

Polypharmacy: Use of Central Nervous System (CNS)-Active Medications in Older Adults (Poly-CNS)

By working together, we can improve health outcomes for your patients, our members. Pharmacy Quality Alliance (PQA) measures are used to assess prescription drug plans' quality and performance. Appropriate medication use measures are developed by the PQA and endorsed by the National Quality Forum. This tip sheet provides key details of the PQA measure for Polypharmacy: Use of Multiple Central Nervous System (CNS)-Active Medications in Older Adults (Poly-CNS).

What Is the Measure?

The measure is defined by the percentage of continuously enrolled Medicare Part D beneficiaries, 65 years or older, with concurrent use of three or more unique CNS-active medications during the measurement period.

The use of CNS-active medications in older adults is associated with an increased risk of cognitive decline. The percentage is calculated with concurrent three or more unique CNS-active medications during the measurement period.

Exclusions

- Persons in hospice during the measurement year
- Persons diagnosed with a seizure disorder during the measurement year

Denominator

Eligible Population: Continuously enrolled beneficiaries, 65 years or older, with at least two prescription claims with unique dates of service of the same medication in the targeted drug classes of CNS-active medications during the measurement period.

Numerator

Persons with three or more unique CNS-active medications during the measurement year. Each medication must have at least two prescription claims with different dates of service during the measurement year. Note: A lower rate indicates better performance.

Medication Classes Included

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|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| • Antihistamines | • Antipsychotics |
| • Antiparkinson agents | • Antimuscarinics |
| • Skeletal muscle relaxants | • Antispasmodics |
| • Antidepressants | • Antiemetics |

References

[CMS Medicare 2025 Part C&D Star Ratings Technical Notes](#)