

# PROVIDER TIPS TO ENSURE BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PATIENTS

The annual **Medicare Health Outcomes Survey (HOS)** is usually mailed to health plan members between April and July. The results of this survey affect Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Star ratings for EmblemHealth.

There are three Star measures on the HOS survey. Each measure addresses a different aspect of patient care and patient-doctor interaction. This guide addresses these metrics and includes recommendations to identify and proactively treat common patient health concerns.

## STAR MEASURE 1: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN OLDER ADULTS (PAO)

**This Star measure assesses whether or not a patient has discussed their level of physical activity with their doctor and if physical activity recommendations were given.**

### Discussing Physical Activity

- Ask patient about overall physical and mental well-being and quality of life.
  - If patient has mental health concerns, please refer them to Beacon Health Options (**1-888-447-2526**) to learn about behavioral health service coverage and find a health care professional.
  - For Montefiore patients only, refer to University Behavioral Associates (UBA) (**1-800-401-4822**).
- Ask patient about level of exercise and physical activity, including:
  - Aerobic activities such as jogging, walking, rolling wheelchair or swimming.
  - Strength training such as bodyweight exercises, weight lifting, carrying laundry or groceries, chair exercises or working in the yard.

### Advising Physical Activity

- Recommend starting, increasing or maintaining patient's level of exercise and physical activity. Emphasize that exercise:
  - Improves muscle strength and balance.
  - Reduces the risk of falls and fall-related injuries.
  - Reduces the impact of age on morbidity and mortality.
  - Improves physical functioning, reduces risk of depressive symptoms and anxiety.

## STAR MEASURE 2: MANAGEMENT OF URINARY INCONTINENCE (MUI)

**This Star measure assesses whether urinary incontinence has had an effect on a patient's quality of life, whether the patient has discussed this with a doctor and whether the doctor has made recommendations for treatment.**

### Discussing Urinary Incontinence

Ask patients about urinary incontinence because patients are often too embarrassed to bring it up themselves.

- Does the patient currently have any urinary incontinence, or has he/she had urinary incontinence or leakage or "accidents" in the past six months?
- How often does the problem occur (occasionally, often, daily)?

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## Assessing Impact on Daily Life

- Has urinary incontinence had any impact on patient's daily life such as social withdrawal, depression, sleep deprivation, sexual dysfunction, or urinary tract infections?
- Has patient had trouble sleeping through the night because of incontinence?

## Recommending Treatment Options

- Ask if patient is currently receiving any treatment.
- Educate patients on potential treatment options based on severity (bladder training, techniques for pelvic muscle rehabilitation, medication, surgery, etc.).
  - Emphasize that treatment may reduce or eliminate urinary incontinence.
  - When necessary, refer for appropriate treatment.
- Make educational materials available for patients to use as discussion starters.

## STAR MEASURE 3: FALL RISK MANAGEMENT (FRM)

**This Star measure assesses whether a patient has discussed fall risk with a provider and whether the provider is managing the patient's fall risk.**

### Discussing Fall Risk

- Ask if patient has:
  - Had a fall in the past year.
  - Felt dizzy, had problems with balance or had problems with walking.
  - Blurry vision and if they've recently had an eye exam. If patient wears glasses, ask if glasses have been updated for vision and proper fit recently.

### Managing Fall Risk

- Discuss risk factors for falls such as:
  - Age, lack of physical activity, misuse of alcohol, prescription drugs (e.g., psychotropic or narcotic), hearing or visual impairments and unsafe home environments.
- Discuss consequences of falls such as:
  - Injuries (e.g., hip fractures), functional decline, limited mobility, loss of ability to live independently and decreased quality of life
- Educate patients on how to prevent falls:
  - Exercise (e.g., tai chi for improved strength and balance), regular medication reviews (by doctors or pharmacists), eye checkups