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Blueprint for Health

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Supporting Documentation

Methods & Measures Used in the Reporting for Blueprint's Community Profiles

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Summary of Methods

The Vermont Blueprint for Health's Community Profiles were commissioned by the Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA), Blueprint's parent agency, to provide policymakers, community health teams, providers, and other stakeholders with information on expenditure, utilization, effective and preventive care, Accountable Care Organization (ACO), and behavioral risk measures at the community level.

Blueprint Community Profiles are based primarily on data from Vermont's all-payer claims database, the Vermont Health Care Uniform Reporting and Evaluation System (VHCURES). Data include all covered commercial, full Medicaid, and Medicare members. Beginning with the calendar year 2017 profiles, this reporting includes the 473,425 Vermont residents (381,575 adult (18+ years) and 91,850 pediatric (1–17 years)) represented in VHCURES who are assigned to communities or hospital service areas based on their place of residence. Where indicated, VHCURES members are then grouped by those: (1) attributed to a Blueprint patient-centered medical home, (2) attributed to a non-Blueprint primary care provider, and (3) with no primary care attribution. Previously, community profiles focused on those attributed to Blueprint medical homes and assigned individuals to communities based on where the practice was located.

The Community Profiles attribute individuals to primary care settings using a standard attribution algorithm. Beginning with the calendar year 2017 profiles, the count of “distinct” members has been added alongside the average number of members to the profiles' first page. The number of distinct members is a count of unique VHCURES member IDs (i.e., patients) with at least one month of enrollment during the year. Not all VHCURES members have a full 12 months of enrollment during a calendar year. The count of “average” members adjusts for this partial enrollment and forms the basis for denominators for utilization and cost measures.

Profile Results are Not Comparable Across Reporting Periods

Users of the new calendar year (CY) 2017 profiles are discouraged from comparing rates in the current reporting period to previous reporting periods due to changes in the population included in VHCURES and how some measures are calculated.

Shift in the Population Included in the Profile

The population represented in the community profiles has changed in two ways. The first is the expansion of the population included in the community profiles described above. The second is the changes in source data, including:

- **Reduction in the commercial, self-funded population.** Following the March 2016 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Gobeille v. Liberty Mutual Insurance Company*, in which the Court concluded that self-funded plans subject to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) cannot be compelled to submit data to the state's all-payer



claims database, a large volume of data for self-funded health plans no longer is submitted to VHCURES (see Table 1).

- **New source of Medicare data.** With the end of the Multi-Payer Advanced Primary Care Practice (MAPCP) program at the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), in which the Blueprint program was a participant, the data source for the Medicare Fee-for-Service (FFS) membership and claims data files and the CMS method for pulling that data have changed. Thus, the CY2017 reporting relies on a complete refresh of all Medicare data for all included years. This change resulted in an increased volume of claims and paid dollars, particularly for inpatient claims.
- **Medicaid redetermining eligibility.** After a brief suspension, Medicaid reimplemented regular redetermination for eligibility in 2016, which resulted in a subsequent decline in Medicaid enrollment as ineligible members were removed from the rolls.

The proportion of the CY2017 adult community profiles' population by payer type was 44% commercial, 23% Medicaid, and 33% Medicare; the pediatric profiles' proportions were 34% commercial and 66% Medicaid. In the community profiles, based on VHCURES, the commercial population has declined, while the Medicaid and Medicare populations have increased. As a result, the reported adult community profile population was older and sicker in CY2017 than in prior years, and the pediatric population was more likely to be covered by Medicaid.

Table 1. CY2017 Community Profile Payer Mix

Profile/Payer Type	2017 Community Profile Payer Mix	2016 to 2017 Change in Membership	2015 to 2016 Change in Membership	2014 to 2015 Change in Membership
Adult Profiles				
Commercial	44%	-5%	-28%	-1%
Medicaid	23%	-10%	-2%	16%
Medicare	33%	2%	4%	3%
Pediatric Profiles				
Commercial	34%	-6%	-33%	-3%
Medicaid	66%	-2%	1%	6%

Utilization Measurement

The Blueprint for Health and Onpoint Health Data use the Total Care Relative Resource Value™ (TCRRV), developed by HealthPartners, as an approach for evaluating utilization. Recently, HealthPartners made changes and enhancements to their software and reference tables that were applied to the VHCURES claims data to generate the TCRRVs. The TCRRVs form the basis for the Relative Resource Use Index (RUI) scores. This change has resulted in some shifts and reduction in the variance in RUI between communities compared to prior profiles' reporting periods.

Alignment with the Vermont All-Payer Accountable Care Organization Model

Since the emergence of accountable care organizations (ACOs) in Vermont, the Blueprint has aligned its metrics with the priorities identified by the State. This alignment has carried over from the shared savings programs to the Vermont All-Payer ACO Model (“the Model”). This model, established through an agreement between the State and CMS, enables the three main payer types of healthcare in Vermont (i.e., commercial, Medicaid, and Medicare) to transition Vermont’s current provider reimbursement system to a more flexible and predictable value-based system that rewards positive health outcomes. The Model builds on the work of Blueprint and Vermont’s ACO programs. The agreement with CMS contains a quality framework organized around three overarching population health goals: (1) improving access to primary care, (2) reducing deaths from suicide and drug overdose, and (3) reducing the prevalence and morbidity of chronic disease. Many of the measures in the quality framework are incorporated into the Community Profiles and are designated with an asterisk in the profiles.

Methodology

The Community Profiles combine data from all major payer types (i.e., commercial, Medicaid, and Medicare), clinical measurements from the Vermont Clinical Registry, and information on behavioral measures based on the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Onpoint uses this data to report on nationally recognized measures, such as those used for ACO payment and reporting measures, and on selected measures prepared by Onpoint.

Community populations were established through grouping Vermont residents with data in VHCURES by their ZIP code of residence and the corresponding hospital service area (HSA) regardless of where they received their primary care. These 13 HSAs form the unit of analysis that defines the community, and each community was compared to the statewide average across the full VHCURES population with the exceptions of those under one year of age and those 65 years and older whose primary payer was Medicaid or commercial.¹

Based on the above identified populations, two types of Community Profiles were generated: adult (ages 18 years and older) and pediatric (ages 1–17 years). The adult profiles include members with commercial payers as primary, members with Medicaid as primary, Medicare Advantage enrollees, and members with Medicare as primary (Advantage and conventional Medicare plans are grouped together as Medicare). The pediatric profiles include members with commercial payers as primary and members with Medicaid as primary.

Rates of expenditure and utilization were adjusted for differences in population risk between HSAs. These adjustments were based on demographic and health status indicators. Additional

¹ These exclusions were determined when the first profiles were generated. Age less than one is excluded due to the difference in cost and utilization compared to the rest of the pediatric population and due to some bundling in maternity claims. Age 65 and older for commercial and Medicaid are excluded to avoid potential overlap and misreporting of rates where Medicare may be a payer.

enhancements were made in the risk adjustment for the Medicaid and Medicare populations within each community. Expenditure and utilization measures were capped for outliers in the data using the 99th percentile for each measure. This capping was done at the statewide level, not by each community individually.

Expenditure measures included the allowed amount on claims, which includes both the plan payments and the member's out-of-pocket payments (i.e., deductible, coinsurance, and copayments). However, pricing varies across the state; therefore, a standardized Resource Use index (RUI) was included to measure aggregate resource consumption, or utilization, across all components of care (i.e., inpatient, outpatient facility, professional, and pharmacy). The RUI has been risk-adjusted for each HSA relative to the statewide rate of total utilization. An RUI of 1.00 would indicate total utilization the same as the statewide average, while an RUI of 1.06 would indicate total utilization that was 6% higher than statewide average, and an RUI of 0.94 would indicate total utilization that was 6% lower than the statewide average.

Effective and preventive care measures were developed by Onpoint based on HEDIS specifications from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).² In compliance with NCQA HEDIS, when the measure denominator is less than 30, the measure is not reported.

Measures related to the All-Payer ACO Model were reported both as stratified by payer type (e.g., commercial, Medicaid, Medicare) and as combined across payer types. A few of the measures based on claims linked to clinical data had insufficient population sizes to allow reporting for all HSAs. In these instances, the measure was included in the profile to identify and guide efforts to improve the collection of clinical data in Vermont's Blueprint Clinical Registry. Similarly, a statewide evaluation of outcomes for diabetic members who had a hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) test during the measurement year — a measure enabled by the linkage of claims and clinical data — was included in the profiles to demonstrate the usefulness of the linked clinical data source.

Data Sources

The Blueprint Community Profiles use eligibility and claims data supplied to the state's all-payer claims database, the Vermont Health Care Uniform Reporting and Evaluation System (VHCURES). These reports include data for Vermont residents enrolled in commercial health plans, Medicaid enrollees for whom Medicaid was the primary payer (i.e., excluding those with dual eligibility for Medicare), and Medicare enrollees for whom Medicare was the primary payer. Data included all commercial health plans in Vermont supplying data to VHCURES and was not restricted to the three health plans — Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Vermont, Cigna HealthCare, and MVP Health Care — currently participating in Blueprint. VHCURES does not

² HEDIS® is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance.

include data for most non-government self-insured employers, uninsured individuals, self-paying individuals, individuals covered under Veterans Affairs, TRICARE, and Federal Employees Health Benefit Plans, and payers with a Vermont resident enrollment of fewer than 200.

For Blueprint practices using the Blueprint Clinical Registry, clinical data also was linked to VHCURES using fields available in both data sets (e.g., ZIP code of residence, first name, last name, date of birth, and gender). Approximately 90.8% of Blueprint Clinical Registry IDs were successfully matched to VHCURES members attributed to a Blueprint primary care provider. (Note that out-of-state residents and uninsured residents cannot be linked between the two data sets.) The linked data was used to calculate those measures that required both claims data and clinical outcomes data, such as HbA1c control for patients with diabetes or blood pressure control for patients with hypertension.

