



Concurrent Use of Opioids and Benzodiazepines (COB) Tip Sheet

What is the CMS Star Rating Program?

CMS uses a five-star quality rating system to measure the experiences Medicare beneficiaries have with their health plan and health care system – the Star Rating Program. Health plans are rated on a scale of 1 to 5 stars, with 5 being the highest. These ratings are then published on the Medicare Plan Finder at <http://www.medicare.gov> to raise the quality of care for Medicare beneficiaries, strengthen beneficiary protections and help consumers compare health plans more easily.

Measure Description

Weight: 1

Percentage of Medicare Part D beneficiaries 18 years and older with concurrent use of prescription opioids and benzodiazepines during the measurement period.

Measure Source

- Prescription Drug Event data from CMS
- 1/1-12/31

Stars/Quality Specifications

The percentage of continuously enrolled (CE) Medicare Part D beneficiaries, 18 years or older, with concurrent use of prescription opioids and benzodiazepines during the measurement period.

Strategies for Success

In accordance with the National Library of Medicine:

- Limit necessary benzodiazepines to short term use (less than 30 days for year) or consider alternative medications to manage original indication (example: Gabapentin for neuropathic pain, serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors for pain with depression or anxiety, or trazodone for insomnia/sleep disturbance).
- Consider options for any withdrawal symptoms (example: clonidine for blood pressure changes, loperamide for diarrhea).
- Provide rescue medication, such as naloxone, to high-risk patients.
- Use prescription drug monitoring programs to monitor the prescribing and dispensing of controlled substances.
- If tapering benzodiazepines for elderly patients, use a longer tapering schedule over 4-5 months.

Coding and Documentation Tips

Exclusions:

Members who elect to receive hospice care with at least one day of hospice coverage during the measurement period.

Medications

- Opioids
- Benzodiazepines

If you have questions, please contact your provider relations specialist.

