



Medication Adherence for Hypertension and Controlling Blood Pressure Guide

Effective January 2025

Both the **Medication Adherence for Hypertension** and **Controlling Blood Pressure** measures are crucial components of the Medicare Star Ratings system, designed to improve patient outcomes and healthcare quality.

Medication Adherence for Hypertension (RAS)

This measure applies to patients aged 18 years and older as of six months before the start of the measurement period who have at least two fills using the patient's Part D benefit of an anti-hypertensive medication (RASA or RASA combination product) during the measurement year. Prescriptions filled often enough to cover 80% or more of the time a patient is supposed to be taking the medicine will close the gap for this measure.

Note: Only prescription drugs claims are used for qualification and measurement of this measure.

RAS (Renin Angiotensin System) antagonists drugs include:

- ▶ Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitors
- ▶ Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARBs)
- ▶ Direct Renin Inhibitors

Formulary ACE Inhibitors		Formulary ACE Inhibitor Combination Drugs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• benazepril• captopril• enalapril• fosinopril• lisinopril	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• moexipril• perindopril• quinapril• ramipril• trandolapril	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• amlodipine besylate – benazepril• benazepril – hydrochlorothiazide• enalapril – hydrochlorothiazide• fosinopril – hydrochlorothiazide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• lisinopril – hydrochlorothiazide• quinapril – hydrochlorothiazide• trandolapril – verapamil

Formulary ARBs		Formulary ARB Combination Drugs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• candesartan• irbesartan• losartan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• olmesartan• telmisartan• valsartan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• amlodipine besylate – olmesartan medoxomil• amlodipine besylate – valsartan• amlodipine – valsartan – hydrochlorothiazide• candesartan cilexetil – hydrochlorothiazide• irbesartan – hydrochlorothiazide• losartan – hydrochlorothiazide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• olmesartan – hydrochlorothiazide• olmesartan – amlodipine – hydrochlorothiazide• telmisartan – amlodipine• telmisartan – hydrochlorothiazide• valsartan – hydrochlorothiazide

Closing the Gap

This measure is defined as the percentage of plan members 18 years and older who adhere to their prescribed drug therapy for renin angiotensin system (RAS) antagonists: angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitor, angiotensin receptor blocker (ARB) or direct renin inhibitor medications.

Visit the [American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association](#) website for more information about the use of ACE inhibitors and ARBs for the treatment of hypertension.

Medications purchased with cash or discount cards, through the VA, under Commercial benefits, or by use of medication samples will not be included in calculating adherence to medication as they are not processed through the patient's Medicare benefits. Only prescription claims run through the patient's Medicare Part D benefits are included in measuring adherence for CMS measures.

Measure qualification is based solely on the patient's prescription drug claims. CMS does not include diagnosis or medical claim information for measure inclusion.

Exclusions

- ▶ Hospice enrollment
- ▶ End-stage renal disease (ESRD) diagnosis N18.5, N18.6, Z992 or dialysis coverage dates
- ▶ One or more prescription claims for sacubitril/valsartan (Entresto)

Educational Talking Points

- ▶ Discuss with patients the importance of taking their medications as prescribed.
- ▶ Remind patients to contact their provider if they experience adverse effects from their medication.
- ▶ Educate patients that hypertension presents minimal symptoms but can have serious consequences if left untreated. Visit the CDC website for additional High Blood Pressure Facts. Refer to [High Blood Pressure Facts](#) for more information.
- ▶ Highlight the importance of a healthy lifestyle including diet, exercise, and sodium reduction to support better outcomes.

Blood Pressure Monitoring

- ▶ Educate patients on the importance of regular blood pressure monitoring.
- ▶ Review readings at follow-ups and titrate as needed to reach the target goal. Adjust treatment, if needed.

Writing the Prescription

When initiating therapy with an ACE Inhibitor or ARB, write prescription to dispense no more than a 30-day supply at a time. Schedule a follow-up visit within 30 days to assess effectiveness of dose and address any concerns with side effects.

Once patients demonstrate tolerance to and effectiveness of therapy, adjust maintenance prescription quantity for up to 100-day supplies through their retail or mail-order pharmacy.

Consider combination pills when appropriate to reduce pill burden and support medications adherence. However, some combination products may result in a higher cost-share for the patient.

Controlling Blood Pressure

Patients aged 18–85 with at least two outpatient visits on separate dates, documented with a diagnosis of hypertension (HTN) between January 1 of the year prior and June 30 of the measurement year. The most recent blood pressure reading during the measurement year—taken on or after the second HTN diagnosis—controlled to <140/90 mm Hg will close the gap for this measure.

Note: Outpatient and telehealth claims data is used for measure denominator qualification. Measure gap closure data can come from any claims data that is not from an acute inpatient or emergency department setting.

Closing the Gap

This measure will always assess the latest blood pressure reading that occurred on or after the second qualifying HTN diagnosis – meaning patients can change compliance status throughout the year.