Data from the 2016 and 2017 Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), a telephone survey conducted annually of 6,000–7,000 residents by the Vermont Department of Health, also was compiled at the community level to provide some context around key behavioral risk factors in the state.

Attribution of Members to Community & Primary Care Group

Determination of the assignment of members to the three primary groups is based on the standard attribution methodology used for Blueprint. This includes the assignment of members to Blueprint primary care practices active in 2017, members with primary care attribution but who were not active in Blueprint, and then all other members (i.e., no primary care attribution).

Beginning with the calendar year 2017 profiles, assignment to communities was based on the member's ZIP code of residence, not the location of their primary care practice – a shift from previous profiles and reporting. However, the statewide and community populations were stratified by: (1) attributed to a Blueprint primary care practice, (2) attributed to non-Blueprint primary care, and (3) with no primary care attribution. The process by which Vermonters are attributed to each primary care status group is detailed below.

The VHCURES data contains information on individual practitioners but does not contain practice-level identifiers. Rosters of primary care physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners for each active Blueprint practice were used to crosswalk to the VHCURES practitioner-specific identifiers.

A standard attribution method was used to assign each member in the VHCURES data to a primary care practice. This was based on a 24-month look-back using Evaluation and Management (E&M) visit codes defined by the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) (see Table 2 and Table 3 for further detail). The member was assigned to a primary care practice based on the following logic:

- The highest number of visits
 - If the same visit count, the most recent visit date
 - » If the same visit date, the largest dollar value
 - If the same visit date and dollar value, then the higher Blueprint practice number

Table 2. E&M CPT/HCPCS Procedure Codes Used to Identify Primary Care Visits from VHCURES by Visit Type*

Visit Type	Codes Used to Identify
CPT/HCPCS Procedure Code Description Summary	
Evaluation and Management – Office or Other Outpatient Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Patient: 99201–99205 • Established Patient: 99211–99215 • Clinic Visit Used by FQHC & RHC: T1015
Consultations – Office or Other Outpatient Consultations Nursing Facility Services	New or Established Patient: 99241–99245 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E & M New/Established patient: 99304–99306 • Subsequent Nursing Facility Care: 99307–99310 • Nursing Facility Discharge: 99315–99316 • Annual Nursing Facility Assessment: 99318
Domiciliary, Rest Home (e.g., Boarding Home), or Custodial Care Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domiciliary or Rest Home Visit New Patient: 99324–99328 • Domiciliary or Rest Home Visit Established Patient: 99334–99337 • Domiciliary or Rest Home Care Supervision: 99339–99340
Home Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Patient: 99341–99345 • Established Patient: 99347–99350
Prolonged Services – Prolonged Physician Service with Direct (Face-to-Face) Patient Contact	99354 and 99355
Prolonged Services – Prolonged Physician Service Without Direct (Face-to-Face) Patient Contact	99358 and 99359
Preventive Medicine Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Patient: 99381–99387 • Established Patient: 99391–99397
Medicare Covered Wellness Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G0402 – Initial Preventive Physical Exam (“Welcome To Medicare” Visit) • G0438 – Annual Wellness Visit, First Visit • G0439 – Annual Wellness Visit, Subsequent Visit
Counseling Risk Factor Reduction and Behavior Change Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New or Established Patient Preventive Medicine, Individual Counseling: 99401–99404 • New or Established Patient Behavior Change Interventions, Individual: 99406–99409 • New or Established Patient Preventive Medicine, Group Counseling: 99411–99412
Other Preventive Medicine Services – Administration and Interpretation	99420
Other Preventive Medicine Services – Unlisted Preventive	99429

Visit Type	Codes Used to Identify
CPT/HCPCS Procedure Code Description Summary	
Newborn Care Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial and Subsequent Care for Evaluation and Management of Normal Newborn Infant: 99460–99463 Attendance at Delivery (When Requested by the Delivering Physician) and Initial Stabilization of Newborn: 99464 Delivery/Birthing Room Resuscitation: 99465

* (1) Professional claims in VHCURES were determined as those having a valid Service Site (Professional) (MC037) reported in the medical claims (i.e., not equal to “-1” [payer supplied no value] or “-2” [payer supplied an incorrect or invalid value]); (2) HCPCS code T1015 (i.e., clinic visit/encounter) was not included in the original attribution specifications for Blueprint but was determined to be widely used by some FQHCs and RHCs in the absence of other codes to identify visits; (3) primary care practitioner visits billed on facility claims were identified as those with a reported Type of Bill (Institutional) code of 71, 73, 77, or 85; (4) for commercial, Medicaid, and Medicare data, the VHCURES field of rendering provider was used to identify the practitioner.

Table 3. E&M CPT/HCPCS Procedure Codes Used to Identify Primary Care Visits from VHCURES by Facility Claim Type*

Facility Claim Types	Codes Used to Identify
Bill Type, Revenue Code, and Place of Service Description Summary	
Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs)	Bill Types: 71, 73, 77 Revenue Codes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0521 = Clinic Visit by Member to RHC/FQHC 0522 = Home Visit by RHC/FQHC Practitioner 0524 = Free-Standing Family Clinic 0525 = Nursing Home Visit by RHC/FQHC Practitioner
Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) Professional Services	Bill Type: 85 Revenue Codes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0960–0989 = Professional Services

* (1) For facility claims with a reported Type of Bill (Institutional) code of 85, revenue codes for professional services (i.e., 0960–0989) were included; (2) for Medicare facility claims, the VHCURES field of Attending Provider NPI was used; when the attending provider information was not provided, the rendering provider was used instead; (3) for Medicaid facility claims, when VHCURES attending provider information was not provided, rendering provider was used.

Members were attributed to a community based on their ZIP code of residence, according to address data provided to Onpoint by Blueprint. Table 4 identifies the towns included in each HSA.

Table 4. Towns Within Hospital Service Area (HSA)

HSA	Towns	HSA	Towns	HSA	Towns	HSA	Towns	
Barre	Barre City	Burlington (cont'd)	Fairfax	Newport (cont'd)	Irasburg	Springfield (cont'd)	Peru	
	Barre Town		Ferrisburgh		Jay		Rockingham	
	Berlin		Fletcher		Lemington		Springfield	
	Bolton		Grand Isle		Lewis		Weathersfield	
	Cabot		Hinesburg		Lowell		Weston	
	Calais		Huntington		Morgan		St. Albans	Alburgh
	Duxbury		Jericho		Newport City			Bakersfield
	East		Milton		Newport Town			Berkshire
	Montpelier		Monkton		Norton			Enosburg
	Fayston		North Hero		Troy			Fairfield
	Marshfield		Richmond	Warner's Grant	Franklin			
	Middlesex		Shelburne	Warren Gore	Georgia			
	Montpelier		South Burlington	Westfield	Highgate			
	Moretown		South Hero	Westmore	Isle La Motte			
	Northfield		St. George	Randolph	Barnard	Montgomery		
	Orange		Starksboro		Bethel	Richford		
	Plainfield		Underhill		Braintree	Sheldon		
	Roxbury		Westford		Brookfield	St. Albans City		
	Topsham		Williston		Chelsea	St. Albans		
	Waitsfield		Winooski		Granville	Town		
Warren		Hancock	Swanton					
Washington		Pittsfield	St. Johnsbury		Barnet			
Waterbury	Middlebury	Randolph			Burke			
Williamstown		Addison			Concord			
Woodbury		Bridport		Danville				
Worcester		Bristol		East Haven				
Bennington		Arlington		Cornwall	Rutland	Benson	Kirby	
		Bennington		Lincoln		Brandon		Lunenburg
		Dorset		Middlebury		Castleton		Lyndon
		Dover		New Haven		Chittenden		Maidstone
		Glastenbury		Orwell		Clarendon		Newark
		Manchester	Panton	Danby		Sheffield		
	Pownal	Ripton	Fair Haven	St. Johnsbury				
	Readsboro	Shoreham	Goshen	Sutton				
	Rupert	Vergennes	Hubbardton	Victory				
	Sandgate	Waltham	Ira	Walden				
	Searsburg	Weybridge	Killington	Waterford				
	Shaftsbury	Whiting	Leicester	Wheelock				
	Somerset	Morrisville	Belvidere	White River Junction	Bradford			
	Stamford		Craftsbury		Bridgewater			
	Sunderland		Eden		Corinth			
Whitingham	Elmore		Fairlee					
Wilmington	Greensboro		Groton					
Woodford	Hardwick		Hartford					
Brattleboro	Brattleboro		Hyde Park		Mount Holly	Hartland		
	Brookline		Johnson		Mount Tabor	Newbury		
	Dummerston		Morristown		Pawlet	Norwich		
	Guilford		Stannard		Pittsford	Peacham		
	Halifax	Stowe	Poultney					
	Jamaica	Waterville	Proctor					
	Marlboro	Wolcott	Rutland					
	Newfane		Rutland City					
			Shrewsbury					

HSA	Towns	HSA	Towns	HSA	Towns	HSA	Towns
	Putney Stratton Townshend Vernon Wardsboro Westminster Windham Winhall	Newport	Albany Averill Averys Gore Barton Bloomfield Brighton Brownington Brunswick Canaan Charleston Coventry Derby Ferdinand Glover Holland		Sudbury Tinmouth Wallingford Wells West Haven West Rutland		Plymouth Pomfret Reading Royalton Ryegate Sharon Strafford Thetford Tunbridge Vershire West Fairlee West Windsor Woodstock
Burlington	Buels Gore Burlington Cambridge Charlotte Colchester Essex			Springfield	Andover Athens Baltimore Cavendish Chester Grafton Landgrove Londonderry Ludlow		

Demographics, Health Status, & Adjustment of Rates for Risk

Demographic and health status information derived from the VHCURES claims data served as the primary inputs for the risk-adjustment methods used for the Blueprint Community Profiles. Utilized components included age, gender, presence of a Blueprint-selected chronic condition, health status as measured by 3M™ Clinical Risk Groups (CRGs), and (for adult profiles) the occurrence of a maternity diagnosis. (Further detail on Blueprint’s selected chronic conditions and 3M CRGs is provided in the narrative below.)

