



# Antidepressant Medication Management Resource Guide



# Managing Patients with Depression

Our experienced staff members can help you manage your patients with depression.

Our resources include:

- Pharmacists and clinical case managers dedicated to managing member care
- Educational materials for your patients
- Medication Adherence reports
- A complex patient multidisciplinary team of medical case managers and behavioral health case managers
- Partnerships with behavioral health resources (including Magellan Health Services and Community Behavioral Services) for Medicaid members



## Increasing Medication Compliance in the Depressed Patient

The National Committee of Quality Assurance (NCQA) utilizes Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS). Jefferson Health Plans collects HEDIS data in efforts to collaborate with and educate our providers and members to improve their quality of care. Per NCQA recommendations, we track the Antidepressant Medication Management (AMM) measure and has programs to improve our members' health outcomes.



### Collaboration/Coordination

Major depression is a serious mental disorder with symptoms such as difficulty concentrating, loss of interest or pleasure, feeling sad, and thoughts of death or suicide. The NIMH estimates that 21 million adults had at least one episode of major depression in 2021.

The episodes of major depression were more common among:

- Females (10.3% compared to 6.2% in males)
- People between the ages of 18 and 25 (18.6%)
- People who describe themselves as being of two or more races or ethnicities (13.9%)

Studies have shown that a majority of these patients will initiate care with their primary care physician rather than a mental health professional. Therefore, effective collaboration between the PCP and the behavioral health provider is critical in the successful treatment of depression.

## What Effective Treatment Can Achieve

Effective antidepressant therapy can lead to significant improvements in depressive symptoms, both in the short and long term.

- In the short term, around 40 to 60 out of 100 individuals who take an antidepressant notice an improvement in their symptoms within six to eight weeks.
- In terms of long-term benefits, antidepressants are typically taken for one to two years, sometimes longer, to prevent relapses.

While antidepressants can be effective, they can also have side effects, which vary depending on the drug, the dose, and the individual's response to the medication. Side effects commonly include dry mouth, headaches, dizziness, restlessness, and sexual problems, and the risk increases if combined with other medications.

## HEDIS Measure Description

Two measure rates are reported to look at the percentage of members 18 years of age and older who were treated with antidepressant medication, had a diagnosis of major depression, and who remained on an antidepressant medication treatment.

These include:

- **Effective Acute Phase Treatment:**  
Members who remained on an antidepressant medication for at least 84 days (12 weeks) with gaps in treatment up to a total of 30 days.
- **Effective Continuation Phase Treatment:**  
Members who remained on an antidepressant medication for at least 180 days (6 months) with gaps in treatment up to a total of 51 days during both the acute and continuation treatment phases combined.




## Strategies to Encourage Medication Compliance

Many patients are reluctant to take and adhere to their medications due to several factors. The most common reasons for medication non-compliance include:

- Forgetting to take their medication
- Fear of medication side effects
- Making decisions based on personal value judgment, religion, and cultural beliefs on the benefit and the risks of medication treatment
- Cost of medication
- Polypharmacy

View our formulary at [HPPlans.com/providers/resources/formulary](https://www.hpp.com/providers/resources/formulary) to see a complete list of antidepressants we cover for our members.

## Helpful HEDIS Hints

-  Educate patients on the importance of taking medication as prescribed for optimal effectiveness.
-  Explain the benefits of antidepressants and how to take them, when patients can expect to feel better, and the typical duration of treatment.
-  Emphasize the importance of continuing the medication even after they begin to feel better.

For a complete listing of Behavioral HealthChoices Managed Care Organizations (BH-MCO) for Medicaid members by county, visit [dhs.pa.gov/HealthChoices/HC-Services/Pages/BehavioralHealth-MCOs.aspx](https://dhs.pa.gov/HealthChoices/HC-Services/Pages/BehavioralHealth-MCOs.aspx)



## Sources

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