

Concurrent Use of Opioids and Benzodiazepines (COB)

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 Concurrent Use of Opioids and Benzodiazepines (COB).

What Is the Measure?

The measure is defined by the percentage of members 18 years or older, with concurrent use of prescription opioids and benzodiazepines during the measurement year.

The COB measurement period starts at the date of the first opioid prescription claim. The end of the enrollment episode must extend at least 30 days from the first opioid prescription claim.

Exclusions

- Members in hospice during the measurement year.
- Members with a cancer diagnosis during the measurement year.
- Members with a sickle cell disease diagnosis during the measurement year.
- Members receiving palliative care during the measurement year.

Denominator

Eligible Population: Members 18 years of age or older, with concurrent use of two or more prescription opioids and benzodiazepine and at least 15 cumulative days' supply of opioids during the measurement year.

Numerator

At least two prescription claims of a benzodiazepine with unique dates of service and concurrent use of opioids and benzodiazepines for at least 30 cumulative days during the measurement year.

Note: COB is an inverse measure. A lower rate indicates better performance.

References

- PQAAlliance.org/Measures-Overview#COB
- CMS.gov/Files/Document/2025-Star-Ratings-Technical-Notes.pdf