



One in a series of tip sheets about HEDIS® and other measures that contribute to star ratings of Medicare Advantage plans.

Medication Adherence

Pharmacy Quality Alliance-endorsed performance measures

Measurement definition

Patients ages 18 and older with a prescription for diabetes, hypertension or cholesterol medications who fill their prescription often enough to cover 80 percent or more of the time they are supposed to be taking the medication.

The three measures are:

- Medication Adherence for Diabetes Medications
- Medication Adherence for Hypertension (RAS Antagonists)
- Medication Adherence for Cholesterol (Statins)

Medications included in each measure		
Diabetes	Hypertension	Cholesterol
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biguanides • Sulfonylureas • Thiazolidinediones • Dipeptidyl peptidase (DPP)-IV inhibitors • Incretin mimetics • Meglitinides • Sodium glucose cotransporter 2 (SGLT2) inhibitors 	Renin-angiotensin system (RAS) antagonists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors • Angiotensin II receptor blockers (ARBs) • Direct renin inhibitors 	Statins

Exclusions

Patients are excluded if they:

- Are in hospice care.
- Have an end stage renal disease diagnosis.
- Diabetes measure only: Have a prescription for insulin.
- Hypertension measure only: Have a prescription for sacubitril/valsartan.
- Are deceased during the measurement year.

Tips for talking with patients

- Provide short and clear instructions for all prescriptions.
- Emphasize the benefits of taking the medication and the risks of not taking the medication. The benefits should outweigh the risks.
- At each visit, ask your patients about their medication habits, including the average number of doses they may miss each week. Continue with open-ended questions to identify barriers to taking medications:

- What side effects have you had from the medication, if any?
- How many doses have you forgotten to take?
- What things have made it difficult for you to pay for your medication?
- What issues prevent you from refilling your prescription?
- Offer recommendations for improvement:
 - Recommend weekly or monthly pillboxes, smart phone apps with medication reminder alerts and placing medications in a visible area (but in properly closed containers and safely out of reach of children or pets) for patients who forget to take their medications.
 - Encourage patients to call your office if they experience side effects to discuss alternative medications.
 - Refer patients to their health plan to learn about mail-order options for their prescriptions.

Tips for success

- Write 90-day supplies of maintenance medications and have your patients use a mail-order pharmacy.
- Write prescriptions with refills for patients who are stable on their medications to reduce the risk of any time lapse between fills.
- Schedule a follow-up visit within 30 days when prescribing a new medication to assess how the medication is working. Schedule this visit while your patient is still in the office.

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Pharmacy Quality Alliance. <https://www.pqaalliance.org/medicare-part-d>*

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