Pharmacy *Quality* Measures

An FAQ explaining the completion rate quality measure for comprehensive medication reviews

by Mallory Nelson

WHERE DOES THIS MEASURE FIT INTO THE OVERALL MEDICARE PART D STAR RATINGS?

Comprehensive medication review (CMR) completion rate is endorsed by PQA and classified by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services as a display measure. It is not included as part of the calculation for the Star Rating, but is used by plans as feedback for quality improvement in patient safety.

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE ANALYZE?

This measure looks at the percentage of a plan's members who are eligible for medication therapy management (MTM) who received a CMR. To be eligible, Medicare beneficiaries must meet certain criteria, including having multiple chronic diseases, taking numerous prescription drugs, or are likely to incur high annual cost. Private plans that offer an MTM benefit have varying eligibility criteria. Comprehensive medication reviews consist of an interactive session between a patient and a health care provider (such as a pharmacist, physician, or nurse) designed to detect problems in a patient's medication regimen. The CMR includes a medication list of all of the prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, herbals, and supplements that the patient is currently taking.

WHAT IMPACT CAN THIS HAVE ON MY PHARMACY?

Many pharmacies are already providing MTM services including CMRs. Because eligible patients are encouraged to receive yearly CMRs, if your pharmacy doesn't provide it, patients may be referred to or contacted by another pharmacy. Conducting a CMR is the perfect opportunity to connect with your patients and foster relationships that could translate into loyal customers. This service could bring extra revenue to the pharmacy through third-party payer reimbursement or private pay from patients. CMR completion rate could be also used in the future in the calculation that determines a plan's Star Rating, which could affect pharmacy network design.

WHAT IMPACT DOES THIS HAVE ON PATIENT SAFETY?

Completion of a CMR for patients may have a great effect on safe medication use. The review is intended to determine that drug therapy, including OTCs and supplements, is appropriate based on diagnosis and patient characteristics and that each diagnosis is appropriately treated. Dangerous interactions may occur when patients do not have a current and accurate medication list. Pharmacists can detect if the patient is experiencing unwanted side effects of their medications. CMRs also educate patients about their medication, which can improve adherence.

WHAT CAN I DO TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE IN MY PHARMACY?

Using platforms such as Mirixa or OutcomesMTM, pharmacists can find out which patients are eligible for a CMR covered by Medicare Part D or private plans, document the encounter, and submit the service for payment from insurance. Pharmacy staff may help identify non-Medicare patients who are good candidates for CMR.

In designing this clinical service, a few areas need to be considered. A pharmacist completing a CMR needs to have extensive knowledge of clinical practice and keep updated on current guidelines. Because CMRs include herbal and dietary supplements, access to reliable resources such as the Natural Medicine Comprehensive Database is important. A pharmacy owner should also consider if there is adequate space for the CMR to take place. A private room with a consultation desk and chairs would provide a good place to promote communication and ensure patient privacy. The time it takes for a pharmacist to review the patient's medication, answer questions, and document the process should also be taken into consideration. Offering CMRs to your patients is a great way to provide high quality care. ∎

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Editor's Note: This is another in a continuing series of articles covering treatment of various health issues and how it relates to the Medicare Part D Star Ratings program.