CMS Star Ratings 101 + Best Practices

What are Star Ratings?
The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) have established Star Ratings to monitor the quality of Medicare Part D plans. Based on their annual ratings, plans face rewards, such as quality bonus payments or marketing advantages, and consequences, such as potential loss of patients.

Why are Medicare Star Ratings important for pharmacies?
Star Ratings for Medicare plans—as well as other quality measure systems—present a significant opportunity for pharmacists to help patients, earn revenue for professional services and demonstrate value to healthcare payers.

Through MTM services, pharmacists can directly impact several Star Rating measures:
- Completion Rate for Comprehensive Medication Reviews (Part D)

- Part D Patient Safety measures:
  - Adherence for diabetes medications:
    - % of patients whose adherence rate for diabetes medications is ≥80%
      - Classes: biguanides, DPP-IV inhibitors, sulfonylureas, TZDs, incretin mimetic agents, meglitinides, SGLT2 inhibitors
      - Patients taking insulin are excluded from this measure
  - Adherence for HTN (RAS antagonists):
    - % of patients whose adherence rate for RAS antagonists is ≥80%
  - Adherence for cholesterol (statins):
    - % of patients whose adherence rate for statins is ≥80%
  - High risk medication: (Display measure only)
    - % of patients with two or more fills of a medication considered high risk in patients ≥65 years old
  - Statin Use in Persons with Diabetes: (Display measure only)
    - % of patients with diabetes between the ages of 40-75 that receive statin therapy

Best Practices

Adherence Patient Consultation for Diabetes, RAS Antagonists, Statins

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assess appropriateness of TIP</th>
<th>- Determine if the patient still taking this medication or another in the same class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Initiating conversation with the patient | - Follow the Drug Adherence Workup (DRAW) Tool
- Use open-ended questions: “What is this treating?” or “How are you taking...?” |
| Reinforcement with patient | - Review purpose of the medication
- Address knowledge deficits regarding medication |
| Strategies to improve adherence | - Recommend a 90-day supply
- Encourage the patient to enroll in an auto-fill program
- Suggest reminder tools such as alarms, a specific storage place for medication |
**Prescriber Consultation for HRM/SUPD**

| Assess appropriateness of TIP | - Determine if the patient is still taking the high risk medication or if the gap in therapy still exists  
|                              | - Review potential contraindications to recommended therapy (e.g., renal dysfunction, previous adverse event) |
| Leverage relationship with prescribers | - Offer to complete in-service with local clinic(s)  
|                                  | - Note prescriber preferences for communication (fax, phone, message with the nurse) |
| Making your recommendation | - Be specific with therapy recommendations; rather than stating patient should be on cholesterol therapy, include suggested drug and dosing (e.g., simvastatin 10 mg once daily in the evening)  
|                               | - Keep it concise  
|                               | - Avoid non-critical phrases, such as “...if appropriate” or “as you know...”  
|                               | - Support with relevant clinical guidelines, studies, etc. (Select Create Prescriber Fax from the patient’s profile to see suggested verbiage for TIP-related interventions) |

**Additional Resource:**  

**Comprehensive Medication Review (CMR)**

**Offering the CMR service**
- Assume acceptance by offering a choice of time instead of a yes/no question:  
  - Use: “The pharmacist would like to talk with you about your medications. Are you available on Tuesday at 2 PM?”  
  - Avoid: “Would you like to schedule a CMR?”  
- Coordinate the appointment with next fill or an upcoming immunization.

**Conducting the CMR**
- Review any pending TIPs for discussion points.  
- Use open-ended questions that invite explanation and discussion:  
  - “What is this treating?”  
  - “How are you taking...?”  
  - “What concerns do you have?”  
  - “How do you feel?”  
- Check administration technique: inhalers, diabetic medications, etc.  
- Look for physical indicators of disease states not in control/adverse reactions.

**Documenting Your Work**
- Fill out the CMR & Action Plan and Medication Profile tabs in patient-friendly language and direct all instructions to the patient.  
- Spend time on the Medication Action Plan to list out each problem identified or issue discussed with guidance for the patient.

For more information, go to [outcomesmtm.com](http://outcomesmtm.com) or call 877.237.0050.