For the purposes of risk adjustment, members also were stratified by age group:

- Pediatric profiles: 1–4 years, 5–11 years, and 12–17 years
- Adult profiles: 18–34 years, 35–44 years, 45–54 years, 55–64 years, 65–74 years, 75–84 years, and 85 years and older

Due to the potential for interaction effects of age and gender, the adjustment models used for the Blueprint Community Profiles combined age and gender into groupings (e.g., males aged 18–34 years, females aged 18–34 years, etc.).

Adjustments also were made for the partial length of enrollment reported for some members during the measurement year. Average members (i.e., cumulative member months divided by 12) were reported for each HSA. Using average members based on member months as a denominator creates more accurate measurement of utilization and cost than using “distinct” members.

Blueprint-Selected Chronic Diseases

Blueprint-selected chronic diseases (Table 5) were identified from the VHCURES medical claims data using diagnosis coding based on nationally accepted definitions (e.g., NCCA HEDIS). The algorithm employed to determine Blueprint-selected chronic diseases used the following

criteria: one or more inpatient visits, one or more outpatient emergency department (ED) visits, or two or more non-hospital outpatient visits. For identifying members with diabetes and asthma, at least two pharmacy prescriptions also were required as part of the algorithm. For the pediatric population, the chronic variable included attention deficit disorder (ADD).

Table 5. Selected Chronic Disease Definitions

Chronic Disease	Medical Claim ICD-9 & ICD-10 Diagnosis Code (Include 4 th & 5 th Digits)*	Pharmacy	Source from Which ICD-9 & ICD-10 Codes were Determined
Asthma	ICD-9: 493 ICD-10: J45	NCQA NDC List	HEDIS ASM Measure
Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) (Pediatric Only)	ICD-9: 31400, 31401 ICD-10: F90	N/A	American Academy of Pediatrics and National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD)	ICD-9: 491, 492, 496 ICD-10: J41, J42, J43, J44	N/A	HEDIS SPR Measure
Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)	ICD-9: 428 ICD-10: I50	N/A	Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) Indicator #37
Coronary Heart Disease	ICD-9: 410–414 ICD-10: I20, I21, I22, I24, I25	N/A	Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) Indicator #36
Depression	ICD-9: 296.2, 296.3, 300.4, 309.1, 311 ICD-10: F32, F33	N/A	HEDIS AMM Measure
Diabetes	ICD-9: 250, 357.2, 362.0, 366.41, 648.0 ICD-10: E10, E11, E13, O24	NCQA NDC List	HEDIS CDC Measure
Hypertension (Essential)	ICD-9: 401 ICD-10: I10	N/A	HEDIS CBP Measure

* Includes principal diagnosis and any secondary diagnosis code reported on the claim.

Clinical Risk Groups

Clinical Risk Groups (CRGs) were applied to the VHCURES claims data to determine each member's health status. CRGs are a product of 3M™ Health Information Systems and are used throughout the United States as a method of risk-adjusting populations. The grouper first classifies each member into one of 1,080 distinct clinical groups based on the diagnoses reported on claims and then further aggregates these clinical groupings into nine major clinical CRG statuses. Due to small numbers in some categories used for the Blueprint Community Profiles' risk-adjustment regression model, these nine categories were combined further into *Healthy, Acute or Minor Chronic, Moderate Chronic, Significant Chronic, and Cancer or Catastrophic*. Table 6 identifies both the nine principal CRG categories (columns 1 and 2) as well as the aggregated categories used in the Blueprint profiles' regression model (Column 4).

Table 6. CRG Major Health Status Categories

#	CRG Major Health Status Categories	Examples	Aggregation for Regression Model
1	Healthy	N/A	Reference Group
2	History of Significant Acute Disease	Acute ear, nose, or throat illness	Acute or Minor Chronic
3	Single Minor Chronic Disease	Minor chronic joint	Acute or Minor Chronic
4	Minor chronic disease in multiple organ systems	Minor chronic joint and migraine	Moderate Chronic
5	Single dominant or moderate chronic disease	Diabetes	Moderate Chronic
6	Significant chronic disease in multiple organ systems	Diabetes and hypertension	Significant Chronic
7	Dominant chronic disease in 3 or more organ systems	CHF, diabetes, and COPD	Significant Chronic
8	Dominant, metastatic, and complicated malignancies	Malignant breast cancer	Cancer or Catastrophic
9	Catastrophic conditions	HIV, cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy, quadriplegia	Cancer or Catastrophic

It should be noted that CRGs do not include pregnancy and child birth in clinical classification. Since pregnant women, women delivering, and newborns contribute to utilization and expenditures, members who had claims for any of these diagnoses were flagged for the risk-adjustment model. The following ICD-9 and ICD-10 diagnosis coding were used for this purpose:

- Pregnancy and child birth: ICD-9 630–677 and ICD-10 O00-O9A (and all 3rd and 4th digits)
- Conditions in perinatal period: ICD-9 760–779 and ICD-10 P00-P96 (and all 3rd and 4th digits)
- Supervision of pregnancy: ICD-9 V22, V23, V24, V27 and ICD-10 Z33, Z34, Z39 (and all 3rd and 4th digits)
- Live-born infants: ICD-9 V3 and ICD-10 Z38 (and all 3rd and 4th digits)

Adjustment for the Medicaid & Medicare Populations

These profiles combine three payer populations — commercial, Medicaid, and Medicare — that have significant differences in demographics, socioeconomic statuses, health statuses, provider reimbursement structures, and services covered and used. For these profiles, risk-adjustment models were further enhanced to include three adjustments for Medicaid. As in the previous version of Community Profiles, Medicaid was adjusted at the individual member level.

Further examination indicated that members who received Special Medicaid Services (SMS) may have had a level of disability not adjusted for through the CRGs. Examples of Special Medicaid Services include members receiving day treatment, residential treatment, case management services, and special school services covered by the Department of Education. These types of services can contribute significantly to a member’s total expenditures. After evaluation of statistical distributions for these services, members with more than the median (50th percentile) of expenditures for these services were flagged and adjusted for in the risk-adjustment model.

Evaluation of the risk-adjustment model also indicated that the percentage of total members that were covered by Medicaid (i.e., “percent Medicaid”) was a statistically significant predictor of total expenditures. Percent Medicaid for each ZIP code was used in the risk adjustment. Additionally, to account for differences in maternity between the major insurers, an interaction term was added between Medicaid and maternity. This adjusts for the potential difference in the effect “payer” (Medicaid versus commercial) in combination with the effect “maternity” (yes versus no) has on the outcome measures. This is sometimes referred to as “effect modification.”.

Additional tuning of the risk-adjustment model was made for the communities’ Medicare populations. First, Medicare was adjusted based on an individual’s eligibility status. Second, to account for differences in geographical areas’ case mix, the percent Medicare for each ZIP code was used in the risk adjustment. (Medicare was not included in pediatric profiling.) As with the Medicaid adjustment described above, this variable first adjusted for Medicare ZIP code level effects at the person level and then rolled up to the community level. Finally, using Medicare-specific eligibility elements, binary flags were developed to identify disability and end-stage renal disease (ESRD).

Risk Adjustment

Risk adjustment for reporting was implemented in SAS Enterprise Guide (Version 7.15) using regression methods to adjust for the differences in the demographics, health status, and payer mix of the populations residing in those communities. This method compares the actual cost or utilization in a community with the predicted cost or utilization for that community. Models included age/gender stratification groups, Blueprint-selected chronic conditions, CRG classification, maternity, and the additional Medicaid and Medicare adjustments described above. Adjusted rates were produced by summing the differences between each member’s actual value and their predicted measurement from the model. Rates were weighted for partial lengths of enrollment.

To calculate the adjusted rate, adjusted values were computed for each member by adding model residuals (e) to the population grand mean (\bar{y}). To report the overall adjusted rate for each practice, the mean of the adjusted values for the members in each community ($\bar{y}_{\text{community}}$) and statewide ($\bar{y}_{\text{statewide}}$) were computed. The following equations represent the models for the adult and pediatric Community Profiles.³

³ For the adult model, males, ages 18–34 years, and “healthy” individuals (from the 3M CRG categories) served as the reference group and therefore do not appear in the model statement. For the pediatric model, males, ages 1–4 years, and “healthy” individuals (from the 3M CRG categories) served as the reference group and therefore do not appear in the model statement.

