

PROVIDER TIDBITS



Louisiana

HEDIS - Follow-up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana collects data for the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) to measure performance for certain areas of care and service. HEDIS is an annual performance measurement created by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) to help establish accountability and improve quality of healthcare.

One measure is ensuring that patients who have had inpatient treatment for a mental illness have a follow-up visit with a behavioral health professional after discharge. Two rates are reported:

- 1.) The percentage for follow-up within seven days** **2.) The percentage for follow-up within 30 days**

Blue Cross is collaborating with New Directions* to promote member quality care that can increase the HEDIS rates for the Follow-up After Hospitalization (FUH) for Mental Illness measure. Providers can use the guidelines and tips below to help their Blue patients.

FUH Measure General Guidelines

A follow-up visit must meet the following criteria to receive HEDIS credit toward the FUH measure:

- The patient is 6 years of age or older as of the date of discharge.
- The date of discharge is on or between January 1 and December 1 of the measurement year.
- The behavioral health professional can be a psychiatrist, child psychiatrist, licensed psychologist, nurse practitioner, licensed clinical social worker, licensed professional counselor, marital or family therapist.
- An intensive outpatient (IOP) or partial hospitalization (PHP) visit counts toward a follow-up visit.
- Visits occurring on the same day of discharge are **no longer given HEDIS credit** by NCQA.

Behavioral Health/Acute Care Facility Can Help Meet the FUH Measure by:

- Scheduling the first follow-up appointment for the patient. All discharges from a standalone behavioral health facility or an acute care facility with a behavioral health unit or wing require the seven day and 30 day follow-up with a behavioral health professional.
- Beginning discharge planning on the day of admission. Include utilization review, discharge planner, New Directions care transitions team, the patient and his/her family, significant others, guardian or others desired by the patient.
- Coordinating care by notifying the patient's primary care physician of the recent hospitalization and providing a current listing of all prescribed medications.
- Conducting follow-up calls with the patient to encourage medication adherence and discuss any side effects.
- Seeking New Directions assistance with any scheduling challenges before the patient is discharged, if needed. Use the Rainmaker list to locate behavioral health professionals for the member's seven-day follow-up visit. To take advantage of this service, call New Directions at 1-877-300-5909.
- Providing discharge orders on the Blue patient to New Directions, including medication and medical records, for the purpose of a successful seven-day follow-up. Submit a completed Discharge Clinical Review form (available through the WebPass Portal accessed through iLinkBlue at www.BCBSLA.com/ilinkblue) prior to discharge or by contacting your dedicated New Directions utilization manager to provide the information verbally.

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Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association and incorporated as Louisiana Health Service & Indemnity Company.

*New Directions is an independent company that serves as the behavioral health manager for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana, including HMO Louisiana, Inc.

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Behavioral Health Professionals Can Help Meet the FUH Measure by:

- Allowing New Directions staff to schedule appointments for members on their behalf. New Directions now offers post-discharge scheduling to ensure our members schedule outpatient appointments. Their case managers and care transitions staff are now calling behavioral health professionals to schedule post-discharge appointments.
- Scheduling patients within seven days of discharge from an inpatient stay, when possible.
- Promptly returning calls from New Directions staff to help.
- Sharing information with New Directions. As a reminder, a release of information form is NOT required for a provider to release a member's information to New Directions Behavioral Health staff per HIPAA Privacy Rule at 45 CFR 164.501.

Follow-up visits with a primary care physician **do not receive credit** toward the FUH measure. We encourage PCPs to refer their patients who have been recently hospitalized for a behavioral health issue to a behavior health professional for post-discharge follow-up care.

Behavioral Health Rainmakers

New Directions actively seeks outpatient behavioral health professionals who can schedule appointments for patients within seven days of discharge from an acute inpatient setting.

These providers are referred to as "Rainmakers" as they are willing to open access to care for newly discharged patients and to help keep them engaged in care post-discharge. Research shows that patients seen by an outpatient behavioral health professional within seven days of discharge are less likely to be readmitted. Rainmakers are beneficial to our discharge planners, clinical teams and members.

The Rainmaker list is used as a "first call" list for the discharge planners at the facilities, New Directions Case Managers and New Directions care transitions staff. If you are an outpatient behavioral health professional interested in becoming a Rainmaker, please send an email to New Directions at LouisianaPR@ndbh.com.

Need Help Scheduling a Follow-up Visit for Your Blue Cross Patients?

To have New Directions schedule follow-up appointments for your Blue Cross patients, contact the **New Directions After-care Follow-up Assistance Line** at 1-877-300-5909 or send an email to Louisiana_CM@ndbh.com.

Facility discharge planners should include the facility name, contact name of the facility staff member and phone number in the email. So we may protect member protected health information (PHI), please do not include patient information in emails. A New Directions employee will return your call or email promptly.