
Follow-Up Care for Children Prescribed ADHD Medications

Neighborhood News – July 2024

Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island (Neighborhood) seeks your assistance in improving performance on the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) measure titled “Follow-Up Care for Children Prescribed ADHD Medications (ADD).”

Why is the ADD quality measure important?

Research indicates that the best outcomes for most individuals, especially those with moderate to severe attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), are achieved through a combination of behavioral therapy and medication. A study from Massachusetts General Hospital¹ supports this, stating, “Pharmacologic treatment in children and adolescents with psychiatric disorders reduces the risk of substance use later in life, especially in ADHD.”

How is ADD measured?

The ADD measure includes **two separate components** that are based on the percentage of children **newly** prescribed ADHD medication who had at least three follow-up care visits within a 10-month period, one of which occurred within 30 days of when the initial ADHD medication was dispensed. These visits can be conducted remotely via Zoom, Skype, or similar platforms, or through voice-only telephone visits.

- **Initiation Phase.** The percentage of members ages 6-12 with a prescription for ADHD medication dispensed by an ambulatory care provider, who had one follow-up visit with a practitioner with prescribing authority during the 30-day initiation phase.
- **Continuation and Maintenance Phase.** The percentage of members ages 6-12 with a prescription dispensed for ADHD medication, who remained on the medication for at least 210 days and who, in addition to the visit in the Initiation Phase, had at least two follow-up visits with a practitioner within 270 days (nine months) after the Initiation Phase ended.

Neighborhood’s performance on the ADD measure

For Measurement Year 2023, Neighborhood’s Medicaid HEDIS® rate was **46.71%** for the Initiation Phase and **56.09%** for the Continuation and Maintenance Phase. These rates have declined from the previous year and consistently rank below the National Medicaid Quality Compass® 90th percentiles.

¹ Brown, N. (2022, May 25). *Medication for pediatric psychiatric disorders reduces later onset of substance use problems*. Retrieved from Massachusetts General Hospital: <https://www.massgeneral.org/news/press-release/medication-treatment-pediatric-psychiatry-reduces-later-substance-use-problems>

How can you help?

- For your patients newly diagnosed with ADHD, schedule a follow-up appointment within 30 days followed by two more appointments within nine months;
- Educate parents or guardians about the importance of an evaluation within 30 days of starting the medication to assess the medication's effectiveness and any potential side effects;
- During follow-up appointments, discuss telehealth options to help overcome any access issues;
- Emphasize the importance of medication adherence.

Resources

Neighborhood and its behavioral health partner, Optum, offer the following resources to all physicians:

- **New ADHD follow-up tracking form** for members that are newly prescribed ADHD medication. The form is available in multiple languages under [Clinical Resources](#);
- Access the [behavioral health toolkit for medical providers](#) on providerexpress.com;
- Review Neighborhood's [Clinical Resources](#) for more information on ADHD, coding, and best practices.