Adult Model

$$y = \alpha + (F_AGE1834)\beta_1 + (F_AGE3544)\beta_2 + (F_AGE4554)\beta_3 + (F_AGE5564)\beta_4 + (F_AGE6574)\beta_5 + (F_AGE7584)\beta_6 + (F_AGE85PLUS)\beta_7 + (M_AGE3544)\beta_8 + (M_AGE4554)\beta_9 + (M_AGE5564)\beta_{10} + (M_AGE6574)\beta_{11} + (M_AGE7584)\beta_{12} + (M_AGE85PLUS)\beta_{13} + (MEDICAID)\beta_{14} + (MEDICARE)\beta_{15} + (DUAL_ELIGIBILITY)\beta_{16} + (SMS)\beta_{17} + (ZIPCODE_PERCENT_MEDI)\beta_{18} + (ZIPCODE_PERCENT_MCARE)\beta_{19} + (DISABLED)\beta_{20} + (ESRD)\beta_{21} + (CHRONIC)\beta_{22} + (CRG_ACUTE_MINOR)\beta_{23} + (CRG_CHRONIC)\beta_{24} + (CRG_SIGNIFICANT_CHRONIC)\beta_{25} + (CRG_CANCER_CATASTROPHIC)\beta_{26} + (MATERNITY)\beta_{27} + (MATERNITY * MEDICAID)\beta_{28} + \varepsilon$$

Pediatric Model

$$y = \alpha + (F_AGE0104)\beta_1 + (M_AGE0511)\beta_2 + (F_AGE0511)\beta_3 + (F_AGE1217)\beta_4 + (M_AGE1217)\beta_5 + (MEDICAID)\beta_6 + (SMS)\beta_7 + (ZIPCODE_PERCENT_MEDI)\beta_8 + (CHRONIC_PED)\beta_9 + (CRG_ACUTE_MINOR)\beta_{10} + (CRG_CHRONIC)\beta_{11} + (CRG_SIGNIFICANT_CHRONIC)\beta_{12} + (CRG_CANCER_CATASTROPHIC)\beta_{13} + \varepsilon$$

$$\bar{y} = \left(\frac{\sum y_i}{MMA} \right)$$

$$y_{adj} = \bar{y} + e$$

$$e = y - \hat{y}$$

$$\bar{y}_{community} = \left(\frac{\sum y_{adj_i}}{\sum MMA_i} \right) \text{ for the practices in each community}$$

$$\bar{y}_{statewide} = \left(\frac{\sum y_{adj_i}}{\sum MMA_i} \right) \text{ for all members (equals the grand mean)}$$

Where:

- α is the intercept
- ε is the error term
- \hat{y} is the predicted value from the regression model for each member
- e is the residual
- MMA is the average enrollment for each participant (i.e., the cumulative member months of enrollment during the year divided by 12)
- Subscript i indicates a value for an individual member

Measurement of Expenditures

Expenditures were measured based on the allowed amount on claims, which included both the plan payments and the member's out-of-pocket payments (i.e., deductible, coinsurance, and copayments). For each member, total expenditures were determined for the measurement year. In addition, expenditures by major and selected service categories were determined. Each



detailed expenditure category was capped separately at the 99th percentile of the statewide study population to reduce the distorting influence of extreme outlier cases.

Expenditure rates were computed as an annualized adjusted rate using the risk-adjustment methods described previously. Lower and upper confidence intervals of 95 percent have been included. This portrays the range of values that have a 95% probability of including the true mean of the population.

The major and detailed expenditure categories (see Table 7) were based on the type of claim, primary diagnosis codes, revenue codes, site of service codes, provider taxonomy codes, and pharmacy therapeutic groupings based on assignment of National Drug Codes (NDCs) using Red Book[®]. The reporting was hierarchical and rolled up service-line claim payments to the header claim level. For example, if an outpatient hospital claim contained a primary diagnosis of mental health or substance abuse (i.e., ICD-9 codes 290–316 or ICD-10 codes F01–F99), then the entire claim, regardless of the specific services performed, was assigned to the category of outpatient hospital mental health / substance abuse.

Table 7. Expenditure Reporting Category Definitions

Description	Major Category	Detail Category
Hospital Inpatient	Claim type description = 'Facility', type of setting = 'Inpatient', and place of setting = 'Acute inpatient or hospital' (whole claim is assigned hierarchically in order below based on finding the diagnosis or revenue code)	
Mental/Substance Inpatient		1. Primary diagnosis code ICD-9: 290–316; ICD-10: F01–F99
Maternity-Related and Newborns		2. Primary diagnosis code ICD-9: 630–677, 760–779, V30–V39, V22–V24, V27; ICD-10: O00-O9A, P00-P96, Z38, Z33, Z34, Z39
Surgical		3. Revenue codes 0360–0369 (operating room service) within the claim
Medical		4. All others
Hospital Outpatient	Claim type description = 'Facility', type of setting = 'Outpatient', and place of setting = 'Hospital' (whole claim is assigned hierarchically in order below based on finding the diagnosis or revenue code)	
Hospital Mental Health / Substance Abuse Observation Room		1. Primary diagnosis codes 290–316 2. Revenue code 0762
Emergency Room		3. Revenue codes 0450–0459
Outpatient Surgery		4. Revenue codes 0360–0369 (i.e., operating room services)
Outpatient Radiology		5. Revenue codes 0320–0359, 0610–0619
Outpatient Lab		6. Revenue codes 0300–0319

Description	Major Category	Detail Category
Hospital-Dispensed Pharmacy		7. Revenue codes 0250–0259
Outpatient Physical Therapy		8. Revenue codes 0420–0429
Outpatient Other Therapy		9. Revenue codes 0430–0439, 0440–0449
Other Outpatient Hospital		10. All Others
Professional Total	Claim type description = 'Professional' and type of setting = 'Provider' or claim type = 'Outpatient' and type of setting = 'FQHC' or 'Rural Health Clinic'	
Physician Services	Primary diagnosis code not ICD-9 290–316 or ICD-10 F01–F99	Provider taxonomy coding indicates provider specialty is an allopathic or osteopathic physician (excluding psychiatrist)
Physician Inpatient Setting		With Place of Service code 21
Physician Outpatient Setting		With Place of Service code: 19, 22
Physician Office Setting		With Place of Service code 11
Professional Non-Physician *		Provider taxonomy coding indicates nurse practitioner, physician assistant, physical therapist, chiropractor, podiatrist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, optometrist/optician, respiratory therapist
Professional Mental Health Provider	Primary diagnosis code ICD-9 290–316 or ICD-10 F01–F99	Provider taxonomy coding indicates psychiatrist, psychologist, MSW, LICSW, LCSW, or claims from other providers with a principal diagnosis of mental health or substance abuse
Pharmacy	From pharmacy claims and medical claims paid to pharmacies	
Pharmacy Mental		Red Book classification used to determine therapeutic CNS medications based on NDC codes
Special Medicaid Services	From Category of Service and Fund Source Coding as identified in consultation with Vermont Medicaid staff.	Examples include day treatment, residential care, school-based services, dental services, transportation, and case-management.

* Please note: Urgent care claims will typically be included in the Professional Non-Physician category.

Resource Use Index

Expenditures were measured based on the allowed amount on claims, which included both the plan payments and the member’s out-of-pocket payments (i.e., deductible, coinsurance, and copayments). However, since pricing and reimbursement can vary, expenditure measures can present a distorted picture of utilization and actual resource consumption (i.e., the frequency and intensity of all services used).

In order to address this concern, the Blueprint Community Profiles include the Total Resource Use Index (RUI) measure. This measure is based on software developed by HealthPartners as

part of their Total Cost of Care (TCOC) measurement system, which has been endorsed by the National Quality Forum (NQF).⁴

For Blueprint Community Profiles, the TCOC software was applied to the VHCURES claims data. The software standardizes resource use through weighting different components of care categorized by relevant descriptors to measure the relative intensity of services. These descriptors include Medicare Severity Diagnosis Related Groups (MS-DRGs) for inpatient services, Current Procedural Terminology codes (CPTs) and associated Ambulatory Payment Classifications (APCs) for outpatient facility services, and CPTs and associated Resource-Based Relative Value Scale (RBRVS) relative weights for professional services. Each of these is a standard system used nationally for measuring relative intensity of resource use. For pharmacy claims, HealthPartners used a national pharmacy data source to develop the relative weights. The Total Care Relative Resource Values (TCRRVs) are supplied as part of the HealthPartners software. Once the TCRRVs are determined for each care setting, adjustment factors are applied to standardize the paid amount across settings (i.e., inpatient, outpatient facility, professional, and pharmacy) for better comparability.

The Blueprint Community Profiles report both the total Resource Use Index and the resource use for each care subcategory or setting. The RUI for each community was calculated by dividing the HSA’s adjusted TCRRV rate by the statewide TCRRV rate to establish a standardized RUI score.

Measurement of Utilization

To understand rates of selected utilization measures, claims data were analyzed using the definitions listed in Table 8. The diagnostic testing and non-hospital outpatient visit measures were based on CPT coding linked to the Berenson-Eggers Type of Service (BETOS) classification system developed by CMS. Utilization rates were computed as an annualized adjusted rate per 1,000 members using the risk-adjustment methods described above. Lower and upper confidence intervals of 95 percent also were included.

Table 8. Methods & Coding for the Utilization by Type of Service Section

Category/Measure	Methods/Coding
Inpatient Hospital	
Inpatient Discharges	NCQA HEDIS Inpatient Utilization (IPU) measure: Medical, Surgical, Maternity. Mental disorders are not excluded. Counts the number of inpatient discharges.
Inpatient Days	NCQA HEDIS Inpatient Utilization (IPU) measure: Medical, Surgical, Maternity. Mental disorders are not excluded. Last date of service minus first date of service. If inpatient days were greater than 90, inpatient days were capped at 90.

