

Initiating and Engaging Patients in Treatment for Alcohol and Drug Dependence

A Key Quality Measure

With substance use increasing in the U.S.,* the HEDIS® measure for Initiation and Engagement of Alcohol and Other Drug Dependence Treatment (IET) is important for providers to monitor. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, “most people who get into and remain in treatment stop using drugs, decrease their criminal activity, and improve their occupational, social, and psychological functioning.” **

The IET measure reports on whether adults and youth who were found to have alcohol and other drug dependence (AOD) by a provider had either/both of the following:

- Treatment *within 14 days* of their first diagnosis (initiation)
- Two or more follow-up treatment services *within 34 days* of the first treatment date (engagement)

As a provider, you can help patients achieve positive treatment results when you improve coordination of care, or plan and manage treatment.

How you can improve care coordination

If you have diagnosed a patient with AOD, you should:

- Consider the use of a **screening tool** during your assessment, such as the CAGE-AID. *You can access this tool from the Magellan PCP Toolkit at www.MagellanPCPtoolkit.com > Diagnostic Tools > Screening Tools.*
- **Educate the patient** about their diagnosis and treatment options and encourage them to discuss any concerns with you if they are not ready to engage in treatment.
- If you are not going to care for the patient after discharge from the facility or following the visit, make sure that the **referral process is secured**, that you’ve transitioned the treatment plan to the behavioral health provider and the primary care provider who will care for the patient after the hospitalization.
- **Refer the patient to a behavioral health provider** for psychosocial support and skill building. *For assistance in identifying a behavioral health practitioner to whom you can refer your patients, please call the number listed on the back of the patient’s benefits ID card.*
- **Help the patient** obtain initial substance abuse treatment within 14 days of the AOD diagnosis (initiation).
- **Encourage the patient** to arrange follow-up treatment within 34 days of the initial treatment start date (engagement).
- Work with Magellan discharge planners to optimize the discharge plan after detoxification, emergency department visit, or any other inpatient or outpatient episode where the AOD diagnosis is determined.
- **Reach out to Magellan** if your patient visits an area emergency department for comorbid conditions to any related AOD issue and is discharged to home following the emergency department visit.

What is HEDIS?

Designed by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) is a collection of over 90 measures consisting of various evidence-based clinical guidelines for services rendered to commercial, Medicare and Medicaid HMO, POS and PPO plan members. **More than 90% of America's health plans use this tool to measure performance on critical dimensions of care and service.**

Initiating and Engaging Patients in Treatment for Alcohol and Drug Dependence A Key Quality Measure, cont.

- **Tap Magellan resources** including the [Magellan Medical Providers' Behavioral Health Toolkit](#) (which provides educational resources on AOD and information on how to consult with a Magellan medical director), and Magellan's [Substance Use Treatment](#) materials (which include information on treatment for opioid dependence).

Types of treatment the IET measure includes***

- Inpatient treatment
- Outpatient visits
- Telehealth services
- Intensive outpatient treatment
- Partial hospitalization programs
- Medication-assisted treatment services

*<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/nationwide-trends>

**<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/principles-drug-addiction-treatment-research-based-guide-third-edition/frequently-asked-questions/how-effective-drug-addiction-treatment>

***Benefits and eligibility vary based on a patient's benefit plan. Before scheduling a treatment service, encourage patients to call the behavioral health number on the back of their insurance card to confirm eligibility, limitations, exclusions and other specific terms of their health benefit plan.

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