

Tips for Improving Patient Experience & Quality of Life

wellcare

WHAT IS THE HEALTH OUTCOMES SURVEY (HOS)?

The Medicare Health Outcomes Survey (HOS) measures a Health Plan's success in improving and maintaining the functional status of our patients ages 65 and older. HOS is an annual survey that is conducted from July through November of a random sample of Medicare patients. The same patients are surveyed again two years later to assess changes in health status. HOS measures patients' perception of their physical & mental health and overall quality of life. HOS results impact Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Star Ratings.



Ways you can impact HOS outcomes:

- Ask questions
- Remember each HOS measure addresses a different aspect of patient care and patient-provider interaction
- Encourage patients to take actions aligning with the HOS measures
- Encourage your office staff to help patients fill out the HOS (HOS is administered by phone & mail)

THERE ARE 5 STAR HOS MEASURES YOU CAN DIRECTLY IMPACT

STAR Measure 1—

Improving or maintaining physical health

Assesses the percentage of patients whose physical health was the same or better after 2 years.

Recommendations:

1. Discussion Tips: Ask patients
 - How far they can walk
 - If they have trouble with stairs
 - Are they able to shop & cook their own food
2. Assess your patients' pain & functional status using standardized tools
3. Provide interventions to improve physical health (i.e. disease management, pain management, physical therapy, or care management)
4. Promote self-management support strategies (i.e. goal setting, action planning, problem solving & follow up to help patients take an active role in improving health)

STAR Measure 2—

Improving or maintaining mental health

Assesses the percentage of patients whose behavioral health was the same or better after 2 years.

Recommendations:

1. Discussion Tips: Ask patients
 - How is their energy level throughout the day?
 - What do they like to do to socialize?
 - Does drinking ever get in their way of other important things in life?
2. Assess your patients' symptoms of depression with the PHQ-2 and, when appropriate PHQ-9
3. Refer patients to behavioral health services or manage depression & anxiety treatment as indicated
4. Promote web based programs (i.e. mystrength.com, which provides evidence-based behavioral health self care resources.)
5. Use motivational interviewing to improve treatment engagement & behavioral and physical health outcomes

STAR Measure 3— Monitoring physical activity

Assesses the percentage of patients who discussed exercise with their health care provider and were advised to start, increase or maintain their physical activity within the year.

Recommendations:

1. Discussion Tips: Ask patients about their level of activity, including:
 - > Walking, rolling wheelchair or swimming (Aerobic activities)
 - > Carrying laundry, groceries or working in their yard (Strength activity)
2. Use motivational interviewing to improve treatment engagement & behavioral and physical health outcomes

STAR Measure 4— Reducing risk for falling

Assesses the percentage of patients with falling, walking, or balance problems who discussed these topics with their care providers and received treatment within the year.

Recommendations:

1. Discussion Tips: Ask patients
 - > If they had a fall in the past year
 - > If they felt dizzy, or had problems with balance or walking in the past year
 - > If they have any vision problems; when was their most recent eye exam
2. Complete a fall risk assessment & provide resources and treatment (i.e. referrals for care management, social worker, eye exam, have office staff verify health plan benefits for OTC)

3. Promote home safety (i.e. removal of throw rugs & clutter to reduce tripping, use of night lights, installing handrails on stairs & grab bars in the bathrooms)
4. Perform medication review to identify medications that increase risk for falls
5. Provide educational material about fall prevention ([visit cdc.gov/steady/materials.html](https://www.cdc.gov/steady/materials.html) for resources)

STAR Measure 5— Improving bladder control

Assesses the percentage of patients with urinary incontinence (UI) who discussed problem & treatment options with their care provider.

Recommendations:

1. Discussion Tips: Ask patients
 - > If they've had any leakage in the past 6 months (Patient may be hesitant to ask about this themselves)
 - > How often & when the leakage problem occurs
 - > If UI affects their daily life (i.e. social withdrawals, depression or sleep deprivation)
2. Evaluate the severity and impact of UI on the patient's quality of life and involve them in the decisions about treatment options (i.e. bladder training, pelvic muscle rehab)
3. Have informative brochures & materials visible and available as discussion starters

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