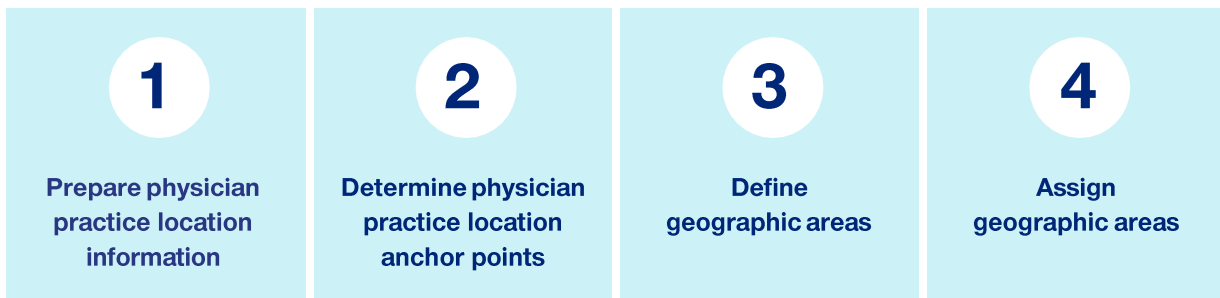


# UnitedHealth Premium Program — Geographic area

The UnitedHealth Premium® program's efficient care evaluation compares a physician's performance to physicians in the same Premium specialty and geographic area. Geographic areas are specialty specific and are assigned based on the physician's Premium specialty and primary place of service ZIP code. The geographic areas are established through a 4-step process.



## Step 1: Prepare physician practice location information

### a. Determine unique physician practice locations

All Premium-eligible physician practice locations are geolocated using address geocoding. Each unique practice location is used only once even if multiple physicians share the same location.

### b. Assign market types to ZIP codes

All ZIP codes are assigned a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) market type of large metro, metro, micro, rural or counties with extreme access considerations (CEAC).

### c. Separate physicians into 2 subsets

Physicians and unique practice location data are placed into 1 of 2 subsets based on Premium specialty and CMS accessibility standards.

Subset	Premium specialty	Access standard in miles
Primary care (P)	Family medicine	Large metro-5, metro-10, micro-20, rural-30, CEAC-60
	Internal medicine	
	Pediatrics	
Subset	Premium specialty	Access standard in miles
Specialists (S)	Allergy	Large metro-15, metro-30, micro-60, rural-75, CEAC-110
	Cardiology	
	Ear, nose and throat	
	Endocrinology	
	Gastroenterology	
	General surgery	
	Nephrology	
	Neurology	
	Neurosurgery, orthopedics and spine	
	Obstetrics and gynecology	
	Pulmonology	
	Rheumatology	
Urology		

## Step 2: Determine physician practice location anchor points

### a. Identify and map unique physician practice location clusters

Using the Esri ArcGIS Pro Density-Based Clustering tool and the unique physician practice location and ZIP code data from step 1, identify statistically significant clusters of physician practice locations for each physician subset.

### b. Determine candidate anchor points

For clusters located in large metro, metro and micro market types, the Esri ArcGIS Pro Mean Centers tool is used to calculate the geospatial “average” or mean location of the cluster. For rural and CEAC market types, the nearest ZIP code center point is identified for all unique physician practice locations. These ZIP code center points are appended to the mean centers calculated for the large metro, metro and micro clusters to create the full set of candidate anchor points.

### c. Determine final anchor points

Using the Esri ArcGIS Pro Location-Allocation tool, the final set of anchor points is selected. The tool uses an intelligent nationwide routable street network to allocate demand population locations to supply locations most efficiently based on driving distance. The process is run against each market type/access standard subset of candidate anchor points. The result is a final set of the minimum number of anchor points required to maximally cover the unique physician practice locations within the applicable access standards.

## Step 3: Define geographic areas

- The assignment of ZIP codes to geographic areas is carried out by repeatedly running the Esri ArcGIS Pro Location-Allocation tool (this time using the final anchor points as the supply locations and the nationwide ZIP code center points as the demand) starting with the large metro access standard distance for each market type/access standard subset.
- Once a ZIP code is assigned to a geographic area for a subset, it is no longer available for assignment.
- Once ZIP code assignments for a market type are complete, the process moves on to the next largest market type.
- There were a few instances where non-assignment of ZIP codes occurred. These ZIP codes are assigned through creating new anchor points and repeating the location allocation process or by assigning them to a contiguous geographic area.
- The resulting ZIP code defined geographic areas are named using the combination of the city, neighborhood (where available) and state where the anchor point resides.

## Step 4: Assign geographic areas

Geographic areas are assigned based on the physician's Premium specialty and primary place of service ZIP code.

### Important notes about the UnitedHealth Premium Program

The information from the UnitedHealth Premium Program is not an endorsement of a particular physician or health care professional's suitability for the health care needs of any particular member. UnitedHealthcare does not practice medicine nor provide health care services. Physicians are solely responsible for medical judgments and treatments supplied. A Premium Care Physician designation does not guarantee the quality of health care services members will receive from a physician and does not guarantee the outcome of any health care services members will receive.

The fact that a physician doesn't have a Premium Care Physician designation doesn't mean the physician doesn't provide quality health care services. All physicians in the UnitedHealthcare Network have met certain minimum credentialing requirements. Regardless of whether a physician has received a Premium Care Physician designation, members have access to all physicians in the UnitedHealthcare Network, as further described under the member's benefit plan.

There are various reasons why a physician may not be designated as a Premium Care Physician. A physician may not receive a Premium Care designation because that physician has not been evaluated for a Premium Care designation. This occurs when a physician does not practice in a specialty that is evaluated by the Premium Program, or when a physician's evaluation is in process. It also occurs when a physician does not have enough health plan claims data to be evaluated, but it is not an indicator of the total number of patients treated by the physician, or the number of procedures performed by the physician. Rather, it reflects the statistical requirements of the Premium Program, which includes only health plan claims associated with specific Premium Program measures and relevant to the physician's specialty. In some cases, there may not be enough data to complete the analytic process from a statistical standpoint.

UnitedHealthcare informs members that designations are intended only as a guide when choosing a physician and should not be the sole factor in selecting a physician. As with all programs that evaluate performance based on analysis of a sample, there is a risk of error. There is a risk of error in the claims data used in the evaluation, the calculations used in the evaluation, and the way the Premium Program determined that an individual physician was responsible for the treatment of the patient's condition. Physicians have the opportunity to review this data and submit a reconsideration request.

UnitedHealthcare uses statistical testing to compare a physician's results to expected or normative results. There is a risk of error in statistical tests when applied to the data and a result based on statistical testing is not a guarantee of correct inference or classification. We inform members it is important they consider many factors and information when selecting a physician. We also inform our members they may wish to discuss designations with a physician before choosing him or her or confer with their current physician for advice on selecting other physicians.

The information contained in this document is subject to change.

**Learn more**

**UnitedHealth Premium Program | [UnitedHealthPremium.uhc.com](https://UnitedHealthPremium.uhc.com)**  
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