

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

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Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850



DATE: April 26, 2019

TO: Medicare Advantage Contracts, Prescription Drug Plan Quality Contracts, and Medicare Compliance Officers

FROM: Cara V. James, Director, CMS Office of Minority Health

SUBJECT: Reporting of National Medicare Advantage Quality Scores by Race, Ethnicity and Gender

Overview

Despite advances in health care access, increases in spending, and improvements in quality over the last decade, there is well-documented evidence that members of racial and ethnic minority groups continue to experience worse health outcomes (2017 National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report - <https://www.ahrq.gov/research/findings/nhqdr/nhqdr17/index.html>). To begin to comprehensively address and eliminate health disparities, it is first necessary to be able to measure and publicly report – in a standardized and systematic way – the nature and extent of these differences. The IMPACT Act of 2014, requires the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation to examine the differential effect of a number of demographic variables, including race and ethnicity, on Medicare payment policy and the reporting of additional quality measures.

On Friday, April 26, 2019, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Office of Minority Health (CMS OMH) will release a national level reports detailing health care experiences and quality of care received by Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare Advantage (MA) and Prescription Drug Plans results stratified by race and ethnicity, race and ethnicity within gender groups, and by women and men separately. The report will be available on the CMS OMH website, go.cms.gov/cms-omh.

Data Sources

The data, which were prepared in collaboration with the RAND Corporation, are based on an analysis of two sources of information, the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) and the Medicare Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) Survey.

HEDIS collects information from medical records and administrative data on the technical quality of care that Medicare beneficiaries receive for a variety of medical issues, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and chronic lung disease. CAHPS, which is conducted annually by CMS, focuses on the health care experiences of Medicare beneficiaries across the nation.

The report present HEDIS and CAHPS scores by race and ethnicity within gender groups or by gender at the national level.

Format of the Data Release

The data release will include:

- A PDF file consisting of bar charts showing the national level results.
- A series of Excel spreadsheets that show contract-level scores for CAHPS and HEDIS measures stratified by race/ethnicity.

Using These Data to Improve Performance

These data provide information that may be useful for targeting quality improvement activities and resources, monitoring health and drug plan performance, and advancing the development of culturally and linguistically appropriate quality improvement interventions and strategies.

Interpretation of Findings

The data presented indicate overall differences in the care that is delivered to Medicare beneficiaries who identify as American Indians or Alaska Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black or African American, Hispanic, or White and for men and women.

Scores on clinical care measures, including the flu immunization measure, are not adjusted for these other characteristics. On clinical care measures, a lower score for a particular racial or ethnic minority group or gender group means that enrollees of the MA contract who are members of that particular racial or ethnic minority group or gender group received worse care than enrollees of that MA contract who are White or who are a different gender.

Support material will be provided

Please direct any questions pertaining to the: (1) technical nature of the data, (2) methodology used to report national MA and PDP contract data for select HEDIS and CAHPS measures stratified by race, ethnicity and gender, or (3) quality improvement resources for MA and PDP contracts for select HEDIS and CAHPS measures stratified by race, ethnicity and gender to the CMS Health Equity Technical Assistance via email at HealthequityTA@cms.hhs.gov.