

Follow-up care for children prescribed ADHD medication supports adherence, helps monitor for side effects

Children, ages 6-12, who have been diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and have been newly prescribed ADHD medication should *have* and *keep* at least three follow-up care visits in a 10-month period. This important step contributes to medication adherence and helps monitor for potential side effects.

How you can support this measure for behavioral health:

- Schedule the child's follow-up appointment in person, or via telehealth or telephone visit if that's a desired option. *Confirm member benefits/authorization requirements prior to scheduling.*
- Schedule one follow-up visit with a practitioner with prescribing authority **within 30 days** of the child's first ADHD prescription (*the initiation phase*).
- Ensure the child has **at least two follow-up visits** with a practitioner in the nine months after the initiation phase (*the continuity and maintenance phase* measures continuation on the medication for at least 210 days).
- Schedule appointment reminders for follow-up visits:
 - Within the first 30 days of beginning the medication.
 - At months 3, 6 and 8.

What to share with the member/guardian:

- Educate the member/guardian on the diagnosis of ADHD and about any medications prescribed during the visit. **Document this education in the clinical record.**
 - ADHD medications often need to be started at a low dose and adjusted to find the right balance between effectiveness and side effects.
 - Stimulants work almost immediately, but how long the effects last will depend on the formulation.
 - Non-stimulants may take a few weeks to start working.
 - To ensure the medication can help your child and avoid side effects, it is important to give the correct dose and give the medications at the right time.
 - The most common side effects are loss of appetite and trouble sleeping.
- Explain to the parent or guardian that the child must be seen **within 30 days** of filling the prescription to evaluate if the medication is working and make any adjustments needed, and have at least two follow-up appointments in the nine months following the initiation phase.
- Verify that the follow-up plan is a good fit for the member/guardian (e.g. transportation isn't problematic, appointment time works, pharmacy is convenient, etc.).
- Remind the parent/caregiver of the importance of the medication.

You play a vital role in helping members receive **timely follow-up appointments once the prescription for ADHD medication is filled. Thank you for your continued collaboration!** The tips above align with NCQA requirements and—more importantly—help members receive the services they need.