



Improving Medication Adherence for Chronic Conditions

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Five-Star Quality Rating System measures medication adherence for certain classes of chronic medications. For 2023, adherence measures focus on renin-angiotensin system antagonists, statins and diabetes medications for non-insulin users. Members are deemed adherent when the proportion of days in the measurement period covered by prescription claims for medications in the therapeutic category of interest is at least 80%.¹ Consider the following prescribing strategies to help improve your patients’ medication adherence²:

Write for 90-day supplies of chronic medications

Reduce patient co-pays; a 90-day supply has the same co-pay as a 30-day supply.

Request medication refill synchronization

Minimize the need for patients to order frequent refills and make multiple trips to the pharmacy by asking the pharmacy to refill chronic medications on the same day.

Remind patients about the option for auto-refills for chronic medications

Automatic prescription refill programs can improve medication adherence, especially for patients receiving multiple medications. Some pharmacies may require patients to request auto-refills for each medication in person or electronically.

Simplify medication regimens with once-daily dosing

Choose medications with a long duration of action to minimize missed doses and reduce pill burden. Common medications with long-acting formulations include metformin and glipizide.

Prescribe combination therapy products when possible

Consolidate medications into single-pill combination therapies to reduce pill burden and co-pays.

Example Combination Products*		
amlodipine-benazepril	irbesartan-HCTZ	glipizide-metformin
amlodipine-atorvastatin [‡]	lisinopril-HCTZ	fosinopril-HCTZ
amlodipine-olmesartan	losartan-HCTZ	alogliptin-metformin
amlodipine-valsartan	olmesartan-HCTZ	Invokamet (canagliflozin/metformin) [‡]
benazepril-HCTZ	quinapril-HCTZ	Janumet (sitagliptin/metformin)
enalapril-HCTZ	valsartan-HCTZ	Synjardy (empagliflozin/metformin)

*Not a comprehensive list; [‡]Non-formulary for Medi-Cal Rx; HCTZ = hydrochlorothiazide

Eliminate unnecessary medications

- Consider a trial off period for medications generally not recommended for long-term use, such as proton pump inhibitors and muscle relaxants.
- Eliminate duplicate medications or those with low benefit-risk ratios.

References

1. Medicare 2023 Part C & D Star Rating Technical Notes. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services: Center for Medicare. Updated September 2022.
2. Clinical Resource, Medication Adherence Strategies. Pharmacist’s Letter/Prescriber’s Letter. August 2022. [380822]