



## Depression Screening Guide

### Importance of Depression Screening

Major depressive disorder (MDD), a common mental disorder in the US, can have a substantial impact on the lives of affected individuals. If left untreated, MDD can interfere with daily functioning and can be associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular events, exacerbation of comorbid conditions, or increased mortality.

### Measure Description

Percentage of patients aged 12 years and older screened for depression on the date of the encounter (or up to 14 days prior) using an age-appropriate standardized depression screening tool AND if positive, a follow-up plan is documented on the date of or up to two days after the date of the qualifying encounter.

### Definitions

**Screening:** Completion of a clinical or diagnostic tool used to identify people at risk of developing or having a certain disease or condition, even in the absence of symptoms.

**Standardized Depression Screening Tool:** A normalized and validated depression screening tool developed for the patient population in which it is being utilized.

### Medical Records Documentation

**Document a Follow-Up Plan** – Documented follow-up for a positive depression screening must include one or more of the following:

- Referral to a provider for additional evaluation and assessment to formulate a follow-up plan for a positive depression screen
- Pharmacological interventions
- Other interventions or follow-up for the diagnosis or treatment of depression

### Improvement Notation

Higher score indicates better quality

### Denominator

All patients aged 12 years and older at the beginning of the measurement period with at least one qualifying encounter during the measurement period.

### Numerator

Patients screened for depression on the date of the encounter or up to 14 days prior to the date of the encounter using an age-appropriate standardized tool AND if positive, a follow-up plan is documented on the date of or up to two days after the date of the qualifying encounter.



## Exclusions

- Documentation stating the patient has had a diagnosis of depression or has had a diagnosis of bipolar disorder (**G9717**)
- Patient refuses to participate
- Documentation for not screening patient for depression (e.g., cognitive, functional, or motivational limitations that may impact accuracy of results; patient is in an urgent or emergent situation where time is of the essence and to delay treatment would jeopardize the patient's health status)

**Disclaimer:** *This information is not intended to dictate or substitute your professional judgment in a particular patient.*

## References

[CMS, Quality ID #134: Preventive Care and Screening: Screening for Depression and Follow-Up Plan](#)

[United States Preventive Services Taskforce, Recommendation: Depression and Suicide Risk in Adults: Screening](#)

[WPS, Depression Screening Fact Sheet](#)

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