

## Quality ID #374: Closing the Referral Loop: Receipt of Specialist Report

### **2023 COLLECTION TYPE:** **MIPS CLINICAL QUALITY MEASURES (CQMS)**

**MEASURE TYPE:**  
Process – High Priority

**DESCRIPTION:**  
Percentage of patients with referrals, regardless of age, for which the referring clinician receives a report from the clinician to whom the patient was referred.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**  
This measure is to be submitted a minimum of **once per performance period** for the first referral for all patients during the measurement period. This measure may be submitted by Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) eligible clinicians who perform the quality actions described in the measure for the patients for whom a referral was made during the measurement period based on the services provided and the measure-specific denominator coding. The clinician who refers the patient to another clinician is the clinician who should be held accountable for the performance of this measure. All MIPS eligible clinicians reporting on this measure should note that all data for the reporting year is to be submitted by the deadline established by CMS, however, only first referrals made between January 1 - October 31 (the measurement period) will count towards the denominator to allow adequate time for the referring clinician to collect the consult report by the end of the performance period. When clinicians to whom patients are referred communicate the consult report as soon as possible with the referring clinicians, it ensures that the communication loop is closed in a timely manner and that the data is included in the submission to CMS.

***NOTE:*** Patient encounters for this measure conducted via telehealth (e.g., encounters coded with GQ, GT, 95, or POS 02 modifiers) are allowable.

**Measure Submission Type:**  
Measure data may be submitted by individual MIPS eligible clinicians, groups, or third party intermediaries. The listed denominator criteria are used to identify the intended patient population. The numerator options included in this specification are used to submit the quality actions as allowed by the measure. The quality data codes listed do not need to be submitted by MIPS eligible clinicians, groups, or third party intermediaries that utilize this modality for submissions; however, these codes may be submitted for those third party intermediaries that utilize Medicare Part B claims data. For more information regarding Application Programming Interface (API), please refer to the Quality Payment Program (QPP) website.

**DENOMINATOR:**  
Number of patients, regardless of age, who had an encounter during the performance period and were referred by one clinician to another clinician on or before October 31

***DENOMINATOR NOTE:*** If there are multiple referrals for a patient during the measurement period, use the first referral.

*\*Signifies that this CPT Category I code is a non-covered service under the Medicare Part B Physician Fee Schedule (PFS). These non-covered services should be counted in the denominator population for MIPS CQMs.*

**Denominator Criteria (Eligible Cases):**  
Patients regardless of age on the date of the encounter

**AND**

**Patient encounter during the performance period (CPT or HCPCS):** 92002, 92004, 92012, 92014, 99202, 99203, 99204, 99205, 99212, 99213, 99214, 99215, 99381\*, 99382\*, 99383\*, 99384\*, 99385\*, 99386\*, 99387\*, 99391\*, 99392\*, 99393\*, 99394\*, 99395\*, 99396\*, 99397\*

**AND**

**Patient was referred to another clinician or specialist during the measurement period:** G9968

**NUMERATOR:**

Number of patients with a referral on or before October 31, for which the referring clinician received a report from the clinician to whom the patient was referred

**Definitions:**

**Referral** – A request from one clinician to another clinician for evaluation, treatment, or co-management of a patient's condition. This term encompasses "referral" and consultation as defined by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

**Report** – A written document prepared by the eligible clinician (and staff) to whom the patient was referred and that accounts for his or her findings, provides summary of care information about findings, diagnostics, assessments and/or plans of care, and is provided to the referring eligible clinician.