Blood pressure measurements can be obtained via telehealth, telemedicine, virtual visits, e-visits, telephone encounters or from a home log brought in by the patient during a regular in-person visit.

If a patient’s initial BP during a visit is ≥140/90 mm Hg, try retaking it at some point during the same visit.

If multiple BP readings are taken during a single visit, use the lowest systolic and lowest diastolic values recorded during that visit.

Encourage your patients to keep a blood pressure log and bring it with them to their visits.

Patient-reported and remote blood pressure readings can be used in determining the correct blood pressure CPT codes to file on a claim as long as they are documented in the patient’s medical record.

As a best practice, include both the systolic and diastolic blood pressure readings on each claim.

Systolic Blood Pressure	Diastolic Blood Pressure
3074F – Most recent systolic blood pressure less than 130 mm Hg	3078F – Most recent diastolic blood pressure less than 80 mm Hg
3075F – Most recent systolic blood pressure 130–139 mm Hg	3079F – Most recent diastolic blood pressure 80–89 mm Hg
3077F – Most recent systolic blood pressure greater than or equal to 140 mm Hg	3080F – Most recent diastolic blood pressure greater than or equal to 90 mm Hg

Consider whether a patient may qualify for a measure exclusion if they are having difficulty keeping their BP adequately controlled. (See Exclusions section below.)

Exclusions

- ▶ Patients using hospice services at any time during the measurement year.
- ▶ Patients who died at any time during the measurement year.
- ▶ Patients receiving palliative care during the measurement year.
- ▶ Patients with evidence of end-stage renal disease, dialysis, nephrectomy or kidney transplant any time in the patient's history.
- ▶ Patients with a diagnosis of pregnancy any time during the measurement year.
- ▶ Patients aged 66 and older who are enrolled in an institutional special needs plan (I-SNP) any time during the measurement year or living long term in an institution any time during the measurement year.
- ▶ Patients aged 66 and older with a diagnosis of frailty and advanced illness during the measurement year.
- ▶ Patients aged 81 and older with a diagnosis of frailty during the measurement year.

Educational talking points

Up to 100-day supply of HTN medications has a proven impact on rates of adherence. When possible, write maintenance HTN prescriptions for up to 100-day supply instead of a 30-day supply.

Lifestyle Recommendations:

- ▶ DASH Diet: Rich in fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy
- ▶ Sodium: <1,500–2,300 mg/day
- ▶ Weight Loss: 5–10% can lower blood pressure significantly
- ▶ Exercise: ≥150 min/week moderate activity
- ▶ Limit Alcohol: ≤2 drinks/day (men), ≤1 (women)
- ▶ Smoking cessation

Blood Pressure Monitoring

Educate patients on the importance of regular blood pressure monitoring.

Review readings at follow-ups and titrate as needed to reach goal and adjust, if needed.

Diagnosis (Based on [American College of Cardiology and Guidelines/American Heart Association Guidelines](#))

- ▶ Normal BP: <120/<80 mmHg
- ▶ Elevated BP: 120–129/<80 mmHg
- ▶ Stage 1 HTN: 130–139 / 80–89 mmHg
- ▶ Stage 2 HTN: ≥140 / ≥90 mmHg
- ▶ Confirm with ≥2 readings on ≥2 occasions

Adherence Resources

Home Delivery/Mail Order Pharmacies

Amazon Pharmacy

- ▶ **E-scribe:** Amazon Pharmacy Home Delivery
- ▶ **Fax:** 512-677-6267
- ▶ **Address:** 4500 S Pleasant Valley Rd., Suite 201
Austin, TX 78744

Walgreens Mail Service

- ▶ **E-scribe:** Walgreens Mail Service: NCPDP 0320793
- ▶ **Fax:** 1-800-215-6612
- ▶ **Call:** 1-800-345-1036

Express Scripts Pharmacy

- ▶ **E-scribe:** Express Scripts Home Delivery
- ▶ **Fax:** 1-800-837-0959
- ▶ **Call:** 1-888-327-9791, Option 2

Note: Express Scripts will not fill GLP1s.

Dose Packaging Services*

ExactCare Pharmacy

- ▶ **E-scribe:** Search ExactCare Pharmacy by zip code 44125
- ▶ **Fax:** 1-855-355-3480
- ▶ **Call:** 1-877-355-7225, opt. 2
- ▶ **Address:** 8333 Rockside Road, Valley View, OH 44125

PillPack by Amazon Pharmacy

- ▶ **E-scribe:** PILLPACK LLC, DBA PillPack by Amazon
- ▶ **Address:** 250 Commercial Street, Suite 2012
Manchester, NH 03101

**Limited to 30-day supplies. No cost savings available for 90-day supplies with this option.*



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Amazon Pharmacy is an independent pharmacy providing mail-order pharmacy services to Patrius Health members.
ExactCare is an independent company providing in-home medication management services and support to Patrius Health members.
Express Scripts Inc. is an independent company contracted to provide pharmacy benefit management services.
PillPack, Inc., an Amazon company, is an independent online pharmacy which packages and delivers medications to Patrius Health members.