

A message for providers: Timeliness of prenatal care



What is timeliness of prenatal care measuring?

This quality of care measure is based on HEDIS® specifications; it measures the percentage of women who had a live birth and received a prenatal care visit during their first trimester of pregnancy or within 42 days of enrollment with Amerigroup Community Care. The HEDIS® national benchmark for completion of this measure is 88.7 percent.

Why is timeliness of prenatal care important?

Timely prenatal care plays a vital role in the health of mothers and their babies. Pregnant women who do not receive early and adequate prenatal care run the risk of complications that may either be undetected or treated too late in pregnancy. This increases the possibility of adverse outcomes for both mother and baby.

HEDIS® is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

As a provider, you can ensure the timeliness of prenatal care by following these guidelines:

- Ensure first prenatal care visits are a high priority by endorsing initiation of prenatal care in the first 13 weeks.
- Code the first prenatal visit with a pregnancy diagnosis when submitting your claims.
- If a pregnant woman presents late in her first trimester, avoid coding this visit as a routine office visit or pregnancy confirmation. Begin prenatal care to ensure the timeliness to care measure is met.
- Educate scheduling staff on the importance of checking estimated gestational age when scheduling first prenatal visits.
- Institute a policy for handling no-shows for first prenatal visit that prioritizes the patient based on her estimated gestational age.
- Complete the Maryland Prenatal Risk Assessment form for all Amerigroup members on initial prenatal visit. Ensure the information is accurate and that the form is faxed to the local health department promptly.
- Ensure you are using the Category II CPT code for first prenatal visit, 0500F.

Prenatal care within the first trimester represents a key opportunity for health care providers to educate and support mothers in later pregnancy and motherhood. We encourage you to adopt these best practices and join Amerigroup in our commitment to your patient's health and well-being. We also offer our members a \$25 gift card incentive for completion of this measure with our Healthy Rewards program.

It's important to know that for pregnant women eligible to receive Medicaid, coverage will be effective back to the first day of the month in which they applied. So, if your patient has already applied and is awaiting active coverage, do not delay prenatal care.

If you would like more information on Amerigroup or our high-risk obstetrics case management program, please call our Provider Services team at **1-800-454-3730**.