



# Improve Health Outcomes

A guide for providers





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We have the same goal – to help improve your patients’ health outcomes and provide the highest quality of care.

# You Can Improve Your Patients’ Health Outcomes and Quality of Care

*Our physicians’ and other providers’ commitment to providing the highest quality of care to their patients is vital to improve health outcomes. This includes taking actions to meet this goal:*

- Identify and close care gaps for preventive screenings, annual exams and vaccinations.
- Complete timely submission of claims or encounters data.
- Share health education to influence patient behavior.
- Provide care coordination and timely access to care and services.
- Meet the cultural and linguistic needs of each person.
- Follow recommended clinical, preventive health guidelines and best practices.

Wellcare knows the importance of working with and helping physicians and other providers in their efforts to improve their patients’ health and meet quality standards. This toolkit provides general information about performance measures. It also contains useful tools to support your practice.





# Health Care Performance Measurement Systems

The Plan monitors quality of care and patient experience metrics to improve patient health outcomes and satisfaction.

Reporting on care and service performance metrics is required by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

## Medicare Star Ratings

CMS uses a five-star quality rating system to measure the overall experience Medicare patients have with their Medicare Advantage (MA) health plans. Health plans are assigned a rating of one to five stars, with five stars being the highest, based on performance.

The quality rating combines medical and pharmacy services when both are provided by the plan and are published on the [CMS website](#). The star rating impacts an MA plan's financial payment from CMS. It is essential to receive a rating of at least four stars.

The quality of plan services rating includes many measures in several categories:

- Staying healthy, including screenings, tests and vaccines.
- Managing chronic conditions.
- Patient satisfaction, including access to care.
- Patient complaints.
- Customer service.
- Patient experience with the drug plan, including safety and accuracy of pricing.





# Performance Measures

THESE MEASURES ARE USED TO REPORT, COMPARE AND RATE



Patients' experience and quality of care.



Your practice's preventive and chronic care efforts – used to determine incentive programs.



Overall performance of health plans.



Health outcomes to identify best practices or improvements needed.

Regulators use NCQA's standardized Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) metrics and the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey to rate health plans. HEDIS and CAHPS measures also drive improvements in health care performance.

Physicians and other providers have a direct and substantial impact on affiliated health plans and provider organization performance ratings based on patient experience and the care provided.

## HEDIS measures

HEDIS is a set of standardized measures developed by NCQA to measure, report and compare performance across health plans. Visit [NCQA](#) for more information.

HEDIS results for health plans and provider organizations are publicly reported in the NCQA Quality Compass and state and federal Quality Report Cards. They are used by purchasers and consumers to compare performance between health plans.

## CAHPS survey

The CAHPS survey is conducted annually on a random sample of patients. CAHPS results are used to measure patient experience with:

- ✓ Access to care.
- ✓ Care coordination.
- ✓ Getting the care needed.
- ✓ Interactions with physicians and other providers.
- ✓ Services delivered by the health plan.

The CAHPS Survey Tip Sheet gives examples of survey questions. It also provides recommendations to improve providers' CAHPS performance. For more information about how to improve these measures, refer to the [Improve Patient Experience and Quality of Care](#) tip sheet on the Wellcare website.



## Health Outcomes Survey (HOS)

The HOS is sent to a random sample of Medicare patients during summer of each year. It evaluates baseline physical and mental health status and other health-related topics. The HOS is then sent to the same patients two years later to determine changes over time.

Physicians and other provider interactions with patients have a direct impact on the following HOS star metrics:

- Improving or maintaining physical health.
- Improving or maintaining mental health.
- Monitoring physical activity.
- Reducing risk of falling.
- Improving bladder control.

To learn more about survey questions and actions physicians or other providers can take to improve performance, refer to [Health Outcomes Survey \(HOS\) for Medicare Members](#).

## Pharmacy measures

Pharmacy measures evaluate appropriateness and patient adherence to taking prescribed medications. This can include the percentage of patients appropriately prescribed, monitored or adherent for:

- Beta blockers.
- Cholesterol medications.
- Diabetes medications.
- Hypertension medications.
- Opioids.

Patient eligibility and performance on medication measures is based on evidence-based clinical guidelines and prescription claims.

Physicians and other providers have the greatest impact on:

- Prescribing appropriate treatment.
- Promoting medication adherence.
- Addressing patient barriers, such as knowledge deficits and side-effects.



# Timely Access to Appointments & After-Hours Care

*Ensuring patients have appointments within appropriate time frames is a vital component of delivering quality care and service. Monitoring and the evaluation of physicians and other providers is established to ensure compliance with timely access standards. Access standards are established to fully comply with regulatory (CMS) and NCQA requirements.*



## Timely access standards

Timely access standards are monitored for primary care physicians (PCPs), specialists, ancillary and non-physician behavioral health providers as applicable to the surveys. Access measures include:

- Urgent care.
- Non-urgent care.
- Wellness checks.
- After-hours accessibility.
- Phone access.

