

2020 Resolution: More Happy, Healthy and Productive Medicare Advantage Patients

Imagine if *all* your Medicare Advantage (MA) patients led healthy, happy and productive lives! As mighty a goal as this is, any positive development toward this end means success - for your patients, you and us as well.

To measure your patients' well-being as well as perception of their health care physician, services and plan, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) administers consumer assessments. Understanding two of these assessments and knowing **how you can positively impact their results** are keys to healthier and happier patients and higher patient-experience ratings.

CAHPS and HOS: The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS[®]) survey and the **Health Outcomes Survey (HOS)** are sent annually to a random sample of MA patients. These survey ratings account for almost one third of overall CMS Star quality ratings.

- **CAHPS** is administered **March – June**. It assesses patients' health care experiences and is focused on quality aspects patients are best qualified to evaluate (i.e., physician / practitioner communication skills and ease of access to care.) More information is available at ma-pdpcahps.org.
- **HOS** is administered **April – July**. It measures the ability of an MA organization to maintain or improve the physical and mental health of its members over time. More information is available at hosonline.org.

How You Can Make a Difference

By talking with your Florida Blue Medicare Advantage patients about CAHPS and HOS and printing out a pre-visit checklist ([English](#)), ([Spanish](#)) or ([Haitian-Creole](#)) for them to complete before their office visit, you can influence your patients' perception of the care they receive.

You may also print the [provider instructions and key to the pre-visit checklist](#) for reference (*floridablue.com > Providers > Tools & Resources > Quality/HEDIS/CAHPS > Provider & Member Communications > Member/Patient Communications*). To assist you, we've included **tips** for CAHPS and HOS quality measures below. Engaging in these activities is a great start to helping your patients improve their well-being and health care experiences.

CAHPS and HOS Quality Measures' Tips to Success

Annual Flu Vaccine and Pneumonia Vaccine: Measured by the percentage of sampled patients who report they received a flu vaccination since the prior July and the percentage of sampled patients who reported ever getting a pneumococcal vaccine.

- Ask your patients if they had flu and pneumonia vaccines; encourage them to get the vaccines.

Obtaining Needed Care: Patients rate how often it was easy to get appointments with specialists, tests or treatment they needed through their health plan in the prior six months.

- Make scheduling as easy as possible.
- Ask staff to schedule specialist appointments and write down the details for your patients.
- Help with pre-certifications / authorizations.

Getting Appointments and Care Quickly: Patients rate how often they could schedule an appointment and get care as soon as needed in the previous six months. Patients rate how often they saw the person they came to see within 15 minutes of appointment time.

- Break up wait times by moving patients from the waiting room into an exam room to take vitals.
- Contact your patients when delays are expected using telephone, text or email.

- Advise patients of the best days or times to schedule appointments.

Overall Rating of Health Care Quality: On a 0-to-10 scale, patients rate their health care in the last six months.

- Ask open-ended questions to give patients a chance to share health issues and concerns.
- A quick explanation for lengthy wait times is proven to markedly improve patient satisfaction.

Coordination of Care Composite Measure: Patients rate their physicians' familiarity with their medical history and prescriptions, how well physicians are following up with patients after tests and how well "personal doctors" are managing care with specialists or other providers.

- Encourage patients to bring their Florida Blue Healthy Living Plan (HLP) to doctor visits.
- Expedite the time it takes to follow up on blood tests, X-rays and other tests.
- Remind patients to bring a list of their prescriptions.
- Prior to appointments, speak with patients' specialists to review the care they've provided.

Obtaining Medications: Patients rate how often in the last six months it was easy to use their health plan to get prescribed medicines; fill a prescription at a local pharmacy; and fill prescriptions by mail.

- Use the formulary, write 90-day fills, coordinate medications as appropriate and work to get authorizations completed in a timely manner while setting patient expectations about resolution time. Click this link to submit a prior authorization for your patient electronically <https://www.myprime.com/en/forms/coverage-determination/prior-authorization.html>.

Improving or Maintaining Physical Health: Patients report whether their physical health is the same or better than they expected in the past two years.

- Admire and support your patients' health whenever possible and encourage them to stay positive.

Improving or Maintaining Mental Health: Patients report whether their mental health is the same or better than expected in the past two years in their perception.

- Inquire about your patients' mental health. Simple suggestions, such as increased social activity, exercise and healthy eating, can have a positive effect on a patient's sense of emotional well-being.

Monitoring Physical Activity: Patients report whether they have discussed exercise with their doctor and if they were advised to start, increase or maintain their physical activity level during the year.

- Strengthen recommendations by being specific. For example, suggest walking at a local park or shopping mall by name so patients have a specific, actionable idea.

Improving Bladder Control: Patients who report a urine leakage problem are asked if they have discussed it with their doctor. Those who have are asked to answer whether they received treatment for the problem or not.

- Emphasize that you are providing treatment when recommending Kegel exercises or other less-conventional remedies, so patients will take your recommendations seriously.
- Recommend treatment options for any frequency or severity of the bladder control problem.

Reducing the Risk of Falling: Patients who had a fall or problems with balance and discussed it with their doctor or other health care provider are asked if they received a fall-risk intervention in the last year.

- Falls are the top source for hospital admissions for older adults, per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Remind patients that installing handrails, using a cane and removing scatter rugs can prevent falls.

Florida Blue is a PPO, RPPO and Rx (PDP) plan with a Medicare contract. Florida Blue Medicare is an HMO plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in Florida Blue or Florida Blue Medicare depends on contract renewal. Health coverage is offered by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida, Inc., DBA Florida Blue. HMO coverage is offered by Florida Blue Medicare, Inc., DBA Florida Blue Medicare. These companies are affiliates of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida, Inc., and are Independent Licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.