

Improved Payer Engagements Around Smoking Cessation

Account Manager training on HEDIS smoking cessation measures fosters discussions and positive payer actions

Situation

Three HEDIS measures had been issued by the National Committee for Quality Assurance regarding payer performance on smoking cessation (SC) among members. Although payers had to report on at least one of these measures, they had limited understanding of how smoking cessation quality measures were impacting their overall rating vs other regional health or national benchmarks. Such low awareness resulted in a barrier to payer engagements by the manufacturer of a medical treatment option to support cessation. A strategy was needed for the company to offer messaging that tied SC support and HEDIS measure improvement to payer coverage for the product while adhering to PhRMA guidelines. NCQA's Quality Compass presented a potential opportunity to offer payer customers validated feedback and initiate improved coverage for medical assistance of SC.

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Challenges

- Increase payer awareness and coverage of SC support services and medical products as a relevant and actionable focus for HEDIS measure improvement
- Develop a partnership presence with payer customers in the maintenance or improvement of HEDIS SC metrics to support product access

Solution

Precision developed and executed training for the company's Account Managers (AMs) on:

- The 3 relevant HEDIS SC measures
- Utilization of the NCQA Quality Compass and Plan Compare tool to identify potential targets

- A discussion guide providing probing questions to support AM discussions with Medical Directors
- Third-party resources to support smoking cessation quality discussions

Results

- The number of AM engagements with Medical Directors increased significantly
- Several health plans reevaluated their coverage for:
 - SC medical assistance products, including the client’s product
 - Available programs for smoking cessation counseling, which offered further opportunity to identify and treat smokers with the client’s product

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