

# 2023 Star Measure Tips



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One in a series of tip sheets that look at key Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set measures, commonly referred to as HEDIS® measures.



## 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

Practitioners can significantly impact how patients assess their health care experience in response to HOS questions.

Examples of HOS questions and tips for success are listed in the table below:

Measure	Sample survey questions to patient
<b>Improving or maintaining physical health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In general, how would you rate your health?</li><li>• Does your health now limit you in these activities?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Moderate activities like vacuuming or bowling</li><li>– Climbing several flights of stairs</li></ul></li><li>• 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"><li>– Accomplished less than you would like</li><li>– Were limited in the kind of work or other activities you were able to perform</li></ul></li><li>• During the past four weeks how much did pain interfere with your normal work?</li></ul>

#### Tips for success

- Ask patients if they have pain and if it is affecting their ability to complete daily activities. Ask what goals the patient has, then identify ways to improve the patient's pain.
- 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.

*continued*

Measure	Sample survey questions to patient
<b>Improving or maintaining mental health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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"> <li>– Accomplished less than you would like</li> <li>– Didn't do work or other activities as carefully as usual</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How much of the time during the past four weeks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Have you felt calm and peaceful?</li> <li>– Did you have a lot of energy?</li> <li>– Have you felt downhearted or blue?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• During the past four weeks how much of the time have your physical or emotional problems interfered with your social activities?</li> </ul>

### Tips for success

- Empathize with the patient.
- Incorporate annual depression screening into visits such as PHQ-2 or PHQ-9.
- Discuss options for therapy with a mental health provider, when appropriate.
- Develop a plan with your patient to take steps to improve mental health. Consider exercise, sleep habits, volunteering, attending religious services, identifying stress triggers, reducing alcohol or caffeine intake, meditation, connecting with supportive family and friends.
- Schedule a check-in to discuss progress with this plan.
- Consider a hearing test when appropriate, as loss of hearing can feel isolating.
- Provide patients the *988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline* information (formerly known as the *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline*, 1-800-273-TALK).

### Monitoring physical activity

- In the past 12 months, did:
  - 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?

### Tips for success

- 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.
- Develop a plan with your patient to take steps to start or increase physical activity. Offer suggestions based on the patient's physical ability, interests, and access.
  - Schedule a check-in to discuss progress on this plan.
- Refer patients with limited mobility to physical therapy to learn safe and effective exercises.

### Improving bladder control

- 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?

Measure	Sample survey questions to patient
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**Tips for success**

- Ask patients if they have any trouble holding their urine. If yes, ask the following questions:
  - When do you notice leaking (exercise, coughing, after urinating)?
  - 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:
  - Is there any change in stream?
  - Any sexual dysfunction (new, historical, or changing)?
- Urinary 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.

**Reducing the risk of falling**

- In the past 12 months, did you talk with your doctor or other health practitioner 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 practitioner done anything to help you prevent falls or treat problems with balance or walking?

**Tips for success**

- 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.

**Resources**

1. Health Services Advisory Group (HSAG). 2022. "Welcome to the Medicare Health Outcomes Survey (HOS) Website." [hosonline.org](https://hosonline.org)
2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). 2022. "988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline." [samhsa.gov/find-help/988](https://samhsa.gov/find-help/988)

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