

Quality Corner: Follow-up after Hospitalization for Mental Illness

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As a provider, we understand you are committed to providing the best care for our members, including follow up appointments with members after a behavioral health (BH) inpatient stay. Since regular monitoring, follow up appointments and making necessary treatment recommendations or changes are all part of excellent care, we would like to provide an overview of the related HEDIS measure.

The Follow-up after Hospitalization for Mental Illness (FUH) HEDIS 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.

Two areas of importance for this HEDIS measure are:

- The percentage of behavioral health inpatient discharges for which the member received follow-up within 7 days after discharge.

- The percentage of behavioral health inpatient discharges for which the member received follow-up within 30 days after discharge.

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

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

1. Earliest follow up with a BH provider can help with continuing treatment after leaving the hospital.

2. With greater emphasis on care coordination, primary care providers can help facilitate the BH follow up appointments.

3. Weekend member discharges have shown to have very inconsistent follow up after discharge. Start discharge planning as soon as possible while members are inpatient so those who are discharged on weekends have scheduled follow up appointments.

4. In addition, other social determinants of health pertinent to the member such as housing, food, living in a rural area, transportation, job schedule, family and social support, child care, etc., can impact follow-up opportunities. Please address these needs and issues; refer to resources that can help support the member.

5. Social workers at the facilities can contact Anthem member services to learn if additional sources of assistance are available through Anthem such as case management and other referrals.

6. Telehealth services have been identified as part of follow up for this HEDIS measure available in certain parts of the country. Telehealth follow up may not be the best choice for everyone; however, not having a BH follow up for several weeks can be detrimental to the member can be a reason for relapse.

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

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