

Health Outcome Survey (HOS) February 2024

Medicare Advantage Organizations (MAO) Star Measure, Fall Risk Management (FRM).

The Fall Risk assessment is an NCQA® Physician Performance Measure required at least annually as part of the Medicare evaluation. All older persons under the care of a health professional should be asked at least once a year about falls and receive a recommendation for how to prevent falls and treat concerns with balance or walking. 1

More than one out of four adults aged 65 or older fall each year. 2 Falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for older Americans. The annual CMS® Health Outcomes Survey (HOS®) 3 measures patients, 65 years of age and older, who were screened for Fall Risk Management (FRM) during the measurement period. 4

The risk of a fall related injury increases with age. Adults 85 years of age and older are at greater risk than those aged 65-74. Approximately 30% of adults older than 65 years of age experience a fall each year. The percentage increases to 50% for those aged 80 years and older. Approximately 10% of falls result in serious injury. Falls in this cohort account for approximately 10% of Emergency Department visits and 6% of Hospitalizations. 6

The HOS Fall Risk Management Survey consists of four questions to identify Patients that may be at risk of falling: 1) In the past 12 months, did your doctor or other health provider talk with you about falling or problems with balance or walking? 2) Did you fall in the past 12 months? 3) In the past 12 months have you had a problem with balance or walking? 4) Has your doctor or other health provider done anything to help prevent falls or treat problems with balance or walking? As a health care professional, you often have the opportunity to ask your senior patients these screening questions and initiate the appropriate interventions to prevent injuries resulting from falls.

WHA CMS HOS Survey Results:

The below table is WHA's reported CMS Fall Risk Management Scoring – Members reporting providers discussion of managing fall risk during the last 12 months.

WHA HEDIS HOS Measures 2022	N	D	%	CMS Star
FRM:				
Discussing Fall Risk	50	261	19.16%	
Managing Fall Risk*	50	103	48.54%	2

* Notes CMS Star measure

Risk Factors and Best Practice

Most falls have multiple causes. Risk factors for falls include muscle weakness, a history of falls, use of four or more prescription medications, use of an assistive device, arthritis, depression, age older than 80 years, impairments in gait, balance, cognition, or vision. 7 Best

Practice standards that may be incorporated by the health professional to enhance medically necessary evaluation and management related to Falls Prevention include; (a) Identifying patients 65 years and older who have not been screened for falls risk during the measurement year. (b) Develop and implement an EMR fall risk assessment to identify patients who experienced a fall or had a fall that resulted in an injury. (c) Establish a clinic Standard of Practice for documenting the fall risk assessment for Patient age 65 and older. (d) Provide Patient/Family education materials on fall prevention strategies.

Interventions Multifactorial Interventions

Health professionals that benefit fall prevention would be a routine review of medications related to side effects and drug interactions, gait and balance assessment, detection of cognitive impairment, management of postural hypotension, foot problems, reestablishing or updating the medical history, and providing personalized health advice and referrals as appropriate. 8 Additionally, physical therapy, exercise programs focused on balance, gait and strength training, and exercise programs; e.g., tai chi, may increase strength and improve balance among older adults. Annual hearing and eye checkups are important for maintaining optimal health and preventing falls.

Screening Tools and Coding

Fall risk screening tools are typically included in the Health Risk Assessment of the Medicare Annual Wellness Visit (AWV) but may be included in the general routine office visit. One assessment utilized in the clinic setting includes the Timed Up and Go (TUG) test to assess mobility and gait. 9 The Geriatrics Societies STEADI algorithm assists Healthcare Providers in implementing fall prevention guidelines. 10

When a Patient is screened during the AWV the physical exam codes will be G0402, G0438 or G0439, using additional Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) performance tracking codes: 11

Codes	Description of Code
1101F	Documentation of no falls or only one fall without injury in the past year.
1100F	Documentation of two or more falls or fall with injury in the past year.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS®), responsible for all information at www.cms.gov provides health care professionals with guidance on AWV coding. 12 The covered physical exams are the Initial Preventive Physical Exam (IPPE); the new Medicare patient visit within the first 12 months of coverage, and the Annual Wellness Visit (AWV), to develop or update a Personalized Prevention Plan (PPP).

Falls are common and often preventable. Falls occur more often with advancing age and are a major threat to quality of life, causing a decline in physical and social activities. Clinical assessment of risk factors combined with an individualized treatment plan and follow-up management contributes to high quality health care. 13

References:

- 1 <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/2023-star-ratings-technical-notes.pdf>
- 2 www.cms.gov
- 3 <https://hosonline.org>
- 4 <https://www.cms.gov/data-research/research/health-outcomes-survey>
- 5 <https://hosonline.org/en/survey-instrument>
- 6 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17169927>
- 7 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16035686>
- 8 <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-42/chapter-IV/subchapter-B/part-410#410.16>
- 9 <https://www.vhan.com/dont-forget-to-prioritize-the-fall-risk-screening>
- 10 <https://www.cdc.gov/steady/materials.html>
- 11 <https://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/preventive-services/medicare-wellness-visits.html>
- 12 www.youtube.com/@CMSHHSgov
- 13 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4707663>