4 See: <https://www.healthpartners.com/hp/about/tcoc/>

Category/Measure	Methods/Coding
Outpatient Service Encounters	
Outpatient Emergency Department Visits	NCQA HEDIS Ambulatory Care (AMB) emergency department visit specifications but does not exclude mental disorders
Outpatient Potentially Avoidable Emergency Department Visits	<p>NCQA HEDIS Ambulatory Care (AMB) emergency department visit specifications and ICD-9 / ICD-10 primary diagnosis codes:</p> <p>ICD-9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 034.0 (sore throat, strep) • 079.99 (viral infection, unspecified) • 300.00, 300.02 (anxiety, unspecified or generalized) • 372.00, 372.30 (conjunctivitis, acute or unspecified) • 380.10, 381.01, 381.4, 382.00, 382.9 (external and middle ear infections, acute or unspecified) • 461.9, 473.9, 462, 465.9 (upper respiratory infections, acute or unspecified) • 466.0, 786.2, 490 (bronchitis, acute or unspecified, or cough) • 493 (asthma) • 691.0, 691.8, 692.6, 692.9, 782.1 (dermatitis and rash) • 719.4 (joint pain) • 724.2, 724.5 (lower/unspecified back pain) • 729.1, 729.5 (muscle/soft tissue limb pain) • 780.79 (fatigue) • 784.0 (headache) <p>ICD-10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J020, J0300, J0301 (sore throat, strep) • B9710 (viral infection, unspecified) • F419, F411 (anxiety, unspecified or generalized) • H1030, H1031, H1032, H1033, H109 (conjunctivitis, acute or unspecified) • H6590–H6593, H6690–H6693, H6000–H6003, H6010–H6013, H60311–H60319, H60321–H60329, H60391–H60399, H6500–H6507, H66001–H66009 (external and middle ear infections, acute or unspecified) • J028, J029, J0190, J0191, J069, J329 (upper respiratory infections, acute or unspecified) • J40, J200, J201, J202, J203, J204, J205, J206, J207, J208, J209, R05 (bronchitis, acute or unspecified, or cough) • J4520, J4530, J4540, J4550, J4522, J4532, J4542, J4552, J4521, J4531, J4541, J4551, J45990, J45991, J45909, J45998, J45902, J45901 (asthma) • L22, L200, L2081, L2082, L2084, L2089, L209, L237, L247, L255, L239, L249, L259, L300, L302, L308, L309, R21 (dermatitis and rash) • M25511, M25512, M25519, M25521, M25522, M25529, M25531, M25532, M25539, M25551, M25552, M25559, M25561, M25562, M25569, M25571, M25572, M25579, M2550 (joint pain) • M545, M5489, M549 (lower or unspecified back pain) • M6080, M60811, M60812, M60819, M60821, M60822, M60829, M60831, M60832, M60839, M60841, M60842, M60849, M60851, M60852, M60859, M60861, M60862, M60869, M60871, M60872, M60879, M6088, M6089, M609, M791, M797, M79601, M79602, M79603, M79604, M79605, M79606, M79609, M79621, M79622, M79629, M79631, M79632, M79639, M79641, M79642, M79643, M79644, M79645, M79646, M79651, M79652, M79659, M79661, M79662, M79669, M79671, M79672, M79673, M79674, M79675, M79676 (muscle / soft-tissue limb pain) • G933, R530, R531, R5381, R5383 (fatigue) • G441, R51 (headache)
Non-Hospital Outpatient Visits	Measure defined by Dartmouth Institute: BETOS M1A, M1B, M4A, M4B, M5A, M5C, M5D, M6

Category/Measure	Methods/Coding
Professional Encounters	
Primary Care Encounters	Claim type description = 'Professional' and type of setting = 'Provider' and provider specialty based on taxonomy coding is pediatrics, internal medicine, family practice, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant
Medical Specialist Encounters	Claim type description = 'Professional' and type of setting = 'Provider' and provider specialty coding based on taxonomy coding is allergy/immunology, cardiology, critical care, dermatology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, geriatric medicine, hematology/oncology, infectious disease, neurology, nephrology, pulmonary medicine, rheumatology, emergency medicine
Surgical Specialist Encounters	Claim type description = 'Professional' and type of setting = 'Provider' and provider specialty coding based on taxonomy coding is the following surgical specialty types: general surgery, cardio-thoracic, ENT, hand, neurological, plastic/reconstructive, OB/GYN, ophthalmology, orthopedic, pediatric, urology, vascular
Diagnostic Testing	
Standard Imaging	BETOS I1A–I1F
Advanced Imaging	BETOS I2A–I2D
Echography	BETOS I3A–I3F
Colonoscopy	BETOS P8D
Admissions	
Prevention Quality Indicator #05: COPD *	This measure assesses the observed rate of ambulatory care sensitive conditions (ACSC) admissions with a principal diagnosis of chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD) or asthma per 1,000 members, ages 40 years and older. The specified diagnosis codes can be found on the AHRQ website.
Prevention Quality Indicator #08: Heart Failure *	This measure assesses the observed rate of ACSC admissions with a principal diagnosis of heart failure per 1,000 members, ages 18 years and older. The specified diagnosis codes can be found on the AHRQ website.
Prevention Quality Indicator #92: Composite (Chronic) *	This measure assesses the observed rate of ACSC admissions for the composite of chronic conditions per 1,000 members, ages 18 years and older. The measure includes admissions for at least one of the following conditions: diabetes with short-term complications, diabetes with long-term complications, uncontrolled diabetes without complications, diabetes with lower-extremity amputations, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD), asthma, hypertension, heart failure, and angina without a cardiac procedure. The specified diagnosis codes for these conditions can be found on the AHRQ website.
Measurement of Plan All-Cause Readmissions	This measure represents a comparison of the rate of (a) continuously enrolled members, ages 18 years and older, that had an inpatient stay followed by an acute readmission for any diagnosis within 30 days during the measurement year to (b) the expected rate of readmissions given risk factors of the patient (i.e., presence of surgeries, discharge condition, comorbidity, age, and gender). The rate is expressed as a ratio of the observed to expected readmissions where the expected number of readmissions has been risk-adjusted. Because the risk probabilities for this measure are generated by NCQA, neither the statewide ratio nor the national ratio is the typical 1.0. The ratio should be used to compare the relative difference between practices and HSAs.

* When comparing to AHRQ's national benchmarks for the observed rate, it is important to keep in mind that AHRQ guidelines suggest including the entire population for the specified area in the denominator. The rates provided in the Blueprint Community Profiles are based on members attributed to Blueprint participating practices for which the denominator is the sum of average members for the specified area.

Measurement of Effective & Preventive Care

Primary measures of effective and preventive care were selected for inclusion in the adult and pediatric Blueprint Community Profiles. While it is beyond the scope of this document to provide all of the detailed specifications for each effective and preventive care measure, the denominator and numerator for each are summarized below. For those measures that include a clinical measurement in addition to claims data, the method used in the Blueprint Community Profile deviates from HEDIS rates reported by NCQA or health plans. While health plans often use clinical data extracted through chart reviews, the Blueprint Community Profiles use data from the Vermont Clinical Registry. Onpoint follows NCQA HEDIS specifications for each measure including continuous enrollment requirements.

Comprehensive Diabetes Care

HEDIS Measure

These measures assess the percentage of members, ages 18–75 years, with diabetes who had HbA1c testing, eye screening, and nephropathy (kidney disease) screening. This is a claims-based measure.

The denominator for these measures consists of members, ages 18–75 years, who were identified with diabetes who had one or more acute inpatient visits or two or more outpatient, observation, emergency department, or nonacute inpatient visits with ICD-9 diagnosis codes of 250, 357.2, 362.0, 366.41, and 648.0 or ICD-10 diagnosis codes of E10, E11, E13, and O24 or who were dispensed insulin oral hypoglycemics/antihyperglycemics during the measurement year or the prior year. The denominator also requires the member to be continuously enrolled during the measurement year.

The numerators for these measures were identified using specific CPT and other coding as defined in the NCQA HEDIS specification manual for HbA1c testing, eye screening, and nephropathy screening. The numerator indicates that the test or screening took place during the measurement year.

Tobacco Use: Screening & Cessation Intervention

NQF #0028

This measure assesses the percentage of members ages 18 years and older that were screened for tobacco use one or more times within a two-year look-back and who received cessation counseling intervention if identified as a tobacco user.

The denominator for this measure includes all members ages 18 years and older who were seen for at least two visits or at least one preventive visit during the measurement period. The denominator also requires the member to be continuously enrolled during the measurement



year. Excluded from the denominator were members with documentation of medical reason(s) for not screening for tobacco use (e.g., limited life expectancy or other medical reason). The numerator for this measure were members who were screened for tobacco use at least once within 24 months and who received tobacco cessation intervention if identified as a tobacco user.

Medication Management for People with Asthma

NQF #1799, HEDIS Measure

This measure assesses the percentage of members, ages 18-64 years, that were identified as having persistent asthma and were dispensed appropriate asthma controller medications that they remained on for at least 50 percent of their treatment period.

The denominator for this measure includes all members, ages 18-64 years, as having persistent asthma who met event/diagnosis and asthma medication criteria during both the measurement year and the year prior to the measurement year. Excluded from the denominator were members diagnosed with conditions other than persistent asthma that may require asthma controller medications, such as members diagnosed with emphysema, COPD, obstructive chronic bronchitis, cystic fibrosis, and acute respiratory failure. Members who had no asthma controller medications during the measurement year also were excluded. The numerator for this measure represents the number of members who achieved a proportion of days covered (PDC) of at least 50% for their asthma controller medications during the measurement year.

Screening for Clinical Depression

NQF #0418

This measure assesses the percentage of members, ages 18 years and older, that were screened for clinical depression on the date of encounter using an age-appropriate standardized depression screening tool.

The denominator for this measure included all members, ages 18 years and older, before the beginning of the measurement period with at least one eligible encounter during the measurement period. Excluded from the denominator are members with an active diagnosis for depression or a diagnosis of bipolar disorder. The numerator for this measure includes members screened for clinical depression on the date of the encounter using an age-appropriate, standardized tool.

Follow-Up After Discharge from the Emergency Department for Alcohol or Other Drug Dependence

NQF #2605, HEDIS Measure

This measure assesses the percentage of ED visits for members ages 18 years and older with a principal diagnosis of alcohol or other drug (AOD) dependence, who had a follow up visit for AOD dependence within 30 days of the ED visit.

The denominator for this measure is an ED visit with a principal diagnosis of AOD dependence on or between January 1 and December 1 of the measurement year. It is based on the number of ED visits not members. The denominator excludes ED visits followed by an admission to an acute or nonacute inpatient care setting on the date of the ED visit or within the following 30 days regardless of principal diagnosis for the admission. The numerator includes members with a follow-up visit for a principal diagnosis of substance use disorder (SUD) with any practitioner within 30 days after the ED visit, including visits that occur on the date of the ED visit.

