

(3210e) HIV Viral Suppression

[HIV viral suppression](#) - PQM Spring 2023 Measure Proposal

Contact Information:

Madison Joyce Shaffer, MPH
Quality Measurement Evaluator
NC Medicaid
NC Department of Health and Human Services
(984)-296-2114
madison.shaffer@dhhs.nc.gov

Comments:

Accurately Reflecting Quality:

With the use of antiretroviral therapy, millions of people living with HIV have longer life expectancies and can achieve viral suppression. However, these populations still experience disproportionate rates of comorbidities and have reduced health-related quality of life.¹ It is important to track viral suppression as a quality metric, but it's also important to pair that with broader wellness related quality measures to get a wholistic view of quality care for beneficiaries living with HIV. For example, in 2020, Kaiser Permanente Mid-Atlantic States (KPMAS) worked on developing a comprehensive measure of HIV quality care, combining preventative measures, process measures, and clinical outcomes.²

Harmonization:

This measure exists within the CMS adult core measure set with slightly different technical specifications which could be confusing for users. For example, in the CMS core set, this measure is only for beneficiaries aged 18 or older and utilizes two age groups for stratification (18-64 and 65+).³ It would be beneficial to harmonize the technical specifications for these two measures.

¹ Reorienting health systems to care for people with HIV beyond viral suppression. Kelly Safreed-Harmon MS, Jane Anderson MD, Natasha Azzopardi-Muscat PhD, et al. *The Lancet HIV*. Volume 6, Issue 12, December 2019, Pages e869-e877. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2352301819303340>

² [Beyond the HIV Care Continuum and Viral Suppression: Broadening the Scope of Quality Metrics for Total HIV Patient Care](#). Michael A. Horberg, Julia M. Certa, Kevin B. Rubenstein, Leo B. Hurley, Derek D. Satre, Peter M. Kadlecik, and Michael J. Silverberg. *AIDS Patient Care and STDs* 2020 34:11, 461-469

³ Core Set of Adult Health Care Quality Measures for Medicaid (Adult Core Set). Technical Specifications and Resource Manual for Federal Fiscal Year 2023 Reporting. (February 2023) Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/medicaid-adult-core-set-manual.pdf>

Feasibility/Access to Data:

NC Medicaid has had this measure in its department calculated measure set for many years, however, we have been unable to calculate it successfully due to restrictions in sharing HIV data. NC Medicaid's Business Information and Analytics (BIA) team is currently working with the Division of Public Health to gather that data, but the process is slow and burdensome. This could be a barrier for other state's Medicaid programs as well.

Additionally, it may be beneficial to stratify measures by product-line, including Medicaid, Medicare, commercial, and duals, although complete and accurate data is often difficult to access for the latter. This measure's specifications could also include evidence-based stratification for HIV related measures, including race, ethnicity, age, and gender.

Risk Adjustment:

HIV research has identified a variety of risk factors related to successful viral load suppression. It could be beneficial to investigate risk adjustment for this measure based on a risk adjustment model including factors such as ART combinations, drug adherence, and baseline viral load.⁴

⁴ Opoku, S., Sakyi, S.A., Ayisi-Boateng, N.K. et al. Factors associated with viral suppression and rebound among adult HIV patients on treatment: a retrospective study in Ghana. *AIDS Res Ther* 19, 21 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12981-022-00447-2>