A Learning Collaborative to Improve Care for Unhealthy Alcohol Use: Lessons Learned from Baseline HEDIS Performance

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Addiction Health Services Research Conference
October 17, 2019

What is HEDIS?

Healthcare
Effectiveness
Data
Information
Set

Health care's most-used tool for improving performance

Asks how often insurers provide evidence-based care to support more than 70 aspects of health

Quality Measures in HEDIS must meet **desirable attributes:**

Relevance **Scientific Soundness** **Feasibility**

Acknowledgment

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Background

Clinical Guideline, Prevalence and Gap in Care

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends screening for unhealthy alcohol use in primary care settings in adults 18 years or older, including pregnant women, and providing persons engaged in risky or hazardous drinking with brief behavioral counseling interventions to reduce unhealthy alcohol use.

Unhealthy alcohol use is a common issue, but there is a lack of screening and brief intervention

21% of adults report engaging in risky or hazardous drinking

A leading cause of preventable death in the US, accounting for 1 out of 10 deaths

Less than 20% of people who engage in unhealthy alcohol use receive appropriate follow-up

Unhealthy Alcohol Use Screening and Follow-Up

HEDIS Measure Description

Denominator	Members 18+ years of age
Numerator	1. Screened for unhealthy alcohol use using a standardized tool (i.e. AUDIT, AUDIT-C, NIAAA Single Question Screener) 2. If screened positive, received counseling or other follow-up care within 60 days
Data Source	Electronic Clinical Data Systems (e.g. electronic health records, registries, case management, HIE, claims)

Follow-Up care includes at least one of the following:

- Feedback on alcohol use and harms

- Identification of high risk situations for drinking and coping strategies

- Increase the motivation to reduce drinking

- Development of a personal plan to reduce drinking

- Documentation of receiving alcohol misuse treatment

For more information on electronic clinical data systems, please visit http://www.ncqa.org/ecds

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Alcohol Learning Collaborative

Background

Purpose
- Improve reporting and performance of the *Unhealthy Alcohol Use Screening & Follow-Up* (ASF) measure.

Method
- A quality improvement learning collaborative involving health plans, patient partners, subject matter experts and NCQA staff
- Four participating health plans

Why We Convened this Collaborative
- Wide variation of performance rates
- Limited access to clinical data
- Variation in use of validated screening tools
- Lack of consistent documentation of services

Alcohol Learning Collaborative

Timeline and Activities

Pre-Implementation	Implementation	Sustainability
Mar 2018 – July 2018	July 2018 – Sept 2019	Sept 2019 – July 2020

Learning Collaborative Activities Included:

- Monthly 1:1 Calls and Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycles
- Bi-Monthly Coaching and Learning Webinars
- Annual in-person meeting at the NCQA offices
- Development of a quality improvement toolkit
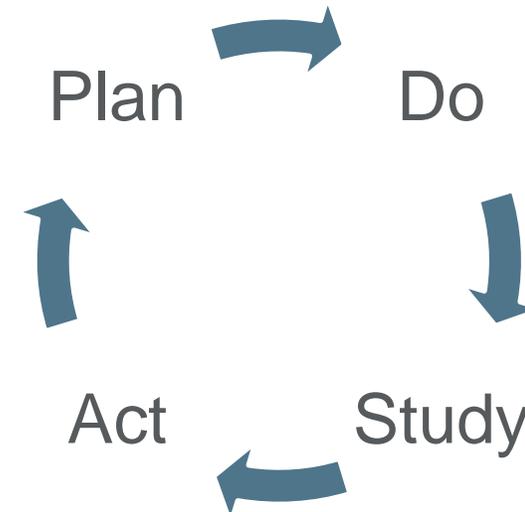
Based on the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Breakthrough Series Model of Quality Improvement

Plan → Do → Study → Act

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Results: Baseline Measure Performance

Unhealthy Alcohol Use Screening and Follow-Up: 2017 Data

Quantitative Findings

Baseline performance data showed wide variation in screening rates (0%–46%) and follow-up (0%–53%) rates

Health Plan	Region	Network Type	Data Source	Screening %	Follow-Up %
Plan A	West	Integrated	EHR	45.6	17.3
Plan B	West	Nonintegrated	EHR	1.7	53.0
Plan C	Northeast	Nonintegrated	EHR	0.0	NA
Plan D	Northeast	Nonintegrated	State Health Information Exchange	0.0	NA

Qualitative Findings

- Plans were engaged in assembling teams and conducting QI activities
- Extraction of ECDS data was challenging for nonintegrated plans
- Use of standardized clinical codes was low or nonexistent

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Conclusions

Existing QI-related infrastructure facilitated success in pre-implementation phase

Barriers in data access contributed to low rates of screening and follow-up at baseline

Alcohol measure implementation can strengthen reporting and performance rates and improve care for those with unhealthy alcohol use

Questions

Get in touch

Alcohol Learning Collaborative

https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/reports-and-research/hedis-measure-unhealthy-alcohol-use-screening-and-follow-up/

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Digital Measurement Community

https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/the-future-of-hedis/the-digital-measurement-community/