Follow-Up After Discharge from the Emergency Department for Mental Health

NQF #2605, HEDIS Measure

This measure assesses the percentage of ED visits for members ages 18 years and older with a principal diagnosis of mental illness, who had a follow-up visit for mental health within 30 days of the ED visit.

The denominator for this measure is an ED visit with a principal diagnosis of mental illness on or between January 1 and December 1 of the measurement year. It is based on the number of ED visits, not members. The denominator excludes mental-illness visits followed by an admission to an acute or nonacute inpatient care setting on the date of the ED visit or within the following 30 days regardless of principal diagnosis for the admission. The numerator includes members with a follow-up visit for a principal diagnosis of a mental health disorder with any practitioner within 30 days after the ED visit, including visits that occur on the date of the ED visit.

Imaging Studies for Low Back Pain – Appropriate Use

HEDIS Measure

This measure assesses the percentage of members ages 18–50 years with a primary diagnosis of low back pain who **did not** have an imaging study (i.e., plain X-ray, MRI, CT scan) within 28 days of diagnosis. A higher percentage indicates appropriate treatment (i.e., the proportion for whom imaging was not performed).

The denominator requires members to have one of the following visit types with a principal diagnosis of uncomplicated low back pain as identified by a particular combination of CPT and UB revenue codes in the claims data: an outpatient visit, an observation visit that is not

inpatient, an ED visit that is not inpatient, an osteopathic or chiropractic manipulative treatment, a physical therapy visit, a telehealth visit, or an online assessment. Members are included if they had a 180-day negative diagnosis history. Members with a history of cancer, recent trauma, intravenous drug use, neurological impairment, HIV, spinal infection, major organ transplants, or prolonged use of corticosteroids are excluded from the denominator. Members must be continuously enrolled during the 208-day period (i.e., the required 180-day history plus 28 days post diagnosis). The numerator identifies any member that **did not** have an imaging study, identified by CPT and UB revenue codes in the claims data, with a diagnosis of uncomplicated low back pain on the index episode start date (IESD) or in the 28 days following the IESD. Denied claims are not included when assessing the numerator, but all claims (paid, suspended, pending and denied) are included when identifying the eligible population.

Cervical Cancer Screening

Core-30, NQF #0032, HEDIS Measure

This measure assesses the percentage of women either (a) ages 21–64 years who received one or more Papanicolaou (Pap) tests to screen for cervical cancer during the measurement year or the two years prior to the measurement year or (b) ages 30–64 years who received one or more Pap tests to screen for cervical cancer during the measurement year or four years prior to the measurement year. This is a claims-based measure.

The denominator requires continuous enrollment in Medicaid during the measurement year or in commercial during the measurement year and the two years prior to the measurement year. Women with evidence of a hysterectomy are excluded. The numerator is based on identification of CPT, HCPCS, ICD-9, ICD-10, and UB revenue codes in the claims data that indicate a Pap test.

Chlamydia Screening

Core-7, NQF #0033, HEDIS Measure

This measure assesses the percentage of female members, ages 16–24 years, identified as sexually active and who had at least one test for chlamydia in the measurement year. This is a claims-based measure.

The denominator requires continuous enrollment during the measurement year and sexual activity as determined by pharmacy data (e.g., dispensed contraceptives) or claims or encounters indicating sexual activity (e.g., pregnancy, pregnancy tests, chlamydia tests, or other claims related to sexual activity).

The chlamydia screening measure has been included for ages 16–24 years in both the adult and pediatric Community Profiles.

Breast Cancer Screening

Core-11, MSSP-20, NQF #0031, HEDIS Measure

This measure assesses the percentage of women, ages 52–74 years, who had a mammogram to screen for breast cancer during the measurement year or the year prior to the measurement year. For the Blueprint Practice Profiles, the measure was stratified further, differentiating between women, ages 52–64 years, and women, ages 65–74 years.

The denominator requires continuous enrollment from October 1 two years prior to the end of the measurement year. Women with evidence of bilateral mastectomy are excluded. The numerator is based on the identification of CPT, Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS), ICD-9, ICD-10, or UB Revenue codes in the claims data that indicate a mammogram.

Plan All-Cause Readmissions

Core-1, NQF #1768, HEDIS Measure

This measure represents a comparison of the rate of (a) continuously enrolled members, ages 18 years and older, who had an inpatient stay followed by an acute readmission for any diagnosis within 30 days during the measurement year to (b) the expected rate of readmissions given risk factors of the patient (e.g., presence of surgeries, discharge condition, comorbidity, age, and gender). The rate is expressed as a ratio of the observed to expected readmissions where the expected number of readmissions has been risk-adjusted.

Because the risk probabilities for this measure are generated by NCQA, neither the statewide ratio nor the national ratio is the typical 1.0. The ratio should be used to compare the relative difference between HSAs. Rates are not comparable to data run for prior versions of the Blueprint profiles due to changes to the NCQA HEDIS specifications in 2017.

Follow-Up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness

Core-4, NQF #0576, HEDIS Measure

This measure assesses the percentage of discharges for members, ages 6 years and older, who were hospitalized for treatment of selected mental health diagnoses and who had a follow-up visit for mental illness within seven days of discharge. This claims-based measure is not reported in the pediatric profiles; in the adult profile it is limited to 18 and over.

The denominator is based on discharges, not members. For inclusion, individuals must be alive upon discharge from an acute inpatient setting (including an acute care psychiatric facility) with a principal diagnosis of mental illness on or between January 1 and December 1 of the measurement year, which allows for the 30-day follow-up period for the year. Members must be continuously enrolled (i.e., have no gaps in enrollment) for inclusion. Follow-up criteria must include a visit with a mental health practitioner, a visit to a behavioral healthcare facility, a visit

to a non-behavioral healthcare facility with a mental health provider, a visit to a non-behavioral healthcare facility with a diagnosis of mental illness, and/or utilization of transitional care management services.

Initiation of Alcohol/Drug Treatment

Core-5a, NQF #0004, HEDIS Measure

This measure assesses the percentage of adult members, ages 18 years and older, with a new episode of substance use disorder (SUD) who initiated treatment through an inpatient SUD admission, outpatient visit, intensive outpatient encounter or partial hospitalization, telehealth or medication assisted treatment (MAT) within 14 days of the diagnosis. This is a claims-based measure.

The denominator (i.e., all index episodes) includes inpatient, intensive outpatient, partial hospitalization, outpatient, telehealth, detoxification services or an ED visit with a diagnosis of SUD. Members must be continuously enrolled without any gaps from two months before the index episode through 48 days after. When the adolescent numerator is insufficient for reporting, this measure will not appear in the pediatric Community Profiles.

If the index episode is an inpatient discharge, that episode qualifies as the initiation. Otherwise, if the index episode is an outpatient, intensive outpatient, partial hospitalization, telehealth, detoxification, or ED visit, the member must have an inpatient admission, outpatient visit, telehealth, intensive outpatient encounter or partial hospitalization with a diagnosis of AOD dependence within 14 days of the index episode to qualify.

Engagement of Alcohol/Drug Treatment

Core-5b, NQF #0004, HEDIS Measure

This measure assesses the percentage of adult members, ages 18 years and older, with a new episode involving SUD who initiated treatment and who had two or more additional services with a diagnosis of SUD through 29 days after the initiation visit. This is a claims-based measure.

The denominator (i.e., all index episodes) includes an inpatient, intensive outpatient, partial hospitalization, outpatient, telehealth, detoxification service, or an ED visit with a diagnosis of AOD dependence. Members must be continuously enrolled without any gaps from two months before the index episode through 48 days after. When the adolescent numerator is insufficient for reporting, this measure will not appear in the pediatric Community Profiles.

The numerator (i.e., engagement) is measured as initiation of SUD treatment and two or more inpatient admissions, outpatient visits, telehealth, intensive outpatient encounters, and/or partial hospitalizations with any SUD diagnosis through 29 days after the date of the initiation encounter (inclusive).

Cholesterol Management, Cardiac

Core-3, MSSP-29, NQF #0075, HEDIS Measure

This measure assesses the percentage of members, ages 18–75 years, who were discharged alive for acute myocardial infarction (AMI), coronary artery bypass graft (CABG), or percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) in the year prior to the measurement year or who had a diagnosis of ischemic vascular disease (IVD) during the measurement year and the year prior to the measurement year, who had low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) screening during the measurement year. This is a claims-based measure.

The denominator requires no more than one gap in enrollment of no more than 45 days during the measurement year. The denominator includes (a) members discharged alive during the measurement year from an acute inpatient setting with an AMI as identified by facility and professional claims, (b) members discharged alive during the measurement year from an acute inpatient setting with a CABG as identified by facility and professional claims, (c) members who had a PCI in any setting during the measurement year, and (d) members who, in the measurement year and year prior, had at least one outpatient visit or acute inpatient encounter with a diagnosis of IVD.

The numerator includes those identified in (a) through (d), above, who had LDL-C tests performed during the measurement year as identified by claim/encounter data or automated laboratory data.

Avoidance of Antibiotic Treatment, Acute Bronchitis

Core-6, NQF #0058, HEDIS Measure

This measure assesses the percentage of members, ages 18–64 years, with a diagnosis of acute bronchitis who were not dispensed an antibiotic prescription. A higher rate indicates appropriate treatment for acute bronchitis (i.e., the proportion for whom antibiotics were not prescribed). This is a claims-based measure.