**NUMERATOR NOTE:** *The consultant report that will successfully close the referral loop should be related to the first referral for a patient during the measurement period. If there are multiple consultant reports received by the referring clinician which pertain to a particular referral, use the first consultant report to satisfy the measure.*

*The clinician to whom the patient was referred is responsible for sending the consultant report that will fulfill the communication. Note: this is not the same clinician who would report on the measure.*

**Numerator Options:**

**Performance Met:**

Clinician who referred the patient to another clinician received a report from the clinician to whom the patient was referred (**G9969**)

**OR**

**Performance Not Met:**

Clinician who referred the patient to another clinician did not receive a report from the clinician to whom the patient was referred (**G9970**)

**RATIONALE:**

Problems in the outpatient referral and consultation process have been documented, including lack of timeliness of information and inadequate provision of information between the specialist and the requesting physician [1,2,3]. In a study of physician satisfaction with the outpatient referral process, Gandhi et al. (2000) found that 68% of specialists reported receiving no information from the primary care provider prior to referral visits, and 25% of primary care providers had still not received any information from specialists 4 weeks after referral visits. In another study of 963 referrals pediatricians scheduled appointments with specialists for only 39% and sent patient information to the specialists for only 51% of referrals [2].

In a 2006 report to Congress, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) found that care coordination programs improved quality of care for patients, reduced hospitalizations, and improved adherence to evidence-based care guidelines, especially among patients with diabetes and CHD. Associations with cost-savings were less clear; this was attributed to how well the intervention group was chosen and defined, as well as the intervention put in place. Additionally, cost-savings were usually calculated in the short-term, while some argue that the greatest cost-savings accrue over time [4].

Improved mechanisms for information exchange could facilitate communication between providers, whether for time-limited referrals or consultations, on-going co-management, or during care transitions. For example, a study by Branger,

van't Hooft, van der Wouden, Moorman & van Bommel (1999) found that an electronic communication network that linked the computer-based patient records of physicians who had shared care of patients with diabetes significantly increased frequency of communications between physicians and availability of important clinical data [5]. There was a 3-fold increase in the likelihood that the specialist provided written communication of results if the primary care physician scheduled appointments and sent patient information to the specialist [2].

Care coordination is a focal point in the current health care reform and our nation's ambulatory health information technology (HIT) framework. The National Priorities Partnership (2008) recently highlighted care coordination as one of the most critical areas for development of quality measurement and improvement [6].

#### References:

1. Gandhi, T. K., Sittig, D. F., Franklin, M., Sussman, A. J., Fairchild, D. G., & Bates, D. W. (2000). Communication breakdown in the outpatient referral process. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 15(9), 626-631. doi: 10.1046/j.1525-1497.2000.91119.x
2. Forrest, C. B., Glade, G. B., Baker, A. E., Bocian, A., von Schrader, S., & Starfield, B. (2000). Coordination of specialty referrals and physician satisfaction with referral care. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 154(5), 499-506. doi: 10.1001/archpedi.154.5.499
3. Stille, C. J., Jerant, A., Bell, D., Meltzer, D., & Elmore, J. G. (2005). Coordinating care across diseases, settings, and clinicians: A key role for the generalist in practice. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 142(8), 700-708. doi: 10.7326/0003-4819-142-8-200504190-00038
4. MedPAC. (2006). Report to the Congress: Medicare payment policy. Retrieved from [https://www.medpac.gov/wp-content/uploads/import\\_data/scrape\\_files/docs/default-source/reports/Mar06\\_EntireReport.pdf](https://www.medpac.gov/wp-content/uploads/import_data/scrape_files/docs/default-source/reports/Mar06_EntireReport.pdf)
5. Branger, P. J., van't Hooft, A., van der Wouden, J. C., Moorman, P. W., & van Bommel, J. H. (1999). Shared care for diabetes: Supporting communication between primary and secondary care. *International Journal of Medical Informatics*, 53(2-3), 133-142. doi: 10.1016/s1386-5056(98)00154-3
6. National Priorities Partnership. (2008). National priorities and goals: Aligning our efforts to transform America's healthcare. Washington, DC: National Quality Forum.

#### **CLINICAL RECOMMENDATION STATEMENTS:**

None

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These performance measures are not clinical guidelines and do not establish a standard of medical care, and have not been tested for all potential applications.

