

# 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 are currently weighted at a four. 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 an MA plan.

## What are the CMS surveys?

### Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS)

The CAHPS program is a multiyear 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 between March and 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 each year between August and November.

More details about HOS measures can be found at [www.hosonline.org](http://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 have grown from more than a quarter of the overall CMS Star quality rating, **now accounting for 35% 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.

- Make scheduling as easy as possible.
- 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 rate 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.

## 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.

## Overall Rating of Health Plan

On a 0 to 10 scale, patients rate their health plan.

- Remind your Humana-covered patients about possible rewards for obtaining certain preventive services, such as a flu vaccine.
- Encourage patients to use health plan resources (e.g., SilverSneakers®) and register for the member portal.

## 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.

- Encourage patients to bring their Humana SmartSummary® statement to doctor visits.
- 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<sup>1</sup>

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.

## Improving or Maintaining Mental Health<sup>1</sup>

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 big impact on a patient's sense of emotional well-being.

## 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.

## 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.
- 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.

\* Keep on Your Feet—Preventing Older Adult Falls. (2022, June 9) Retrieved March 9, 2023, from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [www.cdc.gov/injury/features/older-adult-falls/index.html](https://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<sup>®†</sup>** – rewards our plan members for making healthier choices.

† SilverSneakers and Go365 are not available in 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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<sup>1</sup> Display measure for MY2023, but actively pursuing improvement in anticipation of return to the Star Rating Program.