The denominator for this measure is based on episodes of acute bronchitis. For inclusion, members must have continuous enrollment from one year prior to the episode date to seven days after the episode date. Episodes are based on any outpatient visit, observation visit, or ED visit with a diagnosis of acute bronchitis during the measurement year. Exclusions were made for ED visits that resulted in an inpatient admission, as well as certain comorbid conditions, including HIV, malignant neoplasms, emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and cystic fibrosis. Members who were on antibiotics prior to the episode or who had competing diagnoses (e.g., pharyngitis) also were excluded.

For the members included in the denominator, the numerator is defined as those members who were not dispensed an antibiotic prescription during the episode.



Influenza Vaccination

Core-35, MSSP-14, NQF #0041, AMA-PCPI

This measure assesses the percentage of members, ages 18 years and older, who received an influenza immunization from October 1 of the prior year through March 31 of the measurement year (i.e., the most recent flu season for the United States). Immunizations were identified using both claims data and the Vermont Clinical Registry data.

The denominator included members who had been seen for a visit in the office setting during that same flu season period (October 1 to March 31). Office visits were identified using the claims data CPTs for office visits.

The numerator for this measure was determined using two parts:

- Claims data: Individuals who had evidence in the claims data of receipt of the flu vaccination in any setting were determined to be in compliance with this measure.
- Blueprint Clinical Registry data: For each individual who met the denominator criteria and whose VHCURES member ID was linked to a Vermont Clinical Registry ID, the measures table of the Blueprint Clinical Registry data extract was searched to determine if there was any evidence during the flu season that the provider had reported that the patient received a vaccination. This second step was intended to capture patients who may have reported to their provider that they received the vaccine but who received it in a setting (e.g., flu clinic, drug store, etc.) where it was not billed to medical claims.

Pneumonia Vaccination

Core-48, MSSP-15, NQF #0043

Pneumonia vaccination rates are one of the measures used by many accountable care organizations. However, information on pneumonia vaccinations coming from claims data are not reliable because the measure asks if the patient has *ever* had a pneumonia vaccination. Thus, these are not highly traceable by medical claims as patients may have had the vaccination before VHCURES began collecting data. Vermont, however, does collect data on pneumonia vaccinations using the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Vermont adults, ages 65 years and older, were asked if they had ever received a pneumococcal vaccine. It is important to note that previously vaccinated subjects were not asked to specify when they had received the vaccine. BRFSS data for 2015–2016 were aggregated at the community level and presented for the over-65 population to explore variation between HSAs in this preventive behavior. These data do not reflect specifically on the Blueprint practices, however, as they are a general population indicator.

Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions (ACSC) Admissions

The ambulatory care sensitive conditions (ACSC) inpatient measures use the Prevention Quality Indicator (PQI) software from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to assess Vermont data. These are conditions for which quality outpatient care potentially can prevent the need for hospitalization or for which early intervention potentially can prevent complications or more severe disease.

The ACSC measures include data on discharges for members whose residence is in a specific region (Vermont for these profiles) and whose claims are included in the VHCURES data.

Note: When comparing to AHRQ's national benchmarks for the observed rate, it is important to keep in mind that AHRQ guidelines suggest including the entire population for the specified area in the denominator. By expanding the population to all Vermont residents identified in VHCURES, the analysis more closely aligns with AHRQ's guidelines; however, it is limited to the data available in VHCURES, which was affected by the U.S. Supreme Court's *Gobeille* decision.

ACSC Admissions: COPD & Asthma

Core-10, MSSP-9, NQF, AHRQ Prevention Quality Indicator #5

This measure assesses the observed rate of ACSC admissions with a principal diagnosis of chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD) or asthma per 1,000 members, ages 40 years and older. The specified diagnosis codes can be found on the AHRQ website (<https://ushik.ahrq.gov>). This is a claims-based measure.

The denominator includes all inpatient discharges for members, ages 40 years and older. The numerator includes observed discharges from an acute care hospital with a principal diagnosis of COPD or asthma. Exclusions were made for the following: (1) transfers from a hospital, skilled nursing facility, or intermediate care facility; (2) members with a diagnosis of cystic fibrosis and anomalies of the respiratory system; and (3) members with missing data for gender, age, or principal diagnosis.

ACSC Admissions: Heart Failure

MSSP-10, NQF #0277, AHRQ Prevention Quality Indicator #8

This measure assesses the observed rate of ACSC admissions with a principal diagnosis of heart failure per 1,000 members, ages 18 years and older. The specified diagnosis codes can be found on the AHRQ website. This is a claims-based measure.

The denominator includes all inpatient discharges for members, ages 18 years and older. The numerator includes observed discharges from an acute care hospital with a principal diagnosis of heart failure. Exclusions were made for the following: (1) transfers from a hospital, skilled nursing facility, or intermediate care facility; (2) members with an ICD-9-CM or an ICD-10-CM

procedure code for a cardiac procedure; and (3) members with missing data for gender, age, or principal diagnosis.

ACSC Admissions: PQI Prevention Quality Chronic Composite

Core-12, NQF, AHRQ Prevention Quality Indicator #92

This measure assesses the observed rate of ambulatory care sensitive (ACSC) admissions for the composite of chronic conditions per 1,000 members, ages 18 years and older. The measure includes admissions for at least one of the following conditions: diabetes with short-term complications, diabetes with long-term complications, uncontrolled diabetes without complications, diabetes with lower-extremity amputations, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD), asthma, hypertension, heart failure, and angina without a cardiac procedure. The specified diagnosis codes for these conditions can be found on the AHRQ website. This is a claims-based measure.

Observed discharges from an acute care hospital that meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the numerator for any of the above conditions were included. Exclusions were made for the following: (1) transfers from a hospital, skilled nursing facility, or intermediate care facility and (2) members with missing data for gender, age, or principal diagnosis.

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Measures

Additional measures based on data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) are included in the Community Profiles to provide context regarding key risk factors and diagnoses. Risk factors include: households with income of less than \$25,000 annually; cigarette smoking; no leisure-time physical activity/exercise; and those with a personal doctor. Diagnoses include: COPD, hypertension, and diabetes. Estimates of these risk factors were reported at the community level with 95% confidence intervals. See the BRFSS section in the adult Blueprint Profiles for further detail on these measures. For more information on BRFSS methods, please see the Vermont Department of Health BRFSS page and the CDC's website on BRFSS.

Pediatric Measure: Developmental Screening in the First Three Years of Life

Core-8, NQF #1448

This measure assesses the percentage of children screened for risk of developmental, behavioral, and social delays using a standardized screening tool in the first three years of life: by 12 months of age, by 24 months of age, and by 36 months of age.

The denominator includes children who turn 1, 2, or 3 years of age between January 1 and December 31 of the measurement year. The numerator identifies children who were screened for risk of developmental, behavioral and social delays using a standardized tool (note: only Numerator 4 is used in the profiles):

- Numerator 1: Children in Denominator 1 who had screening for risk of developmental, behavioral, and social delays using a standardized screening tool that was documented by their first birthday
- Numerator 2: Children in Denominator 2 who had screening for risk of developmental, behavioral, and social delays using a standardized screening tool that was documented by their second birthday
- Numerator 3: Children in Denominator 3 who had screening for risk of developmental, behavioral, and social delays using a standardized screening tool that was documented by their third birthday
- Numerator 4: Children in Denominator 4 who had screening for risk of developmental, behavioral, and social delays using a standardized screening tool that was documented by their first, second, or third birthday.

Pediatric Measure: Well-Child Visits in the 3rd to 6th Year of Life

HEDIS Measure

This measure assesses the percentage of members, ages 3–6 years, who received one or more well-child visits during the measurement year.

The denominator includes only those members who are continuously enrolled during the year. The numerator includes children with at least one visit to a primary care physician during the measurement year. Well-child visits are identified with preventive visit CPT codes or ICD-9 V20, V70 codes and ICD-10 Z00, Z02 codes. Primary care practitioners are identified through taxonomy codes indicating that the rendering provider was a pediatrician, family practitioner, internal medicine physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant.

Pediatric Measure: Adolescent Well-Care Visits

Core-2, HEDIS Measure

This measure assesses the percentage of members, ages 12–21 years, who had at least one well-care visit with a primary care practitioner or OB/GYN during the measurement year.

The denominator includes only members who are continuously enrolled during the year. Well-care visits are identified with preventive visit CPT codes or ICD-9 codes V20, V70 and ICD-10 codes Z00, Z02. Practitioners are identified through taxonomy codes indicating that the rendering provider was a pediatrician, family practitioner, internal medicine physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or OB/GYN.

Pediatric Measure: Appropriate Testing for Children with Pharyngitis

Core-13, NQF #0002

This measure assesses the percentage of children, ages 3–17 years, who were diagnosed with pharyngitis, dispensed an antibiotic, and received a group A streptococcus (strep) test for the episode. A higher rate represents appropriate testing for children with pharyngitis.

The denominator includes members with an outpatient, observation, or ED visit with a diagnosis of only pharyngitis (ICD-9 codes 462, 463, and 034.0 and ICD-10 codes J02 and J03). Claims/encounters with more than one diagnosis and visits that result in an inpatient stay are excluded. Members are excluded from the denominator if dispensed an antibiotic prescription within 30 days prior to the episode start date or have an active prescription on the episode start date. Numerator is a streptococcus test (identified through CPT codes) during the seven-day period (i.e., three days prior and three days after the prescription date).

Pediatric Measure: Appropriate Treatment for Children with Upper Respiratory Infection

HEDIS Measure

This measure assesses the percentage of children, ages 1–17 years, who were diagnosed with upper respiratory infection (URI) and **were not** dispensed an antibiotic prescription. A higher rate indicates appropriate treatment of children with URI (i.e., the proportion for whom antibiotics were not prescribed). This is a claims-based measure.

