



Assessing Depression Remission Guide

Importance of Assessing for Remission of Depression

The goals of depression treatment should be to achieve remission, reduce relapse and recurrence, and return to previous levels of occupational and psychosocial function. This measure assesses achievement of remission, which is a desired outcome of effective depression treatment and monitoring.

Measure Description

The percentage of adolescent patients 12 -17 years of age and adult patients 18 years and older with major depression or dysthymia who reached remission at 12 months (+/- 60 days) after an index event. A Patient Health Questionnaire-9 item version (**PHQ-9**) or Patient Health Questionnaire-9 Modified for Teens and Adolescents (**PHQ-9M**) score of **<5** demonstrates remission.

Tips for Providers

- Clinicians should establish and maintain **follow-up** with patients. Appropriate, reliable follow-up is highly correlated with improved response and remission scores. It is also correlated with the improved safety and efficacy of medications and helps prevent relapse.
- The PHQ-9 is an effective management tool, as well, and should be used routinely for subsequent visits to **monitor treatment outcomes** and severity. It can also help the clinician decide if/how to modify the treatment plan.
- Response and remission take time. If improvement is seen, continue working with patients to augment or increase dosage to reach remission. This can take up to three months.

Medical Records Documentation

CMS requires documentation before billing. A professional trained to analyze the tool must document:

- Tool: What tool used; Administration method
- Time in minutes to: Administer the screening; Interpretation of the results
- Use of the results by the healthcare professional: Plan of care and follow up

Denominator

Adolescent patients 12 -17 years of age and adult patients 18 years of age and older with a diagnosis of major depression or dysthymia AND an initial **PHQ-9** or **PHQ-9M** score **>9** during the index event. Patients may be assessed using PHQ-9 or PHQ-9M on the same date or up to 7 days prior to the encounter.

Numerator

Adolescent patients 12 -17 years of age and adult patients 18 years of age and older who achieved remission at 12 months as demonstrated by 12 month (+/- 60 days) **PHQ-9** or **PHQ-9M** score **<5**.

Improvement Notation

Higher score indicates better quality



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Exclusions

- Hospice
- Permanent nursing home residents
- Bipolar Disorder diagnosis
- Personality Disorder Emotionally Labile diagnosis
- Schizophrenia or Psychotic Disorder diagnosis
- Select Personality Disorders diagnosis
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder diagnosis

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

References

[eCQI Resource Center, Depression Remission at Twelve Months](#)

[CMS, Depression Remission at Twelve Months](#)

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