To learn more about the appointment wait time standards, refer to the [Improve your Patients' Experience with Timely Access](#) flyer on the Wellcare website.



## Access to care surveys

Physicians and other providers are monitored annually for their ability to provide timely access to care through the following provider surveys:

- **Provider Appointment Availability Survey (PAAS)** – Appointment availability for routine and urgent care and wellness checks.
- **Provider After-Hours Availability Survey (PAHAS)** – Appropriate emergency instructions for after-hours care and the providers' availability to be reached within 30 minutes of a patient's call for urgent after-hours issues.
- **Provider Office Telephone Access Monitoring** – Time to answer the call, and call-back wait time for patients with non-urgent issues.

Surveys may be administered by fax, email and telephone as applicable to the survey methodology sent to a randomly selected group of physicians and other providers.

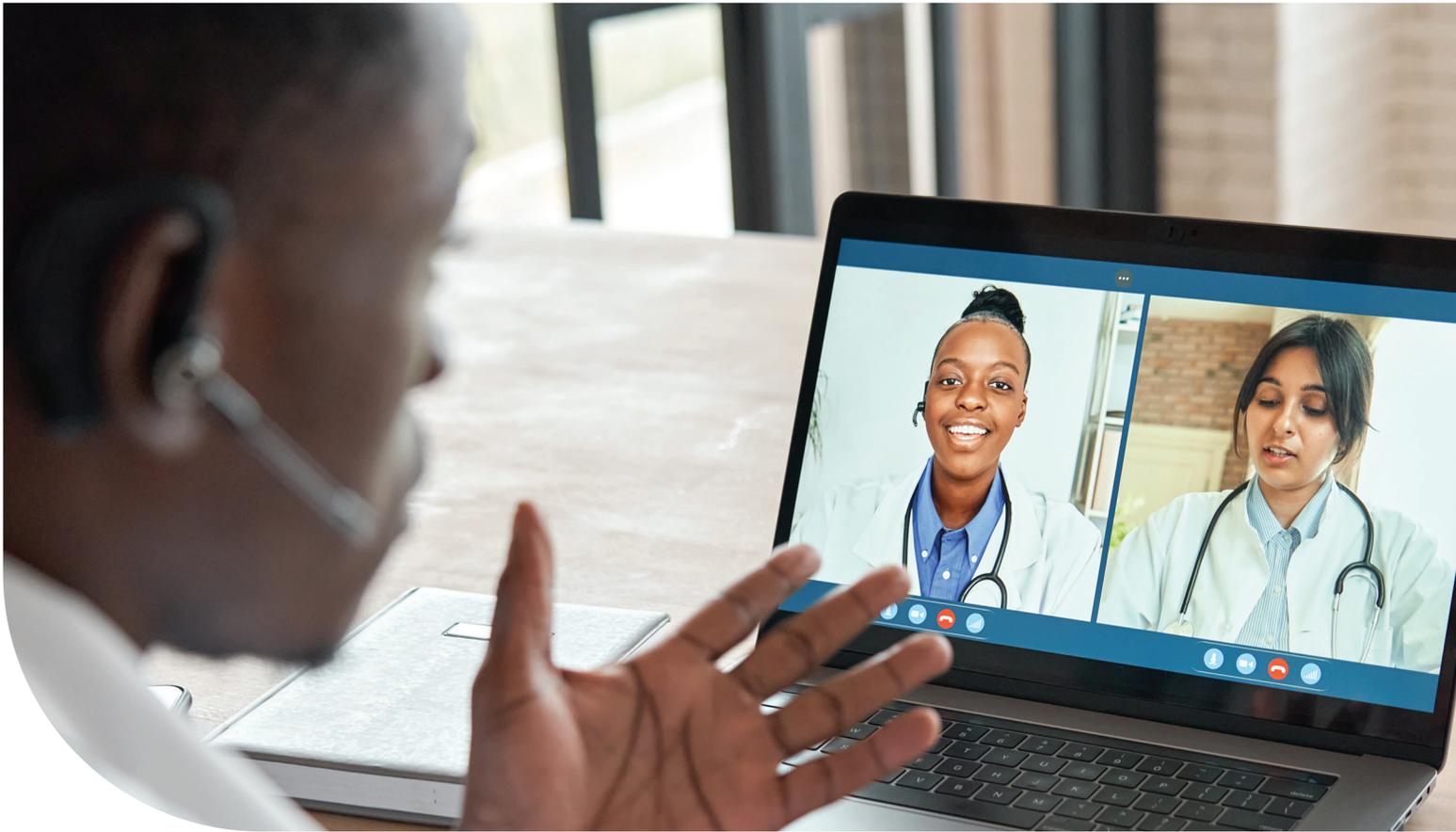


## Provider online training

[Training materials and webinars](#) are available on the website.

