



# Support Patient Outcomes Through Follow-Up Appointments

## Why Follow-Up Care Appointments Matters

Ensuring timely follow-up care after discharge from a higher level of care for a patient with a behavioral health diagnosis is critical to improving patient outcomes and HEDIS® (Healthcare Effectiveness Data Information Set) quality measures.

We know that post-discharge follow-up visits help reduce readmissions, support ongoing treatment, and improve overall engagement in care, therefore, as a provider, your role in scheduling and encouraging patients to attend follow-up visits is essential to ensuring they get the care they need.

Outlined below are key requirements for follow-up care, eligibility criteria, and discharge best practices to help you support your patients.

### What are the HEDIS Follow-Up Requirements?

The following list details requirements that meet HEDIS measures. Follow these best practices to ensure you're meeting the necessary criteria.

#### Post-Discharge Follow-Up for Inpatient and ER Behavioral Health Claims & Diagnosis:

- If your patient is being discharged from an ER, residential or inpatient facility they must:
  - ☐ **Have a follow-up visit scheduled with a PCP or BH Provider and attend within 7 days of discharge.** Their follow-up appointment cannot be on the day of discharge.
  - ☐ Patients with a new Substance Use diagnosis must engage in at least **three follow-up appointments within 48 days of diagnosis.**

#### Coordination of Care:

Identifying additional providers that your patient may be working with, i.e.: Primary Care Physicians and any known behavioral health providers and sharing with them relevant clinical information can help assist in ensuring that the patient's needs are known and any barriers to care are addressed.

- ☐ The follow-up provider must submit the behavioral health diagnosis in the primary position on the service claim in order for it to count as a follow-up for HEDIS.

### What's Eligible as a Follow-Up Appointment?

The following types of visits with a behavioral health provider will meet HEDIS measure criteria:

- ☐ Family/group therapy sessions
- ☐ Individual therapy sessions
- ☐ Psychiatrist Appointment
- ☐ Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Appointment

HLOC | *Tip sheet*

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### What's Eligible as a Follow-Up Appointment? *Continued*

- Telehealth appointments with a licensed behavioral health provider
- Primary Care Physician Appointment (with a BH diagnosis submitted as the primary on a service claim)
- Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP)
- Partial Hospitalization Programs (PHP)
- Community Mental Health visits
- Substance Use Disorder Treatment service or
- Residential Treatment
- Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)
- Peer Support Specialists

### Ineligible Services:

- Same-day follow-ups—first follow-up cannot be on the day of discharge
- ER visits
- PCP visits (without a BH diagnosis as primary on claim)
- Support Groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and GriefShare.

By prioritizing timely follow-ups and collaborating with care providers, you help improve patient outcomes.



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