

What you should know about CAHPS® and HOS quality measures

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) publishes the Medicare Part C and D Star Ratings each year to measure the quality of health and drug services received by patients enrolled in Medicare Advantage (MA) and prescription drug plans (PDPs or Part D plans). The Star Ratings provide insight for consumers as they research various MA plans.

The Star Ratings support CMS' efforts, along with Humana, to put patients first. As part of this effort, patients should be empowered to work with their health plan and healthcare providers to make healthcare decisions that best suit their needs.

Patient experience is a focal point for CMS, as patient experience, complaints and access measures play a vital role in a MA plan's Star rating. This reflects CMS' commitment to serve Medicare beneficiaries, including patients' assessments of the care received by their health plan and providers alike.

MA members have the chance to provide feedback on their healthcare experience through CMS-administered surveys. The feedback is a large component in the Star quality rating received by a MA plan.

What are the CMS surveys?

Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®)

The CAHPS program is a survey administered by CMS to assess patients' experiences with healthcare. The survey focuses on aspects of quality that patients are best qualified to assess, such as rating the quality of healthcare received and the ease of access to healthcare services. CMS selects a random sample of health plan members from eligible MA contracts to participate in the CAHPS survey each year. CAHPS is administered each year starting in March and ending in June.

More details on the CAHPS survey and how it applies to MA plans can be found at <https://ma-pdpcahps.org>.

Health Outcomes Survey (HOS)

The HOS assesses the ability of an MA organization to maintain or improve the physical and mental health of its members over time. A random sample of health plan members is selected from eligible MA contracts to participate in the HOS. HOS is administered each year starting in July and ending in November.

More details about HOS measures can be found at www.hosonline.org.

The importance of CAHPS and HOS survey results has increased significantly over the last few years as CMS continues to make patient experience a focal point. CAHPS and HOS ratings **now account for 29% of the MA Star quality rating**. When these quality ratings improve, it's an indicator that your Humana-covered patients are voicing a positive opinion about their overall healthcare experience.



Physicians drive performance on the following CAHPS and HOS quality measures. You will find impactful talking points and advice beneath each measure.

Annual Flu Vaccine

Patients report whether they have received an influenza vaccination since the previous July.

- Ask patients if they received the flu vaccination.
- Discuss benefits of the flu vaccine and answer any of the patients' questions.

Getting Needed Care composite measure

Patients rate how often it was easy to get appointments with specialists and how often it was easy to get the care, tests or treatment they needed through their health plan in the previous six months.

- Allow patients to schedule appointments online or by calling your office.
- Consider adding extended office hours on certain days of the week. This is helpful for patients who may have difficulty with scheduling appointments during normal business hours.
- If specialist care is needed, ask staff to schedule specialist appointments and write down the details for your patients.

Getting Appointments and Care Quickly composite measure

Patients rate how often they were able to schedule an appointment and get care as soon as needed in the previous six months. Patients also answer how often they saw the person they came to see within 15 minutes of their appointment time.*

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

*The wait time question is asked on the survey but will not be included in the scoring for this measure.

Overall Rating of Healthcare Quality

On a 0 to 10 scale, patients rate their healthcare in the previous six months.

- Ask open-ended questions to give your patients a chance to disclose health issues and concerns.
- A quick explanation for lengthy wait times has been shown to improve patient satisfaction significantly.
- Build trust and rapport with patients by showing interest in them as a person (ex: remembering birthdays, anniversaries or acknowledging big life events)

Care Coordination composite measure

Patients rate their physicians' familiarity with their medical history and prescriptions, how well physicians are following up with them after tests and how well "personal doctors" are managing care with specialists or other healthcare providers.

- Advise patients to contact your office after they have visited an urgent care, emergency room or had a hospital stay. 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 with them when they receive care.
- Prior to appointments, speak with patients' specialists to review the care they have provided.

Getting Needed Prescription Drugs composite measure

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

- Use the formulary to identify Humana-covered medicines.
- Consider 90-day fills.
- Synchronize medications, when appropriate.
- Work prior authorizations in a timely manner and set expectations with patients regarding resolution time if a prior authorization is needed. To submit a prior authorization for your patient, call **800-555-2546**. For Puerto Rico prior authorizations only, please call 866-488-5991.

Improving or Maintaining Physical Health

Patients report whether their physical health is the same as or better than expected in the past two years.

- Praise your patients' physical health when possible and encourage them to stay positive.
- Ask patients if they're having any physical difficulties with daily life activities such as getting dressed, bathing or climbing stairs. Encourage conversation on these topics and share information and resources that may assist patients in these situations.

Improving or Maintaining Mental Health

Patients report whether their mental health is the same as or better than expected in the past two years.

- Ask about your patients' mental health. Simple recommendations—such as increased social activity, exercise and healthy eating—can have a significant impact on a patient's sense of emotional well-being.
- Regularly check in with patients who have experienced recent life changes, such as losing a spouse or retiring from their jobs.
- Have resources in place either internally or through referrals to provide immediate assistance for patients struggling with mental health.
- Have information available on local support groups within the local community. Consider referring your Humana-patients to the [Humana Community Navigator](#) to find support groups in their area.

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 particular local park or shopping mall so patients have a specific, actionable idea.
- Inform patients about activities, classes and events that may be going on in the local community.

Improving Bladder Control

Patients who report having a urine leakage problem are asked whether they have discussed it with their doctor. Those who have are asked whether they received treatment for the problem.

- When you recommend Kegel exercises or other less conventional remedies, emphasize that you are providing treatment options so patients will take your recommendations seriously.
- Encourage patients who have urine leakage to choose water over other drinks and to limit the amount of water they have before bedtime.

Consider recommending treatment options, if clinically appropriate, no matter the 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 healthcare provider are asked whether they received a fall-risk intervention in the last year.

- In the U.S., about 36 million older adults fall each year.[†] Remind patients that installing handrails or using a cane can help prevent falls.
- Provide exercises to help patients maintain or strengthen their balance.
- Emphasize the importance of routine vision and hearing tests.
- Encourage patients to plug in night-lights to make it easier to see their surroundings at night.

[†] Keep on Your Feet—Preventing Older Adult Falls. (2023, March 24) Retrieved Feb. 22, 2024, from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/injury/features/older-adult-falls/index.html.

Resources that can help

Humana offers resources that can be valuable to your patients.

- **SilverSneakers[‡]** – offers live virtual classes on physical fitness, stress management and stability/fall prevention, as well as on-demand videos and the SilverSneakers GO app with a meditation series.
- **Humana Neighborhood Center** – offers daily online virtual classes such as cooking demos, crafts and meditation.
- **Go365^{®‡}** – rewards our plan members for making healthier choices.

[‡] SilverSneakers and Go365 are not available with every plan. Patients can check their eligibility for these resources through their personalized account on [Humana.com](https://www.humana.com).

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