-800-301-3984**.

# Living Well Program by Evolent Specialty Services

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1) What is the Evolent Living Well Program?

The Living Well Program is a voluntary, patient-centered service designed to:

- Help individuals identify personal values and quality-of-life preferences.
- Assist patients in actively and effectively communicating their priorities to families and providers.
- Ensure a more effective shared decision-making process occurs between patients, families, and providers.

### 2) Do Evolent specialists give advice on medical situations or care plans?

No, Evolent specialists do not provide medical advice or opinions regarding the care plan or team in place. The interaction is focused on enabling the patient to participate in the process based on their intrinsic preferences.

### 3) Will the Living Well Program interfere with the patient-physician relationship?

No, Evolent specialists will not interfere with the physician-patient relationship at any time while running the Living Well Program. Our goal is for the program to enhance patient satisfaction and the overall patient-physician relationship.

### 4) How will this program impact my relationship with my patient?

Participation with Evolent enables a patient to hear and act upon the medical options and care you are offering. This may enhance the communication you have with your patient. It also helps align the family with the patient's preferences.

### 5) What Florida Blue patients are eligible for this program?

Since 2020, Living Well has been included as part of our Advance Care Planning Program for commercial members and offered as a standalone program to both commercial and Medicare members.

### 6) How are patients referred to the Living Well Program?

Eligible members are identified in three ways:

1. Physician referral. Physicians can contact our Care Management teams via email.
  - For commercial member referrals: [carememberoutreach@floridablue.com](mailto:carememberoutreach@floridablue.com)
  - For Medicare member referrals: [medicare\\_casemanagement\\_vm@bcbsfl.com](mailto:medicare_casemanagement_vm@bcbsfl.com)
2. Florida Blue case manager referrals
3. Members identified as eligible by Florida Blue's analytics program.

### 7) How much does the program cost the Florida Blue or Florida Blue Medicare patient?

This is a voluntary program made available at no additional cost to our commercial and Medicare members.

### 8) How does the patient participate in the program?

Once a member is identified, Evolent specialists reach out to the member to explain the program and obtain consent to participate. The program is conducted with members (and, if appropriate, family members) through a series of telephonic or video sessions over the course of their illness.

**9) Will I receive information of my patient’s participation in this program?**

When a patient engages in the Living Well Program, you will be notified. You will receive information on how to access a secure portal to review documentation for the engaged member.

**10) Does this program add to a physician’s workload?**

Nothing will be required by the physician if a patient is enrolled in the Living Well Program. The provider can access the secure portal to review documentation for patients engaged in the program.

**11) Does the Living Well Program overlap with other supportive advanced illness counseling programs?**

The Living Well Program complements other programs patients may be involved in, including mental health counseling and programs available to cancer patients and those with other advanced illnesses.

**12) Why is Florida Blue offering this program?**

We are offering this program at no extra cost to eligible patients to help improve the end-of-life experience.

Studies suggest physicians and patients are ambivalent about engaging in conversations regarding patient’s life priorities and health care preferences during the end phase of the illness. Research also shows end-of-life discussions may have cascading benefits for patients and caregivers.<sup>1</sup> Yet more than 60 percent of dying patients do not have end-of-life discussions with physicians.<sup>2</sup>

**13) Can you tell me more about Evolent?**

Evolent currently works with multiple national, regional, and local health plans across the country. Evolent’s program has been recognized as a Best Practice in Consumer Protection and Empowerment by the Utilization Review Accreditation Commission (URAC). You can find more information on Evolent [here](#). If you have other questions about the program or Evolent, you may call the same number used for Vital Decisions: **1-800-301-3984**.

**Sources:**

1. Wright, et. al. “Associations Between End-of-Life Discussions, Patient Mental Health, Medical Care Near Death, and Caregiver Bereavement Adjustment,” JAMA, October 8, 2008, Vol 300, No. 14. pp. 1665-1673.13
2. Larson, D., Tobin, D., “End-of-Life Conversations: Evolving Practice and Theory,” JAMA, September 27, 2000, Vol. 284, No. 12, pp. 1573-1578