

HEDIS MEASURE OVERVIEW

Depression Screening and Follow-Up for Adolescents and Adults (DSF-E)

Please note: The information offered in this flyer is based on Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) technical specifications. It is not meant to preclude your clinical judgment.

The Depression Screening and Follow-Up for Adolescents and Adults (DSF-E) measure is one of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) HEDIS measures. It is designed to identify individuals with depression and ensure they receive continued care. According to the NCQA, major depressive disorder is the second leading cause of disability worldwide. Depression in adolescents is particularly concerning as it can lead to long-term morbidities such as generalized anxiety disorder and panic disorder, as well as behaviors like substance use. The onset of depression during this time increases the risk of attempted suicide fivefold compared to nondepressed adolescents. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among people 15–24 years of age.¹

Measure description

The percentage of patients 12 years of age and older who were screened for clinical depression using a standardized instrument and, if screened positive, received follow-up care

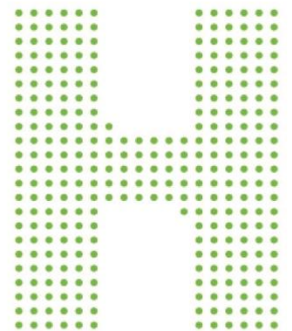
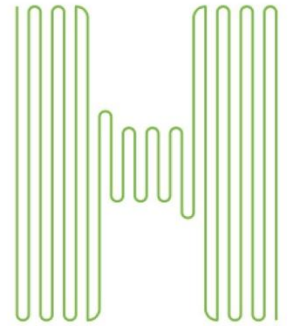
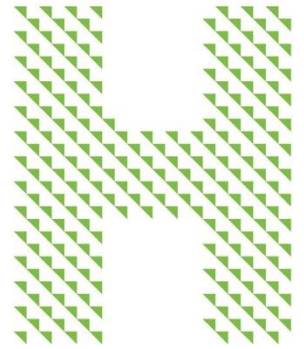
Two rates are reported:

- Depression Screening – the percentage of patients who were screened for clinical depression using a standardized instrument
- Follow-Up on Positive Screen – the percentage of patients who received follow-up care within 30 days of a positive depression screen finding

Who is included in the DSF-E measure?

Patients 12 years of age and older during the measurement year

1. National Committee for Quality Assurance. (2025) HEDIS® Measurement Year 2025: Volume 1: Narrative



Addressing the measure

- Depression Screening
 - Screen patients for clinical depression using a standardized instrument.
Note: Standardized instruments are listed in grids below.
- Follow-Up on Positive Screen
 - Patient received follow-up care within 30 days (31 total days) after the date of first positive depression screen finding. The follow-up encounter can be:
 - Outpatient, telephone, virtual check-in or e-visit with a diagnosis of depression or other behavioral health (BH) condition
 - Depression case management encounter that documents assessment for symptoms of depression or a diagnosis of depression or other BH condition
 - BH encounter, including assessment, therapy, collaborative care or medication management
 - A diagnosis of encounter for exercise counseling (ICD-10 code Z71.82)
 - Dispensed antidepressant medication **or**
 - Documentation of additional depression screening on a full-length instrument indicating either no depression or no symptoms that require follow-up (i.e., a negative screen) on the same day as a positive screen on a brief screening instrument

Measure best practices

- Train all staff on depression screening, including its purpose and importance.
- Complete screenings on patients at new visits, annually and as needed per clinical judgment.
- Keep patients engaged with a clear follow-up plan if screening is positive.
- Refer patients to counseling or psychosocial care and encourage use of services.
- Ensure coordination of care between behavioral health and primary care providers.
- Educate patients on use of new psychotropic medications.
- Provide care in a culturally responsive manner.

Exclusions

- Patients in hospice or using hospice services
- Patients with a history of bipolar disorder anytime during their history through the end of the year prior to the measurement period
- Patients with depression that starts during the year prior to the measurement period
- Patients who die anytime during the measurement year

Screening tools

Instruments for adolescents (12–17 years of age)	Positive finding
Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) [®]	Total score ≥ 10
Patient Health Questionnaire Modified for Teens (PHQ-9M) [®]	Total score ≥ 10
Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2) ^{®2}	Total score ≥ 3
Beck Depression Inventory-Fast Screen (BDI-FS) ^{®2,3}	Total score ≥ 8
Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale-Revised (CESD-R)	Total score ≥ 17
Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)	Total score ≥ 10
PROMIS Depression	Total score (T score) ≥ 60

Instruments for adults (18 years of age and older)	Positive finding
Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) [®]	Total score ≥ 10
Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2) ^{®2}	Total score ≥ 3
Beck Depression Inventory-Fast Screen (BDI-FS) ^{®2,3}	Total score ≥ 8
Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II)	Total score ≥ 20
Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale-Revised (CESD-R)	Total score ≥ 17
Duke Anxiety-Depression Scale (DUKE-AD) ^{®3}	Total score ≥ 30
Geriatric Depression Scale Short Form (GDS) ²	Total score ≥ 5
Geriatric Depression Scale Long Form (GDS)	Total score ≥ 10
Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)	Total score ≥ 10
My Mood Monitor (M-3) [®]	Total score ≥ 5
PROMIS Depression	Total score (T score) ≥ 60
Clinically Useful Depression Outcome Scale (CUDOS)	Total score ≥ 31

2. Brief screening instrument. All other instruments are full-length.

3. Proprietary; may be cost or licensing requirement associated with use.

Information regarding inclusion, compliance and exclusions for this measure were sourced from the HEDIS Measurement Year 2025: Volume 2: Technical Specifications for Health Plans report. The coding information in this document is subject to changing requirements and should not be relied on as official coding or legal advice. All coding should be considered on a case-by-case basis and supported by medical necessity and appropriate documentation in the medical record.

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