

Medicare Part D Star Measure

Concurrent Use of Opioids and Benzodiazepines (COB)



What is measured?

The measure looks for patients age 18 or older who receive two or more opioid prescriptions, filled on different days, totaling at least 15 days during the measurement year, and identifies if they are concurrently prescribed and filling benzodiazepines for 30 or more total days. Lower rates mean better performance.

Why is it important?

Concurrent use of benzodiazepines with other CNS depressants, such as opioids, can increase risk for severe respiratory depression, which can lead to death.

Exclusions:

- Injectable formulations of opioids and benzodiazepines
- Single-agent and combination buprenorphine products used to treat opioid use disorder (buprenorphine sublingual tablets, Probuphine® Implants, and all buprenorphine/naloxone combination products)
- Patients with a diagnosis of cancer and/or sickle cell disease
- Patients enrolled in hospice or palliative care



Tips for success

- Coordinate care with all patient-treating providers to avoid co-prescribing.
- If co-prescribing is necessary, follow these principles from CMS for co-prescribing benzodiazepines and opioids:
 - Avoid initial combination by offering alternative approaches, such as cognitive behavioral therapy or other medication classes.
 - If new prescriptions are needed, limit the dose and duration.
 - Taper longstanding medications gradually and, when possible, discontinue.
 - Continue long-term co-prescribing only when necessary, and monitor the patient closely.
 - Provide rescue medication (for example, naloxone) to high-risk patients and their caregivers, as co-prescribing increases risk of opioid overdose.

Continued >

Questions?

We're here to help.

Email

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Opioid medications

benzhydrocodone	hydrocodone	opium
buprenorphine	hydromorphone	oxycodone
butorphanol	levorphanol	oxymorphone
codeine	methadone	pentazocine
dihydrocodeine	meperidine	tapentadol
fentanyl	morphine	tramadol

Benzodiazepine medications

alprazolam	diazepam	oxazepam
chlordiazepoxide	estazolam	quazepam
clobazam	flurazepam	temazepam
clonazepam	lorazepam	triazolam
clorazepate	midazolam	

Not all listed medications may be on the health plan formulary. Our Medicare formulary is at [Medicare.PacificSource.com/Search/Drug](https://www.PacificSource.com/Search/Drug).