The denominator consists of members with an outpatient or ED visit with a diagnosis of URI (ICD-9 codes 460 and 465 and ICD-10 codes J00 and J06). The member must be continuously enrolled without a gap in coverage from 30 days prior to the diagnosis through 3 days after the diagnosis date. The numerator consists of members who were prescribed an antibiotic either on the same day as or during the three days after the diagnosis date. Members are excluded if there is a competing diagnosis within three days of the initial diagnosis or if they had an antibiotic prescription filled within the prior 30 days. The measure is expressed as the percentage who received appropriate care (i.e., were not dispensed an antibiotic).

Linked Clinical Data: Obesity, Hypertension, & HbA1c

Starting with the data for calendar year 2014, Blueprint began to integrate clinical data from the statewide Vermont Clinical Registry (formerly DocSite). This table presents the proportion of distinct members and distinct members with diabetes linked to clinical data with valid body mass index (BMI), blood pressure, and HbA1c measurements meeting the criteria for obesity (BMI \geq 30.0), hypertension (mmHg \geq 140/90), and HbA1c in poor control ($>$ 9%).

The top, blue section of Table 9, below, shows the rates of availability of clinical measures, obesity, and hypertension for all distinct adult members in the profile, while the bottom, green section shows the rates of availability of clinical measures, hypertension, obesity, and HbA1c for distinct adult members with diabetes. For distinct members with diabetes, the age range was restricted to ages 18–75 years to conform to NCQA HEDIS specifications.

The member count used here is “Distinct Members” (i.e., the number of unique individuals in the community with at least one month of enrollment during the year) rather than “Average Members,” which accounts for partial enrollment and represents the number of individuals in the data in the measurement year. The indented row labels indicate that they are reporting a subset of the distinct members from the row immediately above; in these cases, the member numerator of the preceding row (not shown) served as the denominator.

Additionally, the Blueprint profiles that feature the quality measures identified below in Table 9 rely on both claims and clinical data.

Table 9. Measure Descriptions for the “Linked Clinical Data: Obesity & Hypertension, & HbA1c” Table

Measure	Description
% linked to clinical data	Percent of distinct members who were linked to clinical data and who had data for at least one clinical measurement
% with BMI data	Percent of distinct members who have a valid Body Mass Index measurement
% meeting obesity criteria	Among the distinct members who had a valid Body Mass Index measurement, percent who met the obesity criteria
% with blood pressure data	Percent of distinct members who have a valid blood pressure measurement
% meeting hypertension criteria	Among the distinct members who had a valid blood pressure measurement, percent who met the hypertension criteria
% with BMI and blood pressure data	Percent of distinct members with diabetes who had both a valid blood pressure measurement and a valid Body Mass Index measurement
% meeting obesity and hypertension criteria	Among the distinct members who had both a valid Body Mass Index measurement and a valid blood pressure measurement, percent who met the obesity and hypertension criteria
% linked to clinical data	Percent of distinct members with diabetes who were linked to clinical data and who had data for at least one clinical measurement
% with BMI data	Percent of distinct members with diabetes who had a valid Body Mass Index measurement
% meeting obesity criteria	Among the distinct members with diabetes who had a valid Body Mass Index measurement, percent who met the obesity criteria
% with blood pressure data	Percent of distinct members with diabetes who had a valid blood pressure measurement
% meeting hypertension criteria	Among the distinct members with diabetes who had a valid blood pressure measurement, percent who met the hypertension criteria
% with valid HbA1c	Percent of distinct members with diabetes who had both a valid HbA1c measurement
% with HbA1c >9%	Among the distinct members who had both a valid HbA1c measurement, percent who met the HbA1c >9% criteria

Diabetes Outcome Measures

Core-16; MSSP-22, -23, -24, -25; NQF #0729 (composite)

These measures assess the percentage of members, ages 18–75 years, with diabetes who were in control for various diabetes outcome measurements (i.e., HbA1c, blood pressure, and tobacco non-use).

The denominator for these outcome measures consists of members, ages 18–75 years, who were identified as having diabetes claims data for one or more inpatient visits, one or more outpatient emergency department visits, or two or more non-hospital outpatient visits with ICD-9 diagnosis codes of 250, 357.2, 362.0, 366.41, and 648.0 or ICD-10 diagnosis codes of E10, E11, E13, and O24 or for dispensed insulin oral hypoglycemics/antihyperglycemics during the measurement year or the year prior to the measurement year. The denominator also requires the member to be continuously enrolled during the measurement year. Additionally, members must be linked to the Vermont Clinical Registry database and have at least one measurement in the database for the measure in question (e.g., to be included in the HbA1c in control measure, a member would have to be identified as having diabetes by the claims, be linked to Blueprint Clinical Registry data, and have a valid HbA1c measurement in the Vermont Clinical Registry during the measurement year). Because of limitations affecting submission of data to the Vermont Clinical Registry, this measure represents fewer members than the number included in the comprehensive diabetes care measures described above.

Key information specific to each of the diabetes measures is described here:

- Diabetes in poor control (Core-17, MSSP-27, NQF #0059): To be included in the denominator for diabetes in poor control, members identified in claims as having diabetes had to be linked to the Vermont Clinical Registry and have a valid HbA1c measurement in the measurement year. The numerator was based on the most recent HbA1c measurement in the measurement year. If the HbA1c was greater than 9%, the member was considered “in poor control.” A higher proportion of individuals with HbA1c scores greater than 9% or diabetes in poor control is a negative outcome while lower proportions are positive outcomes.
- Blood pressure in control (MSSP-24): To be included in the denominator for blood pressure in control, members identified in claims as having diabetes had to be linked to the Vermont Clinical Registry and have a valid blood pressure measurement in the measurement year. The lowest blood pressure at the most recent visit was examined for the numerator. If the systolic blood pressure was less than 140 mm/Hg and the diastolic blood pressure was less than 90 mm/Hg, the member was considered “in control.”
- Tobacco Non-Use (MSSP-25): To be included in the denominator for the tobacco non-use measure, members identified in claims as having diabetes had to be linked to the Vermont Clinical Registry and have a valid indicator of tobacco non-use. If, at any time during the year, the individual was marked as a tobacco user, they were considered “in poor control” for this measure. Those who were consistent non-users were considered “in control.”
- Diabetes Care Two-Part Composite: To be included in the denominator for the diabetes composite measure, members identified in claims as having diabetes had to be linked to the Vermont Clinical Registry with a valid HbA1c measurement during the measurement year. The numerator included any of those members whose HbA1c was in control (the inverse of Core-17) and who received an eye screening for diabetic retinal disease.

For some HSAs, the volume of linked clinical data was insufficient to report these measures. This was particularly true for the diabetes composite measure, which required blinding for denominators of fewer than 30 and numerators of fewer than 11.

Comparison of Patients by HbA1c Control Status

An additional analysis was conducted to examine the effect of diabetes control on expenditures and utilization. For the measurement year, members in the full population with diabetes were identified through claims data and limited to those with a clinical HbA1c measurement in the Vermont Clinical registry. This group was then divided into those with poor diabetes control (HbA1c > 9%) and compared to those whose diabetes was in better control (HbA1c ≤ 9%). Adjusting for differences in age, gender, and health status between the two groups, rates of expenditures per person per year (and associated 95% confidence intervals) were calculated for both groups. Also, the mean adjusted rates of inpatient hospitalizations, inpatient days, and outpatient ED visits were calculated for the measurement year and presented side by side with 95 percent confidence intervals to see if the two groups had different patterns of use and cost.

Hypertension: Blood Pressure in Control

Core-39, MSSP-28, NQF #0018

This measure assesses the percentage of members, ages 18–85 years, with hypertension whose last recorded blood pressure measurement in the claims and Vermont Clinical Registry data was in control (<140/90 mmHg).

The denominator for this measure consists of members, ages 18–85 years, who had been identified as having hypertension by at least one inpatient claim or two or more outpatient or professional claims with a diagnosis of essential hypertension within a two-year look-back period. The denominator also requires the member to be continuously enrolled during the measurement year and to be linked to the Blueprint Clinical Registry database and have at least one valid blood pressure measurement in the Vermont Clinical Registry database to be included.

The numerator is based on the most recent visit during which a measurement was taken. The lowest valid blood pressure measurement during the most recent visit was examined. If the systolic blood pressure was less than 140 mm/Hg and the diastolic blood pressure was less than 90 mm/Hg, the member was considered “in control.” If one of those two components, however, was not in control, the individual was considered to not have his or her blood pressure in control. Unlike the diabetes poor control measure, a higher proportion is a positive result..

Patient Experience Survey Data

Blueprint Community Profiles include a section for patient experience based on the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) patient-centered medical home (PCMH) survey data. NCQA requires reports on patient experience data as a component of PCMH recognition. The Blueprint, as laid out in statute, is also required to report on patient experience. There are two versions of the survey: one for the adult population (ages 18 years and older) and another for the pediatric population (ages 17 years and younger) based on the parent's experience with the child's practice. The survey is conducted by DataStat, Inc., which compiles and reports the resulting data in accordance with NCQA standards. If CAHPS PCMH survey data is not available for an HSA, then the Blueprint Community Profile will omit figures that typically display these survey results.

The key areas of care for the adult survey include: Access, communication, office staff, self-management support, and information. The key areas of care for the pediatric survey include: Access, communication, office staff, and information. Two additional focus areas, coordination of care and specialists, are not standard in the CAHPS PCMH but have been included in the Vermont survey.

A composite measure for each key area of care was computed by averaging the responses to individual questions within each key area and is presented graphically in figures in the profiles with 95% confidence intervals. NCQA does not have a composite measure benchmark for coordination of care or for specialists, which have been created for these profiles. Individual questions and responses are reported in the tables, which show the denominator (N) for each question, the rate (%), and the margin of error (+/-), which reflects the degree of uncertainty of the measure at the 95% confidence level. Cells in the table have been blinded if the numerator of the response was fewer than 11, in adherence to CMS blinding rules.



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