



## Medication Best Practices – Focus on Adherence

Medication adherence can affect quality and length of life, health outcomes, and overall healthcare costs. A 2012 [review](#) in the Annals of Internal Medicine estimated that medication non-adherence costs the healthcare system between \$100 - \$289 billion a year. Adherence rates of 80% are needed for optimal therapeutic effect, however the estimated adherence rate in patients with chronic conditions hovers around 50 percent.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services consider medication adherence to be a critical component of health plan performance, and the measure is integral to an organization’s Medicare Advantage Star Rating. Eight of the 45 unique measures in the Medicare Part C and D Star Ratings framework relate in some way to medications, and the three that relate directly to medication adherence in common chronic diseases are *triple-weighted* measures. Medication adherence is critical to improving health outcomes and lowering total cost of care.

Medication Adherence Measurements		
D10: Adherence for Diabetes Medications	D11: Adherence for Hypertension (RAS Antagonists)	D12: Adherence for Cholesterol (Statins)
<b>Target Population</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are 18 years of age or older</li> <li>• Have at least two fills in a calendar year for a diabetes (non-insulin) medication               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Biguanides</li> <li>➢ DPP-IV inhibitors</li> <li>➢ Incretin mimetics</li> <li>➢ Meglitinides</li> <li>➢ SGLT-2 inhibitors</li> <li>➢ Sulfonylureas</li> <li>➢ Thiazolidinediones</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are 18 years of age or older</li> <li>• Have at least two fills in a calendar year for a renin-angiotensin system antagonist               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ ACE-inhibitors</li> <li>➢ Angiotensin receptor blockers</li> <li>➢ Direct renin inhibitors</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are 18 years of age or older</li> <li>• Have at least two fills in a calendar year for a statin medication</li> </ul>
<b>Exclusions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospice enrollment</li> <li>• ESRD diagnosis or coverage dates</li> <li>• One or more prescriptions for insulin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospice enrollment</li> <li>• ESRD diagnosis or coverage dates</li> <li>• One or more prescriptions for sacubitril/valsartan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospice enrollment</li> <li>• ESRD diagnosis or coverage dates</li> </ul>
<b>Gap Closure</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients fill their prescriptions often enough to cover 80% or more of the time they are supposed to take them</li> </ul>		
<b>Tips</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess medication adherence at every patient interaction just as you do for vital signs</li> <li>• Prioritize non-adherence in the differential for conditions not at goal</li> <li>• Encourage patients to use tools like pill boxes, mobile apps, or multi-dose packaging as appropriate</li> <li>• Review eligibility for 90-day prescriptions where permissible</li> <li>• Provide a year’s supply of prescriptions at each annual visit to prevent refill gaps</li> <li>• Address concerns about medication safety, side effects, cost, or purpose</li> <li>• Ask for patient input into their treatment plan</li> <li>• Encourage annual comprehensive medication reviews with an aligned pharmacist</li> </ul>		

If you have additional questions, please contact the SOHO Pharmacy Team at: [Maria.Summa@sfhcp.org](mailto:Maria.Summa@sfhcp.org)



References:

- Viswanathan M, Golin CE, Jones CD, et al. Interventions to improve adherence to self-administered medications for chronic diseases in the United States: a systematic review. *Ann Intern Med* 2012;157:785–95
- Neiman AB, Ruppert T, Ho M, et al. CDC Grand Rounds: Improving Medication Adherence for Chronic Disease Management — Innovations and Opportunities. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2017;66
- <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Prescription-Drug-Coverage/PrescriptionDrugCovGenIn/Downloads/Star-Ratings-Technical-Notes-Oct-10-2019.pdf>