

Improving Medicare Patient-Reported Outcomes

Our network providers play a fundamental role in affecting patient perceptions surrounding their health care outcomes. Every year, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) sends the Health Outcomes Survey (HOS) to a random sample of Medicare members in the summer. Two years later, those same members are surveyed again to look at changes in their self-reported health outcomes.

What is the purpose of the Health Outcomes Survey?

The survey serves to provide a standardized understanding of patient outcomes around physical and mental health, fall risk and prevention, physical activity, and urinary incontinence. Our providers have a direct impact on patients' perception of their health and quality of life. The tips and techniques below may help you enhance your Medicare patients' health care outcomes

EASY TIPS TO FOLLOW TO IMPROVE MEDICARE PATIENT HEALTH OUTCOMES



MENTAL HEALTH

- Assess your patient's symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions using a standardized, evidence-based, behavioral health screening tool.
- If a patient screens positive on a tool or exhibits symptoms of a mental health condition, develop a plan with them to help take steps to improve their mental health. Discuss exercise, identify stress triggers, talk about sleep habits, suggest that they connect with supportive friends and family, etc.
- Discuss options for therapy with a mental health provider. EmblemHealth's behavioral health partner, Carelon, is available to help. Call **800-397-1630**, available 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday.



PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Ask your patient questions about their overall physical well-being, functional status, pain, and if their health limits them in performing daily activities (such as climbing stairs, working, etc.).
- Determine if your patient could benefit from physical therapy, acupuncture, a pain management provider, case management services, or another specialist or service. Help link them to care, possibly with help from our [Care Management team](#).
- Partner with your patients to set physical health improvement goals (like healthy eating or exercise habits).



BLADDER HEALTH

- Initiate discussion with patients around urinary incontinence as this topic is often a sensitive one. Share educational materials about the condition.
- Ask your patients if they have any trouble with holding their urine, if they have had any accidents, and how it may impact their daily activities (e.g., sleep, social situations) and quality of life.
- Explain how common urinary leakage is, especially as we grow older. Discuss treatment options such as pelvic exercises, dietary changes, bladder training, medicines, and surgery.
- Refer your patients to specialists, if needed (e.g., urologist, OB/GYN).



SLIPS AND FALLS

- Review your patients' fall risk by conducting a fall risk assessment. You can use a tool like this ["Stay Independent" assessment from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). Ask questions about falls in past year, feeling unsteady, and worries about falling.
- Discuss fall prevention interventions including exercise and balance activities, physical therapy, a routine hearing and vision test, and home safety interventions (e.g., grab bars in bathroom, reducing trip hazards, use of nightlights).
- Conduct a regular medicine review with patient to see if there are medicines that increase the likelihood of falls.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Assess your patients' physical activity levels, including both aerobic and strength training activity.
- Discuss the health benefits of staying active (e.g., mental health, physical functioning).
- Develop exercise strategies that match your patients' abilities.
- Offer ideas where patients can engage in activities (e.g., YMCA). Link patients to resources, such as the [healthy discounts available for EmblemHealth members](#).