



# Medicare 2019 Star Rating Threshold Update

On October 10th, CMS released the Medicare 2019 Part C & D Star Rating Technical Notes. This update documents the trends and high-level summary of performance associated with key Part D measures.

The 2019 Star Ratings for Medicare Part C & D plans are displayed on the Medicare Plan Finder found at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). Medicare beneficiaries, starting on October 15th, will be able to view these 2019 Star Ratings when selecting their MA-PD or PDP for the 2019 benefit year as part of the Open Enrollment period which will continue through December 7th.

As partners for improving quality, PQS has provided key highlights from the 2019 Part C & D Star Rating Technical Notes that impact pharmacy-based quality measures. The complete version of the Technical Notes can be found [here](#).

**Effective with the October EQuIPP™ performance refresh, Pharmacy Quality Solutions (PQS) has displayed the updated 2019 Star Rating thresholds in EQuIPP™ for the 3, 4, and 5 Star MAPD Thresholds within the Goal drop down menu on the main page. However, most plans, PBMs, and associated programs will continue to maintain customized, programmatic goals which would be detailed in the Quality Improvement Program (QIP) table in addition to any applicable “My Programs” displays.**

## General points from the Medicare 2019 Part C & D Star Rating Technical Notes:

- Approximately 74% of MAPD enrollees (1% increase from 2018) and ONLY 3.5% of PDP enrollees (drop from 45% in 2018) are in a Medicare contract with a rating of 4 or more stars.
- Average Overall MAPD Star Rating remained consistent at 4 Stars for 2019 but the average PDP Star Rating dropped from 3.62 Stars in 2018 to 3.29 in 2019, which is lower than the average PDP Star rating in 2016.

Measure Name	MAPD - 2019					PDP - 2019				
	1 Star	2 Star	3 Star	4 Star	5 Star	1 Star	2 Star	3 Star	4 Star	5 Star
PDC Diabetes	<72%	72%	78%	81%	85%	<82%	82%	84%	86%	88%
PDC Hypertension	<79%	79%	83%	86%	88%	<84%	84%	86%	87%	89%
PDC Cholesterol	<73%	73%	77%	83%	87%	<80%	80%	82%	84%	88%
CMR Completion Rate	<50%	50%	66%	73%	85%	<21%	21%	39%	56%	72%
SUPD	<72%	72%	76%	80%	83%	<73%	73%	77%	79%	82%

## Focused updates for medication-related Measures from the Medicare 2019 Part C & D Stars

### MTM Program Completion Rate for Comprehensive Medication Review (CMR)

#### Key Takeaways

- The average Star Rating for MAPD plans dropped slightly from 3.5 stars in 2018 to 3.3 Stars in 2019. For PDP plans, the average measure Star also decreased from 2.8 in 2018 to 2.6 Stars in 2019.
- Despite the decrease in average Stars for the CMR Completion Rate measure, the 2019 average measure score increased by 10% for MAPD plans (61% to 71%) and increased by 5% for prescription drug plans (33% to 38%).

#### Measure Details

- This measures the percent of MTM eligible members that have received a CMR during the measurement period.
- As mentioned in a previous call letter, a future update will be planned for this measure in 2020 but is not implemented for the 2019 Star Ratings.
- Details for the 2020 update will include: Small update related to the qualifying population (i.e. denominator) based upon patients eligible for a CMR with fewer than 61 days of continuous enrollment in the MTM program. Members that did receive a CMR with less than 61 days of continuous enrollment will be included in the numerator and denominator for the measure. However, members that did not receive a CMR during the same time frame would be excluded from the measure. This denominator exception will apply to the 2020 Star Ratings.

