



IMPROVING HEALTH CARE QUALITY

## Appropriate Treatment for Upper Respiratory Infection

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico (BCBSNM) collects data from our providers to measure and improve the quality of care our members receive. The Appropriate Treatment for Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) is one aspect of care we measure in our quality programs. Quality measures evaluate a prior calendar year performance.

### What We Measure

We capture the percentage of members ages 3 months to 18 years who were diagnosed with upper respiratory infection and were not dispensed an antibiotic prescription.

URI is a Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) measure. See the [National Committee for Quality Assurance \(NCQA\) website](#) for more details.

### Why It Matters

Most URIs, also known as the common cold, are caused by viruses that **require no antibiotic treatment**. Antibiotics are too often prescribed inappropriately, which can lead to antibiotic resistance, a major health concern. Increased education and awareness of appropriate treatment for URIs can reduce the danger of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.



## Eligible Population

This measure includes members ages 3 months to 18 years who had an outpatient or emergency department (ED) visit with a URI diagnosis during the measurement year.

**Exclusions:** Exclude members from the eligible population who:

- Took antibiotics in the 30 days before a diagnosis
- Had a competing diagnosis during the episode, including cholera, typhoid, salmonella and whooping cough
- Were in hospice during the measurement year

## Ways to Improve

- Review and document the diagnosis with the member.
- Schedule follow-up appointments.

## How to Document

In our members' records, include the **date of service** for an outpatient or ED visit with only a URI diagnosis and no new or refill antibiotic prescription on or three days after the episode.

For more information, see [NCQA's HEDIS Measures and Technical Resources](#).



## Questions?

Contact your BCBSNM Network Representative.



The above material is for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for the independent medical judgment of a physician or other health care provider. Physicians and other health care providers are encouraged to use their own medical judgment based upon all available information and the condition of the patient in determining the appropriate course of treatment. The fact that a service or treatment is described in this material is not a guarantee that the service or treatment is a covered benefit and members should refer to their certificate of coverage for more details, including benefits, limitations and exclusions. Regardless of benefits, the final decision about any service or treatment is between the member and their health care provider.

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