

Improve Patient Care and Quality of Life




Use these tips and recommendations to guide discussions with your patients about their health.


What is the Health Outcomes Survey (HOS)?

- ✓ An annual survey administered from April through July to a random sample of Medicare patients. The same patients are surveyed again two years later to assess change in health status.
- ✓ It measures patients' perception of their physical and mental health and overall quality of life.
- ✓ Survey results impact Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Star Ratings.



Each measure addresses a different aspect of patient care and patient-provider interaction. There are five Star HOS measures you can directly impact.

|  Improving or maintaining physical health | |
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| This Star measure assesses the percentage of patients whose physical health was the same or better after two years. | |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | DISCUSSION TIPS... |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess your patient's pain and functional status using standardized tools. • Provide interventions to improve physical health, such as disease management, pain management, physical therapy, or care management. • Promote self-management support strategies, such as goal-setting, action planning, problem solving, and follow-up to help patients take an active role in improving their health. | <p>Ask patients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far they can walk. • If they have trouble with stairs. • If they are able to shop and cook their own food. • If pain limits activity. |

|  Improving or maintaining mental health | |
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| This Star measure assesses the percentage of patients whose behavioral health was the same or better after two years. | |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | DISCUSSION TIPS... |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess your patient's symptoms of depression with the PHQ-2 and, when appropriate, PHQ-9. • Refer patients to behavioral health services or manage depression and anxiety treatment as indicated. • Promote web-based programs, such as myStrength.com, that provide a range of evidence-based behavioral health self-care resources. • Use motivational interviewing to improve treatment engagement and behavioral and physical health outcomes. | <p>Ask patients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To describe their energy level. • If they get out to socialize. • If alcohol use causes personal problems. |

(continued)

Health Outcomes Survey Tip Sheet (continued)



Monitoring physical activity

This Star measure assesses the percentage of patients who discussed exercise with their doctor or other health care provider and were advised to start, increase or maintain their physical activity within the year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assess your patient's current physical activity level.
- Discuss health benefits and advise patients to start, maintain or increase physical activity as appropriate for their individual health status.
- Develop physical activity plans with patients that match their abilities. Use the Let's Get Active Rx pad to provide written activity guidelines.
- Refer patients with limited mobility to physical therapy to learn safe and effective exercises.
- Encourage participation in a gym, fitness and exercise programs and local community resources.

DISCUSSION TIPS...

Ask patients:

- About daily level of workouts.
- What activities they enjoy.
- If they feel better when they are more active.

Discuss the benefits of aerobic activities (walking, jogging or swimming) and strength training (bodyweight exercises, weightlifting, tai chi, or gardening).



Reducing risk of falling

This Star measure assesses the percentage of patients with falling, walking or balance problems who discussed these topics with their providers and received treatment within the year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assess fall risk by asking patients about falling, gait and balance problems. Document discussion on the My Wellness and Prevention Checklist.
- Provide fall prevention interventions, such as promoting regular exercise, strengthening and balance activities (tai chi, yoga), promoting regular eye exams, and providing appropriate educational materials.
- Promote home safety, such as:
 - Removal of throw rugs and clutter to reduce tripping.
 - Installing handrails on stairs and grab bars in the bathrooms.
 - Use of non-slip mats in the tub or shower.
 - Use of night lights to keep halls well lit.

DISCUSSION TIPS...

Ask patients:

- If they had a fall in the past year.
- About circumstances of the fall.
- How they think a fall could have been prevented.
- If they felt dizzy, or had problems with balance or walking in the past year.
- About vision problems and if they have had a recent eye exam.



Improving bladder control

This Star measure assesses the percentage of patients with urinary incontinence (UI) who discussed the problem and treatment options with their health care providers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assess problems with UI in the last six months and document discussion on the My Wellness and Prevention Checklist.
- Assess the severity of the condition and the impact of UI on the patient's quality of life. Involve patients in decisions about treatment options that best work for them. These options include behavioral (such as bladder training and pelvic muscle rehabilitation), pharmacological and surgical therapies.
- Have informative brochures and materials visible and available as discussion starters.

DISCUSSION TIPS...

Ask patients:

- If they have had leakage in the past six months.
- How often and when the leakage problem occurs.
- If UI has affected their daily life (such as social withdrawals, depression or sleep deprivation).

Contact QI for more tools at
CQI_Medicare@healthnet.com.

