

# FEP Provider News

## Follow-up after emergency department visit for substance abuse

### What we measure

We capture emergency department (ED) visits for members ages 13 years and older with a principal diagnosis of substance use disorder (SUD), who had a follow-up visit for SUD. Two percentages are measured and reported:

- ED visits for which the member received follow-up within 30 days (31 total days)
- ED visits for which the member received follow-up within 7 days (8 total days)

FUA is a Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) measure. See the National Committee for Quality Assurance ([NCQA website](#)) for more details.

### Why it matters

Timely follow-up care for people with SUD seen in the ED can reduce substance use, future ED use, hospital admissions and length of stay. A study by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration found that more than 21 million people ages 12 and older in the U.S. needed substance use treatment but that only 4.2 million people received it.

### Tips to consider for EDs

- Help our members schedule an in-person or telehealth visit within 7 days.
- Educate members about the importance of following up with treatment.
- Focus on member preference for treatment, allowing members to take ownership of the treatment process

### Tips to consider for providers

- Encourage members to bring their discharge paperwork to their first appointment.
- Educate members about the importance of following up and adhering to treatment recommendations.
- Use the same diagnosis for substance use at follow-up visits. A non-substance diagnosis code won't fulfill this measure.
- Coordinate care between behavioral health and primary care physicians:
  - Share progress notes and updates.
  - Include the diagnosis for substance use disorder.
  - Reach out to members who cancel appointments and help them reschedule as soon as possible.

### Resources

National Committee for Quality Assurance, HEDIS® Measurement Year 2023 Volume 2 Technical Specifications for Health Plans



**BlueCross  
BlueShield.**

Federal Employee Program.

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