

# Walker Utilizers

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## Health Status Outcomes Summary

No changes in beneficiary health outcomes resulting from the Medicare Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies (DMEPOS) Competitive Bidding Program have been observed to date.

These materials contain the mortality and morbidity rates for one group of beneficiaries being monitored: the walker utilizers group. Utilizer Groups are composed of Medicare beneficiaries who have a claim for the product in the month of observation or any of the previous three months. Access Groups include beneficiaries who are likely to use the product and are determined by whether a beneficiary has a condition related to product use.

The health outcomes being measured are deaths, hospitalizations, emergency room visits, physician visits, admissions to skilled nursing facilities, average number of days spent hospitalized in a month, and average number of days in a skilled nursing facility in a month.

Rates in Round 2 Competitive Bidding Areas (CBAs) are compared to historical rates in Round 1 CBAs and in non-competitive bid regions. In general, outcome rates in Round 2 CBAs continue in line with historical rates. Additionally, they also track closely with rates in non-competitive bid regions.

It is important to note that mortality and morbidity rates generally display seasonal trends. The first quarter of each year typically has elevated rates of mortality and morbidity; however, the trends generally mirror past seasons and are closely matched by the non-competitive bid regions.

Additionally, rates that appear more variable tend to be based on a smaller number of beneficiaries. For example, the Utilizer Groups have fewer beneficiaries than the Access Groups, so rates for the Utilizer groups tend to be more variable.

### **NOTE:**

Beginning with public use files utilizing data through the third quarter of 2014, we redefined access groups to include only beneficiaries with ICD-9 diagnosis codes that are considered highly related to product use. Prior to this update, access groups were defined using related condition categories (CCs) based on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) beneficiary risk adjustment model. Because Medicare makes periodic updates to its risk adjustment model, the ICD-9 diagnosis codes that are aggregated under a given CC can change over time. As a result, our CC-defined access groups may include ICD-9 diagnosis codes that are not as closely associated with product category usage. Redefining access groups using pre-specified sets of ICD-9 diagnosis codes, instead of CCs, allows us to remove these unrelated diagnoses and improve the accuracy of our access groups.

## Introduction

Folder Name: Walkers\_Utilizers\_Thru\_Sept\_2014

Upload Date: 2015.01.13

Observation Period: 01/01/2011 to 9/30/2014

Claims Processed Through: 1/2/2015

Beneficiary Enrollment Through: November 2014

Data Types: Original Medicare (Part A and Part B) Claims; Medicare Enrollment Data

Purpose: To summarize mortality and morbidity outcomes in walker utilizers in Round 1 and Round 2 CBAs and non-competitive bid regions aggregated at the DME region level.

Each CSV file in this folder refers to a specific outcome of interest. Each of the outcomes is defined in the Specifications section.

## Specifications

### Study Population and Definitions

- Utilizers: All persons who, during the month of observation, were enrolled in Original Medicare and living in a ZIP code in the specified Round 1 or Round 2 CBA or non-competitive bid region, and had a claim for a walker in the month of observation or any of the previous three months.<sup>1</sup>
- Round 1 CBAs: Includes all areas in which the competitive bidding policy was implemented for Round 1
- Round 2 CBAs: Includes all areas in which the competitive bidding policy was implemented for Round 2
- Non-Competitive Bid Regions: Includes all regions nationally that are not part of Rounds 1 or 2 of competitive bidding

### Outcome Definitions:

- Death: As observed in the Medicare Enrollment Database
- Hospitalization: As indicated by the service date of Inpatient (IP) claim
- ER: As indicated by the service date of Outpatient (OP) claim with emergency room flag
- Physician Visit: As indicated by the service date of Carrier (PB) claim
- SNF Admission: As indicated by the date of admission to a skilled nursing facility (SNF)
- IP Days: As indicated by the dates on a beneficiary's IP claims
- SNF Days: As indicated by dates on a beneficiary's SNF claims

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<sup>1</sup> Source:

- [Round 1 CBAs](#);
- [Round 2 CBAs](#);
- [Product Category HCPCS](#)