Antidepressant medication management (AMM)

Access/Availability of Care HEDIS® Measure

Antidepressant medications play a critical role in the effective care of patients with depression. The consequences of untreated or inadequately treated depression are significant and taking antidepressant medication correctly is an important part of appropriate treatment. Combining the right antidepressant medications with proper psychological therapy typically leads to positive outcomes for patients. Providers need to monitor patients with depression closely during the first 3-6 months of treatment to adjust the dosage or type of medication if necessary. Taking the correct medication as prescribed is important to the long-term health and well-being of the patient.

HEDIS MEASURE DEFINITION
Patients 18 years and older who were treated with antidepressants, had a diagnosis of major depression, and remained on an antidepressant medication treatment for at least 6 months.

RATES EVALUATED IN THE MEASURE
HEDIS evaluates two separate rates in this measure:
- **Rate 1 Effective Acute Phase Treatment**: Patients who remained on an antidepressant medication for at least 84 days (12 weeks)
- **Rate 2 Effective Continuation Phase Treatment**: Patients who remained on an antidepressant medication for at least 180 days (6 months)

TIPS FOR TALKING WITH PATIENTS
Your patients will likely have a lot of questions and possible concerns about starting an antidepressant medication. Below are questions and topics of concern patients with a new depression diagnosis typically have. You should be prepared to discuss this information with your patients.

**Length of treatment**: Set expectations about the recommended length of medication treatment based on the severity of the patient’s depression and patterns of recurrence.

**Proper usage and efficacy**:
- Discuss the importance of continuing medication as prescribed (even if the patient starts feeling better) and the risks of stopping medication before 6 months, notably increased rates of recurrence.
- Note that it can take 3 weeks or longer for a medication to have the desired effect and the patient should take the prescribed medication for 3 weeks before determining whether it’s working. Giving the patient medication instructions in writing will help reinforce your conversation about proper usage.
• Don’t continue a prescription without seeing the patient at least 2 times per year so you can evaluate their progress and the effectiveness of the prescription.

**Side effects:** Discuss possible side effects of the medication and ways the patient can contact your office with questions and concerns.

**What success looks like:**
• Discuss full remission may involve increasing the medication dose even if the patient reports improvements at the first follow-up visit.
• Educate patients about ways to improve symptoms in conjunction with their medication such as exercise and psychological therapy.

**Ensure follow-up appointments:**
• To ensure your patients complete a follow-up visit within 30 days of a new prescription, prescribe a 30-day supply of medication at the first visit and require a follow-up visit to continue the medication.
• It’s important to see patients within 3-6 weeks after they start a new prescription to reassess symptoms, side effects, and adjust the type or dose of medication if needed.
• To ensure the patient completes at least 2 more follow-up visits within 9 months of the first appointment, schedule all follow-up appointments while the patient is at your office for their first visit.

**INFORMATION PATIENT MEDICAL RECORDS SHOULD INCLUDE**
When documenting major depression, make sure to include information about the following:
• Whether the episode was single or recurrent
• The severity of the episode: mild, moderate, severe without psychotic features, or severe with psychotic features
• The clinical status of the patient and whether they’re in partial or full remission

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**
This measure is looking at patients with a diagnosis of major depression. The Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) incorporates DSM-IV depression diagnostic criteria with other leading major depressive symptoms into a brief self-report tool, and can objectively determine if the episode is mild, moderate, or severe. The Patient Health Questionnaire can be located at [www.phqscreeners.com](http://www.phqscreeners.com).