

Advancing Outcomes in Opioid Use Disorder

Associated HEDIS measures:

- Pharmacotherapy for Opioid Use Disorder (POD)
- Initiation and Engagement of Substance Use Disorder Treatment (IET)
- Risk of Continued Opioid Use (COU)
- Concurrent Use of Opioids and Benzodiazepines (COB)
- Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for Substance Use (FUA)

How Meridian can help providers and members

- Meridian's **Clinical Excellence Team (CET)** supports treatment continuity through ongoing monitoring and outreach, including weekly refill review, identification of at-risk members, pharmacy review of medication history and fill patterns, and provider support to improve adherence to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD). Email ClinicalExcellenceL@centene.com to connect with our team.
- Offer a **90-day supply** for select MOUD
- Provide [telehealth options](#) to support access to care
- Find additional [behavioral health provider resources](#) from Meridian

Ideas to enhance care quality

Opioid use disorder (OUD) increases the risk of overdose, death, avoidable acute care use, and blood-borne infections. Early **diagnosis**, timely **access** to MOUD, and **coordinated care** can reduce risk, increase treatment engagement, and help address disparities.¹

Why timely diagnosis matters	Team-based care improves outcomes	Communication and care coordination
Delayed recognition and treatment increase overdose risk, care disengagement, and avoidable acute care use. Each clinical encounter is an opportunity to: - Screen for opioid use and assess for OUD when indicated - Address underlying and co-occurring conditions - Initiate or continue MOUD, when appropriate - Connect patients to treatment and recovery supports	Effective OUD treatment depends on coordinated teams with shared accountability of roles such as: Prescribers: Screening, diagnosis, and MOUD initiation/continuation Behavioral health: Counseling and co-occurring condition management Care managers/navigators: Warm handoffs, scheduling, and outreach Pharmacists: Medication education, adherence support, and naloxone access Peer support: Engagement and retention	Communication gaps can interrupt treatment and follow-up. Recommended strategies include: - Warm handoffs to MOUD and behavioral health providers - Shared care plans with clear follow-up ownership - Confirmed post-discharge appointments - Outreach after missed visits or treatment interruptions Meridian care managers are available for ongoing support, follow-up, and education on community resources.

Recognizing health disparities and advancing health equity

Many patients with OUD face barriers to timely, ongoing care, and racial/ethnic minority populations often experience lower MOUD initiation and continuation.

Common barriers include:

- Geographic access limits, provider shortages, and limited community services
- Social needs, such as housing, transportation, and childcare
- Fragmented referrals, unclear ownership, and delayed follow-up

CDC data show **widening disparities** between White people and Black, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian and Alaska Native populations. Most people who died by overdose had no evidence of treatment for substance use disorder before their deaths.²

Actions to advance equity and improve outcomes:

- Use patient-centered, trauma-informed language that frames OUD as a chronic condition
- Standardize screening, referral, treatment, and follow-up workflows
- Strengthen clinical, community, and health plan partnerships
- Embed care coordination and navigation into routine practice
- Connect patients to low-barrier care and social support resources

Additional resources

- [CDC Addiction Medicine Toolkit](#)
- [Medication Assisted Recovery \(MAR Now\)](#)
- [Narcotics Anonymous \(Illinois meetings\)](#)
- [SAMHSA: Substance Use Disorder Treatment](#)

Visit lmeridian.com/HEDIS for our HEDIS® Quality Reference Guide and other resources to address care opportunities and improve quality performance.

References:

1. StatPearls. [Opioid Use Disorder](#). NCBI Bookshelf.
2. CDC. [Drug Overdose Deaths Rise, Disparities Widen](#). July 19, 2022.