

An FAQ on Proportion of Days Covered With Calcium Channel Blockers

by T'Bony Jewell

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

At this time, proportion of days covered (PDC) with calcium channel blockers has been endorsed by the Pharmacy Quality Alliance (PQA), but has not been included for calculation of 2016 Medicare Part D Star Ratings.

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE ANALYZE?

Proportion of days covered for calcium channel blockers (CCB) calculates the percentage of patients ages 18 years or older who filled at least two prescriptions for a CCB or CCB combination and had medication to cover 80 percent or more of the days measured. The PDC only considers the number of days during the measurement period that the patient has the prescription through the end of the period; in other words, the first day of the measurement period is the day a prescription is first filled rather than the first of the year.

WHAT IMPACT CAN THIS HAVE ON MY PHARMACY?

PQA develops measures so health care stakeholders can measure performance, make improvement plans, and document improvement in a consistent manner to provide better care for patients. Though pharmacies do not receive star ratings from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the insurance plans that contract with pharmacies do. Essentially, payers who do not need a pharmacy to meet the network adequacy

Additional Resources:

- **Pharmacy Quality Alliance:** www.pqaalliance.org/measures/cms.asp
- **National Quality Measures Clearinghouse:** <http://www.qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov/content.aspx?id=47494&search=pdc+calcium+channel+blocker>
- **Simplify My Meds®:** <http://www.ncpanet.org/membership/benefits/preview-of-simplify-my-meds->

standard may include or exclude pharmacies based on the impact they have on their CMS star ratings. By achieving high rates of adherence, as measured by PDC, your pharmacy may be in a better position for preferred network contracting, and thus being able to care for more patients.

WHAT IMPACT DOES THIS HAVE ON PATIENT SAFETY?

Adherence to calcium channel blockers is important for chronic diseases such as heart failure (due to systolic dysfunction), hypertension, heart arrhythmias, and many other chronic conditions. There is evidence to support improvements in health for patients who are adherent to such medications. Patients are less likely to experience adverse events such as fatigue, palpitation, and chest pain or be admitted to a hospital for complications. Activities such as walking upstairs or simply cleaning the house can be completed with less discomfort.

WHAT CAN I DO TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE IN MY PHARMACY?

Prospective and retrospective drug utilization review (DUR) assess-

ments in your pharmacy help identify patients who are on calcium channel blockers or new or older prescriptions. Pharmacist counseling on the importance of medication adherence and patient-centered strategies to improve is key. Barriers that prevent patients from receiving their medications should be recognized and reconciled. Increasing the number of patients who receive educational materials and time with a pharmacist or intern can improve PDC numbers for your pharmacy. Many patients taking CCBs will qualify for medication therapy management (MTM) services including an annual Comprehensive Medication Review (CMR). Programs such as Simplify My Meds® can increase the likelihood of detecting patients with adherence issues and correcting them. After establishing a relationship with the pharmacist, patients can more readily recognize side effects and progress controlling their chronic diseases. ■

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