

Follow-Up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness

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We understand providers are committed to providing our members with quality care, including follow-up appointments after a behavioral health (BH) inpatient stay. Since regular monitoring, follow-up appointments and making necessary treatment recommendations or changes are all part of quality care, we would like to provide an overview of the related HEDIS®/QARR measure.

The Follow-Up after Hospitalization for Mental Illness (FUH) HEDIS/QARR measure evaluates members 6 years and older who were hospitalized for treatment of selected mental illness diagnoses and who had a follow-up visit with a mental health practitioner.

This HEDIS/QARR measure looks at the percentage of BH inpatient discharges for which the member received follow-up within seven days after discharge. The follow-up visit cannot occur on the day of discharge or it will not count.

On a regular basis, we continue to monitor if follow-up appointments are recommended and scheduled during the inpatient stay as part of discharge planning by the eligible BH facilities (such as psychiatric hospitals, freestanding mental health facilities and acute care hospitals with psychiatric units), as well as by practicing BH providers.

Please consider the following for improving member outcomes for this measure:

- Earliest follow-up with a BH provider can help with continuing treatment after leaving the hospital.
- With greater emphasis on care coordination, PCPs can help facilitate the BH follow-up appointments.
- Weekend discharges have shown to have very inconsistent follow-up appointments after discharge. Start discharge planning as soon as possible during inpatient stay so those who are discharged on weekends have already scheduled follow-up appointments.

- In addition, facilitate discussion of other social determinants of health (such as housing, food, living in a rural area, transportation, job schedules, family and social support, child care, etc.) which can influence follow-up opportunities. Please address these needs and issues during the behavior health inpatient stay.
- Social workers at the facilities can contact Member Services for Empire BlueCross BlueShield HealthPlus to learn if additional sources of assistance are available through case management or other referrals.
- Telehealth services may be considered as part of follow-up for this HEDIS/QARR measure if permitted in your state for BH follow-up and must be based on your clinical evaluation since this may not be the best choice of follow up for everyone.
 - However, it is also extremely important to note that telehealth services are subject to state and federal policies, coding and other requirements.
 - Please follow required guidelines and policies related to telehealth services specific to this measure.
- Our goal is continuity of care and treatment within seven days of inpatient BH discharge, followed by another visit within 30 days.

Please note this bulletin is for informational purposes only, as a resource for BH HEDIS/QARR follow up guidelines.

*HEDIS is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

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