Follow-up after hospitalization for mental illness HEDIS® Measure

Members should see an outpatient psychiatric or behavioral health specialist within 7 or 30 calendar days of discharge after hospitalization for mental illness. Proper follow-up care is associated with lower rates of readmission and with a greater likelihood that gains made during hospitalization are retained. The period immediately following discharge from inpatient care is recognized as a time of increased vulnerability. Ensuring continuity of care by increasing compliance to outpatient follow-up care helps detect early post-hospitalization medication problems and provides continuing support that improves treatment outcomes and reduces healthcare costs.

Measure

Members 6 years of age and older who were hospitalized for treatment of selected mental health disorders and who had an outpatient visit, an intensive outpatient encounter, or partial hospitalization with a mental health practitioner. Two rates are reported.

1. The percentage of patients who received follow-up within 30 days of discharge
2. The percentage of patients who received follow-up within 7 days of discharge

Care Coordinator Steps

If a member was recently hospitalized for mental illness, ask him or her if they have a follow-up appointment made with a mental health provider within 7 or 30 days of discharge.

- If the member does not have an appointment, make a three-way call to their clinic to set up the appointment.
- Ask if the member has transportation or interpreter services arranged if needed. If not, assist the member with arranging those services.

Types of visits that “count”

- Visit with a mental health practitioner
- Visit to a behavioral healthcare facility
- Transitional Care Manager (TCM)
- Adult Rehab Mental Health Services (ARMHS)
- Direct transfers to non-acute facilities e.g. IRTS
- Partial hospitalization

“Mental health practitioner” includes:

- Psychiatrist
- Psychologist
- LICSW
- Mental Health NP & CNS
- Licensed therapist and counselor

Tips for Care Coordinators when talking to the member

- Remember, members are more likely to show for an appointment if they have talked to someone about it, or were assisted in making the appointment.
- Remind them that consistent follow-up care is very important and can prevent another hospitalization.
- Reassure the member that they are not alone – one in four Americans have a mental health diagnosis.

1 HEDIS is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).
3 Peter Bach et al. HEDIS 2014 Technical Specifications for Health Plans (National Committee for Quality Assurance 2013), 181–183