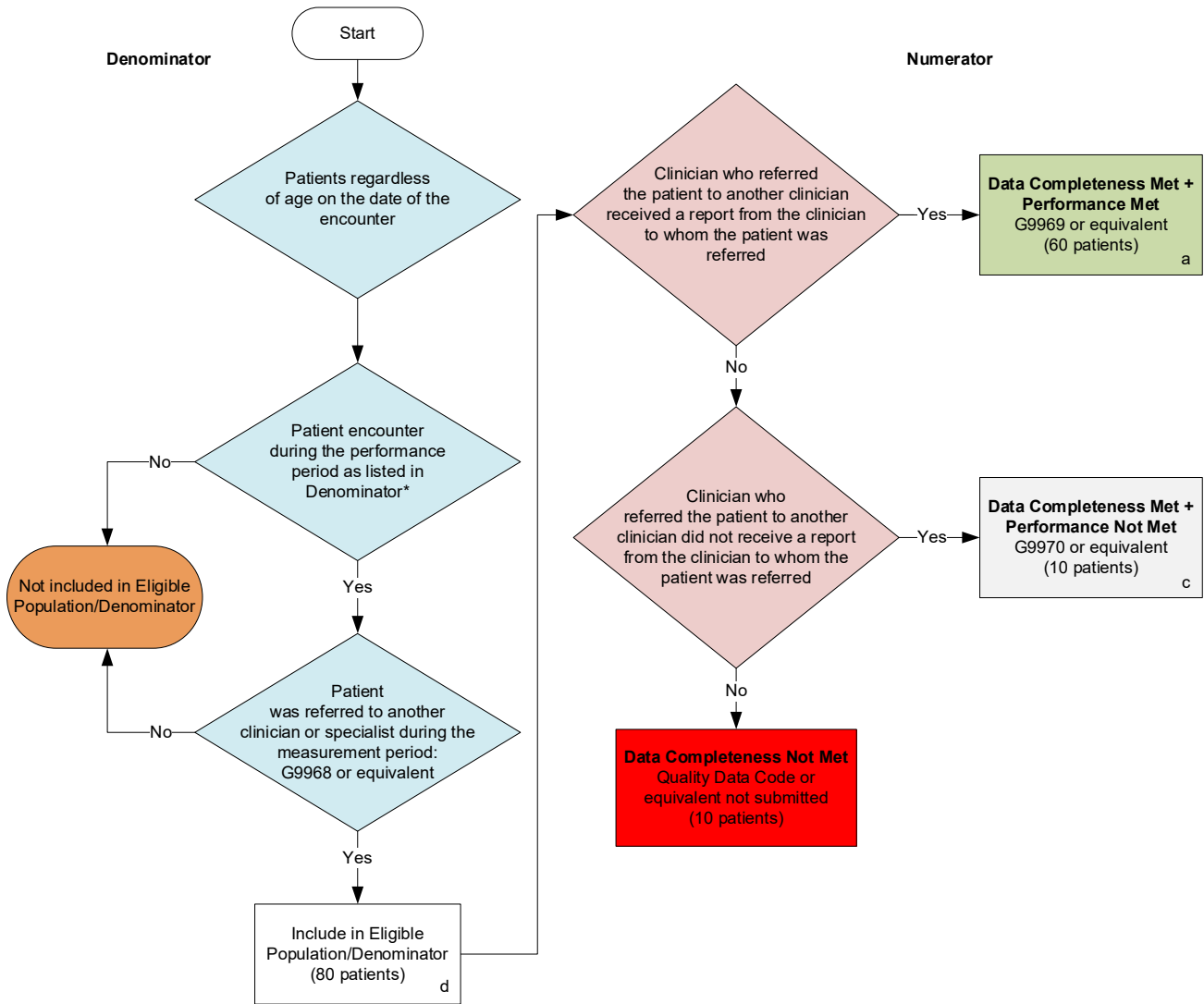
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## 2023 Clinical Quality Measure Flow for Quality ID #374: Closing the Referral Loop: Receipt of Specialist Report

*Disclaimer: Refer to the measure specification for specific coding and instructions to submit this measure.*



### SAMPLE CALCULATIONS

**Data Completeness=**

$$\frac{\text{Performance Met (a=60 patients) + Performance Not Met (c=10 patients)}}{\text{Eligible Population / Denominator (d=80 patients)}} = \frac{70 \text{ patients}}{80 \text{ patients}} = 87.50\%$$

**Performance Rate=**

$$\frac{\text{Performance Met (a=60 patients)}}{\text{Data Completeness Numerator (70 patients)}} = \frac{60 \text{ patients}}{70 \text{ patients}} = 85.71\%$$

\*See the posted measure specification for specific coding and instructions to submit this measure.

