

## Follow-Up Care for Children Prescribed ADHD Medications

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Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island (Neighborhood) requests your help in improving performance on the HEDIS measure *Follow-Up Care for Children Prescribed ADHD Medications (ADD)*.

### How is ADD Measured?

The ADD measure has two separate components, and is based on the percentage of children newly prescribed attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) medication who had at least three follow-up care visits within a 10-month period, one of which was within 30 days of when the first ADHD medication was dispensed. All three of these visits may be done remotely with Zoom, Skype, or similar options or with voice-only telephone visits.

*Initiation Phase.* The percentage of members 6–12 years of age with a prescription for ADHD medication dispensed by an ambulatory care provider, who had one follow-up visit with a practitioner with prescribing authority during the 30-day Initiation Phase.

*Continuation and Maintenance Phase.* The percentage of members 6–12 years of age with a prescription for ADHD medication dispensed by an ambulatory care provider who have had a follow-up visit during the Initiation Phase who remained on the medication for at least 210 days and who had at least two additional follow-up visits with a practitioner with prescribing authority within 270 days (9 months) after the Initiation Phase ended.

### What is happening with ADHD Treatment around the Country?

According to an article published by the American Psychiatric Association,<sup>1</sup> “An estimated 8.4 percent of children and 2.5 percent of adults have ADHD. ADHD is often first identified in school-aged children when it leads to disruption in the classroom or problems with schoolwork. It can also affect adults. It is more common among boys than girls.” The article also stated, “Behavioral therapy and medication can improve the symptoms of ADHD. Studies have found that a combination of behavioral therapy and medication works best for most people, particularly those with moderate to severe ADHD.” Supporting this is Massachusetts General Hospital released a study stating that,<sup>2</sup> “Pharmacologic treatment in children and adolescents with psychiatric disorders reduces the risk of substance use later in life, especially in ADHD.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the care provided patients with ADHD in several ways. For example, according to an article from the *Psychiatric Times* there have been issues with the distribution of ADHD medications due to supply line interruptions. The article also notes that there have been some positive advancements including telemedicine that allow providers to observe patients with ADHD in their homes.

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<sup>1</sup> Ranna Parekh, M. M. (2017, July). American Psychiatric Association. Retrieved from What is ADHD?: <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/adhd/what-is-adhd>

<sup>2</sup> Brown, N. (2022, May 25). *Medication for pediatric psychiatric disorders reduces later onset of substance use problems*. Retrieved from Massachusetts General Hospital: <https://www.massgeneral.org/news/press-release/medication-treatment-pediatric-psychiatry-reduces-later-substance-use-problems>

## What is Neighborhood's Performance on the ADD Measure?

Neighborhood's preliminary HEDIS Rate for our Medicaid members for measurement year 2021 (as of June 2, 2022) is 48.39% for initiation and 60.45% for continuation and maintenance. Both rates fell year over year relative to the previous year, placing them below the 2021 National Medicaid Quality Compass 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles.

## How You Can Help

- For your patients newly diagnosed with ADHD, it is important to schedule a follow-up appointment within 30 days and then two follow-up appointments within nine months after the initial 30 days.
- Educate the parent or guardian that the child must be seen within 30 days of starting the medication to evaluate if the medication is working and assess any adverse effects.
- Inform parents or guardians of the patient's telehealth options when discussing follow-up appointments as a way to alleviate issues with access.
- Talk with the parent or guardian about the importance of the follow-up appointments and schedule additional follow-up appointments.
- It is also important that patients remain on prescribed medications during and after follow-up appointments.

## Resources That Can Help You

Neighborhood's Behavioral Health partner, Optum, has specific resources available to all physicians that will help you identify behavioral health providers who are in Neighborhood's network and to schedule behavioral health appointments for your patients.

- **Request coordination of care and referrals** for your patients by calling the number on the back of the member's health plan ID card to speak to a licensed clinician or by searching [liveandworkwell.com](https://liveandworkwell.com) using access code "clinician."
- **You can also find additional tools and information about behavioral health issues** on [providerexpress.com](https://providerexpress.com) > Clinical Resources > Behavioral Health Toolkit for Medical Providers.
- **Patient education information** is available on [liveandworkwell.com](https://liveandworkwell.com) using access code "clinician." See "Mind & Body" at the top, scroll down to find the links to specific topics.