### Topics Include, but are not limited to:

- **Provider Portal Overview Training** – contract admin, description of roles, reference guide, registration/account setup for new users.
- **Provider Microlearnings** – 11 microlearning courses that cover behavioral health, cultural humility and member experience.
- **Provider Notice: Model of Care** – self-study program that outlines the basic Model of Care requirements.
- **Special Needs Plans FAQ** – answers several common questions about dual-eligible special needs (D-SNP) plans.





# Quality Improvement Activities

**The Plan conducts patient outreach activities to promote healthy preventive and chronic care practices, including:**

- Mailed materials, such as flyers, postcards, health calendars, and newsletters.
- Educational emails.
- Live and programmed calls.
- Health education classes.
- In-home visits.
- Text messaging.
- Social media campaigns.
- Member incentives.

**The Plan works with physicians and other providers to improve health outcomes and data capture of measures by:**

- Offering weekend and extended access clinics.
- Providing online patient care gap lists.
- Data sharing, such as pharmacy/lab data and electronic medical records.
- Creating provider and patient tools.
- Hosting provider education webinars.
- Setting up mobile mammography events.
- Rx Effect tool.



## Rx Effect

Rx Effect is a medication adherence tool that allows Medicare provider groups to see members who are at risk for non-adherence. Only members with potential for non-adherence to the medication adherence stars measure will be in the application. They will appear in a list as new opportunities. Members will appear based on priority of the opportunity.

The claims data in Rx Effect is updated daily with a 3–5 day processing lag. There is a monetary bonus program available.



## Mobile mammography

To help members overcome barriers to breast cancer screening, the Plan's Quality Improvement (QI) Department, in collaboration with independent practice associations (IPAs), offers mobile mammography to members. Mobile mammography is a convenient way for people to receive mammograms. Certified technologists perform studies at healthcare facilities, community clinics, employer groups, health fairs, and community events.



## Incentive programs

Your performance scores are used to measure your practice's quality improvement and preventive care efforts. Performance-based incentive programs may reward select participating PCPs, clinics and IPAs based on care gap closures and HEDIS performance from claims and encounter data.

# Resources to Improve Patient Experience

Positive patient experience can lead to improved clinical outcomes<sup>1</sup>. Those who are happy and satisfied with their care are more likely to stay engaged with their health care down the road. How you effectively engage with your patients and their needs makes a difference! See the various resources that can help improve the patient experience.



## Language assistance

No-cost interpreter services are available to help you communicate with your patients. You can request telephone or in-person interpreters.



## Transportation

Reliable transportation is one of the most common barriers for our members. You can schedule or refer transportation services to your members to support patients in getting to and from their various health care appointments based on the program and covered benefits.

<sup>1</sup>[Why Improve Patient Experience? Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality \(AHRQ\).](#)





# Quality Improvement Resources Online

## Provider portal

The [provider portal](#) allows easy access to:

- Member eligibility.
- Escalations.

You must have a website account to access secure information on the provider portal. If you don't have an account, it's easy to register. If you are not able to register on the provider portal or have questions, call Wellcare at **866-999-3945 (TTY 711)**, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, April 1–September 30; Monday through Sunday, October 1–March 31.

Or, select the *Chat with an Agent* pre-login. This offers real-time support about topics such as claims adjustments and authorizations.



## Navigating the quality improvement program

The Plan's Quality Improvement Program posts [valuable tools](#) online.

Useful information on health care topics includes:

- **HEDIS Measure Year** – current and previous year's toolkit
  - Quick Reference Guide
  - Adult Pocket Guide
  - Care of Older Adult Assessment Form
  - Behavioral Health Measure At-A-Glance Toolkit
- **Other Resources**
  - SUPD: Help Your Patients with Diabetes Adhere to Statin Therapy Treatment
  - Controlling Blood Pressure
  - Medication Adherence Provider Flyer
  - Statin Use Measures

The Plan encourages the use of these tools. They can be used to help patients better understand their health care. These tools also help to improve patient recall, their experience and meet quality of care standards.



## Provider resources

The online [California Provider Resources](#) page allows providers to access relevant items in real time. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Provider manual.
- Reference and resource guides.
- Provider/facility tip sheets, and more.



## Quality reports

Physicians and other providers can also utilize Cozeva<sup>®</sup>, a web-based reporting and analytics tool, to view patient-level details on gaps in care, upload records, and track measure performance. Contact your assigned Wellcare representative or [sign up](#) to today.