



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

Health Outcomes Survey (HOS)

Member perception star measures

Why is the HOS important?

The goal of the HOS is to gather clinically meaningful health status data from Medicare Advantage patients to support quality improvement activities, monitor health plan performance and improve the health of this patient population.

HOS questions and provider impact

Providers can significantly impact how patients assess their health care experience in response to HOS questions. Some key HOS questions are listed in the table below along with tips to ensure patients feel well supported.

| Measure | Sample survey questions to patient |
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| Improving or maintaining physical health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In general, how would you rate your health? • Does your health now limit you in these activities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Moderate activities like vacuuming or bowling ○ Climbing several flights of stairs • During the past four weeks, have you had any of the following problems with your work or other regular daily activities as a result of your physical health? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accomplished less than you would like ○ Were limited in the kind of work or other activities you were able to perform • During the past four weeks, how much did pain interfere with your normal work? |
| Tips for success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask patients if they have pain, and if so, whether it is affecting their ability to complete physical activities they would like to do in their daily lives. Ask about goals the patient has that better pain management would allow them to achieve. Then, identify ways to improve your patient's pain problem. • Determine if your patient could benefit from a consultation with a pain specialist, rheumatologist or other specialist. • Consider physical therapy and cardiac or pulmonary rehab when appropriate. | |
| Improving or maintaining mental health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the past four weeks, have you had any of the following problems with your work or other regular daily activities as a result of any emotional problems? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accomplished less than you would like ○ Didn't do work or other activities as carefully as usual • How much of the time during the past four weeks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have you felt calm and peaceful? ○ Did you have a lot of energy? |

| Measure | Sample survey questions to patient |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have you felt downhearted or blue? ● During the past four weeks, how much of the time have your physical or emotional problems interfered with your social activities? |
| <p>Tips for success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Empathize with the patient. ● Discuss options for therapy with a mental health provider, when appropriate. ● Offer ideas to improve mental health: Take daily walks, socialize, stay involved with family, own a pet, do crossword puzzles, volunteer, participate in a church, go to senior community centers or meditate. ● Consider a hearing test when appropriate, as loss of hearing can feel isolating. | |
| <p>Monitoring physical activity</p> | <p>In the past 12 months, did:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● You talk with a doctor or other health care provider about your level of exercise or physical activity? ● A doctor or other health care provider advise you to start, increase or maintain your level of exercise or physical activity? |
| <p>Tips for success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk to patients about their physical activity and the health benefits of staying active. Studies show that having patients fill out a questionnaire is not enough to gauge their activity level. Show interest in ensuring patients remain active. ● Offer physical activity suggestions based on the patient's physical ability. ● Offer ideas where patients can engage in activities (e.g., senior classes at the Area Agency on Aging, YMCA and community centers) to increase social interaction. ● Refer patients with limited mobility to physical therapy to learn safe and effective exercises. | |
| <p>Improving bladder control</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the past six months, have you experienced leaking of urine? ● There are many ways to control or manage the leaking of urine, including bladder training exercises, medication and surgery. Have you ever talked with a doctor, nurse or other health care provider about any of these approaches? |
| <p>Tips for success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask patients if they have any trouble holding their urine. If yes, ask the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When do you notice leaking (exercise, coughing, after urinating)? | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there urgency associated with the leaking? ○ Do you have any issues emptying your bladder (incomplete, takes too long, pain)? ○ How often do you empty your bladder at night? During the day? ○ Do you have pain when you urinate? ○ Have you noticed a change in color, smell, appearance or volume of your urine? ○ How impactful are your urinary issues to your daily life? ● For men, ask all the same questions, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there any change in stream? ○ Any sexual dysfunction (new, historical or changing)? ● Communicate that urinary leakage problems can be common as we grow older, but there are treatments that can help. Discuss potential treatment options such as behavioral therapy, exercises, medications, medical devices and surgery. ● Use informational brochures and materials as discussion starters for this sensitive topic. |
| <p>Reducing the risk of falling</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the past 12 months, did you talk with your doctor or other health provider about falling or problems with balance or walking? ● Did you fall in the past 12 months? ● In the past 12 months, have you had a problem with balance or walking? ● Has your doctor or health provider done anything to help you prevent falls or treat problems with balance or walking? |
| | <p>Tips for success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote exercise, physical therapy and strengthening and balance activities (tai chi, yoga). ● Review medications for any that increase fall risk. ● Discuss home safety tips, such as removing trip hazards, installing handrails and using nightlights. ● Suggest the use of a cane or walker, if needed. ● Recommend a vision or hearing test. |