Medication Adherence
Pharmacy Quality Alliance-endorsed performance measures

Measure description
Percentage of patients with a prescription for diabetes, hypertension, or cholesterol medications and who were adherent with their prescribed course of treatment.

The three measures are:
- Medication Adherence for Diabetes Medications
- Medication Adherence for Hypertension (RAS Antagonists)
- Medication Adherence for Cholesterol (Statins)

Measure population (denominator)
Patients 18 years and older who were dispensed at least 2 prescriptions on different dates of service during the measurement year.

Medications included in each measure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diabetes</th>
<th>Hypertension</th>
<th>Cholesterol</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Biguanides</td>
<td>Renin-angiotensin system (RAS) antagonists:</td>
<td>Statins</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sulfonylureas</td>
<td>• Angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Thiazolidinediones</td>
<td>• Angiotensin II receptor blockers (ARBs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dipeptidyl peptidase (DPP)-IV inhibitors</td>
<td>• Direct renin inhibitors</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Incretin mimetics</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Meglitinides</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sodium glucose cotransporter 2 (SGLT2) inhibitors</td>
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</table>

Did you know?
- Medication adherence can reduce total annual health care spending primarily through decreased inpatient hospital days and emergency department visits.
- Medications are arguably the single most important health care technology to prevent illness, disability, and death in the older population.
- The consequences of medication nonadherence in older adults may be more serious, less easily detected, and less easily resolved than in younger age groups.

One in a series of tip sheets that look at key Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set measures, commonly referred to as HEDIS® measures.
Measure compliance (numerator)
Patients who filled their prescribed medication often enough to cover 80% or more of the treatment period.

**Note:** Patients must use their pharmacy benefit to close this measure.

**Exclusions**
- Received hospice services anytime during the measurement year
- Patients with end-stage renal disease diagnosis
- Diabetes measure only: Prescription for insulin
- Hypertension measure only: Prescription for sacubitril/valsartan

**Helpful HEDIS hints**
- Instruct patients to fill prescriptions using their pharmacy benefit.
  - Claims filled through pharmacy discount programs, cash claims, and medication samples will not count.
  - Gap closure is dependent on pharmacy claims.
  - Medication costs are often less when they use their pharmacy benefit.
- 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:
  - What side effects have you had from the medication, if any?
  - How many doses have you forgotten to take?
  - What financial barriers prevent you from obtaining your prescriptions?
  - What issues prevent you from refilling your prescription?
- Offer recommendations for adherence improvement:
  - Suggest the use of weekly or monthly pillboxes, smart phone apps with medication reminder alerts and placing medications in a visible area (in properly closed containers and safely out of reach of children or pets).
  - Instruct patients to contact their practitioner if experiencing side effects. Discuss alternative medications when appropriate.
  - Encourage patients to enroll in auto-refill program or utilize mail-order options.
- Once patients are stable on regimen, write 90-day supplies of maintenance medications.
- Schedule a follow-up visit within 30 days when prescribing a new medication to assess effectiveness and any barriers.
Resources