NOTE: Submission Frequency: Patient-Process

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## 2023 Clinical Quality Measure Flow Narrative for Quality ID #374: Closing the Referral Loop: Receipt of Specialist Report

**Disclaimer:** Refer to the measure specification for specific coding and instructions to submit this measure.

1. Start with Denominator
2. Patients regardless of age on the date of the encounter
3. Check *Patient encounter during the performance period as listed in Denominator\**:
  - a. If *Patient encounter during the performance period as listed in Denominator\** equals No, do not include in *Eligible Population/Denominator*. Stop processing.
  - b. If *Patient encounter during the performance period as listed in Denominator\** equals Yes, proceed to check *Patient was referred to another clinician or specialist during the measurement period*.
4. Check *Patient was referred to another clinician or specialist during the measurement period*:
  - a. If *Patient was referred to another clinician or specialist during the measurement period* equals No, do not include in *Eligible Population/Denominator*. Stop processing.
  - b. If *Patient was referred to another clinician or specialist during the measurement period* equals Yes, include in *Eligible Population/Denominator*.
5. Denominator Population
  - Denominator Population is all Eligible Patients in the Denominator. Denominator is represented as Denominator in the Sample Calculation listed at the end of this document. Letter d equals 80 patients in the Sample Calculation.
6. Start Numerator
7. Check *Clinician who referred the patient to another clinician received a report from the clinician to whom the patient was referred*:
  - a. If *Clinician who referred the patient to another clinician received a report from the clinician to whom the patient was referred* equals Yes, include in *Data Completeness Met and Performance Met*.
    - *Data Completeness Met and Performance Met* letter is represented as Data Completeness and Performance Rate in the Sample Calculation listed at the end of this document. Letter a equals 60 patients in the Sample Calculation.
  - b. If *Clinician who referred the patient to another clinician received a report from the clinician to whom the patient was referred* equals No, proceed to check *Clinician who referred the patient to another clinician did not receive a report from the clinician to whom the patient was referred*.
8. Check *Clinician who referred the patient to another clinician did not receive a report from the clinician to whom the patient was referred*:
  - a. If *Clinician who referred the patient to another clinician did not receive a report from the clinician to whom the patient was referred* equals Yes, include in *Data Completeness Met and Performance Not Met*.
    - *Data Completeness Met and Performance Not Met* letter is represented in the Data Completeness in the Sample Calculation listed at the end of this document. Letter c equals 10 patients in the Sample Calculation.

- b. If *Clinician who referred the patient to another clinician did not receive a report from the clinician to whom the patient was referred* equals No, proceed to *Data Completeness Not Met*.

9. Check *Data Completeness Not Met*:

- If *Data Completeness Not Met*, the Quality Data Code or equivalent was not submitted. 10 patients have been subtracted from the Data Completeness Numerator in the Sample Calculation.

**Sample Calculations:**

Data Completeness equals Performance Met (a equals 60 patients) plus Performance Not Met (c equals 10 patients) divided by Eligible Population/Denominator (d equals 80 patients). All equals 70 patients divided by 80 patients. All equals 87.50 percent.

Performance Rate equals Performance Met (a equals 60 patients) divided by Data Completeness Numerator (70 patients). All equals 60 patients divided by 70 patients. All equals 85.71 percent.

\* See the posted measure specification for specific coding and instructions to submit this measure.

NOTE: Submission Frequency: Patient-Process

The measure diagrams were developed by CMS as a supplemental resource to be used in conjunction with the measure specifications. They should not be used alone or as a substitution for the measure specification.