#### CMR Completion Rate - Measure Averages



## Medication Adherence Measures

### Key Takeaways

- The average MAPD Star Rating dropped slightly in 2019 for the RASA (Now 3.1 from 3.7 Stars in 2018) and Statin PDC (Now 3.2 from 3.3 Stars in 2018) measures. The Diabetes PDC measure increased from 3.3 Stars in 2018 to 3.7 Stars in 2019.
- MAPD Average adherence rates for all 3 adherence measures increased by 2% compared to the 2018 Star Rating CMS reported averages, which is an additional increase as the year before only had an average increase of 1%.
- While the average Star Rating for the Diabetes PDC measure had an increase for 2019, the average PDP Star Rating decreased from 3.2 Stars in 2018 to 2.6 Stars in 2019. The average PDP Star Rating for RASA PDC went from 3.2 Stars down to 3.0 Stars in 2019 and the Statin PDC measure went from 3.3 Stars in 2018 to 3.1 Stars.
- Despite the drop in the average Star Rating for the PDP adherence measures, the average scores for each of the three adherence measures increased by 1-2% compared to 2018.
- For MAPD, Diabetes PDC, most thresholds remained the same except for the 5 Star Threshold which decreased by 1%. For MAPD RASA and Statin PDC measures, all of the 3, 4, and 5-star thresholds increased.
- For PDP, all PDC measure thresholds increased except for the 5 Star RASA PDC measure which remained the same at 89%.
- The average 2019 PDC scores (based on 2017 data) were:

#### MAPD:

Diabetes: 82% (+2%)  
Hypertension: 84% (+2%)  
Cholesterol: 80% (+2%)

*Denotes change from previous year.*

#### PDP:

Diabetes: 83% (+1%)  
Hypertension: 86% (+2%)  
Cholesterol: 83% (+2%)

*Denotes change from previous year.*

### Measure Details

- This measures the percentage of eligible members with a proportion of days covered (PDC) rate at 80% or over for the specific drug classes (e.g. diabetes, hypertension, and cholesterol medications)
- Patients with one or more claims for sacubitril/valsartan are excluded from the hypertension/RASA adherence measure
- End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) exclusions have been applied to measure results according to the most recent specifications from the measure steward. The two newest measures included the hypertension and diabetes adherence measures as the statin adherence measure already had an ESRD exclusion. As a result, all three adherence measures now have an ESRD exclusion which is represented in the Star Ratings Results.

*Note: See page 4 for Performance Trends graphs on PDP and MAPD Adherence Measure Averages.*

## Statin Use in Persons with Diabetes (SUPD)

### Key Takeaways

- This is the first year the measure has officially been a Star Rating
- The average Star Rating for MAPD plans on the measure was 3.3 Stars and for PDPs was 2.9 Stars.
- The average performance for the measure was 79% and 77% for MAPD and PDPs, respectively.

### Measure Details

- Measures the percentage of beneficiaries 40-75 years old who were dispensed at least two diabetes medication fills who received a statin medication fill at any point during the measurement period.
- Exclusions include members with ESRD or who are enrolled in hospice.

## Statin Therapy for Patients with Cardiovascular Disease (SPC) – PART C

### Key Takeaways

- This is the first year the measure has officially been a Star Rating
- The average Star Rating for MAPD plans on the measure was 3.3 Stars.
- The average performance for the measure was 79%.
- Performance score for the measure along with the average star rating was the same as the SUPD Part D measure.

### Measure Details

- Measures the percentage of males 21–75 years of age and females 40–75 years of age during the measurement year, who were identified as having clinical atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) and were dispensed at least one high or moderate-intensity statin medication during the measurement year.
- Several exclusions exist with other conditions including ESRD.
- Key differences from the Part D SUPD measure involves the use of medical data to identify patients with ASCVD, and that the intensity of the statin is relevant to the measure, whereby only moderate to high-intensity statins are to be prescribed for the qualifying patient population. Low intensity statins do not allow patients to achieve numerator status. The measure also has a one-year look back period to identify the qualifying population.

## PERFORMANCE TRENDS

PDP - Adherence Measure Averages



MAPD - Adherence Measure Averages

