

Quality of Care for Children and Adults in Medicaid and CHIP: Overview of Findings from the 2021 Child and Adult Core Sets

KEY FINDINGS

- Voluntary reporting continued to increase, with 20 states reporting more Child Core Set measures and 18 states reporting more Adult Core Set measures for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2021 than for FFY 2020.
- Almost all measures met criteria for public reporting: 21 of 23 Child Core Set and 27 of 32 Adult Core Set measures.
- Four measures in the Child Core Set and one in the Adult Core Set were publicly reported for the first time this year.

Introduction

Together, Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) cover more than 94 million children and adults.¹ The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) seeks to provide access to high-quality care and improve health for individuals covered by these programs. The Child and Adult Core Sets promote these objectives by supporting federal and state efforts to collect, report, and use a standardized set of measures to drive improvement in the quality of care provided to Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries.

CMS’s goals for state reporting of the Child and Adult Core Sets include maintaining or increasing the number of states that report Core Set measures, maintaining or increasing the number of measures reported by each state, improving the quality and completeness of the data reported, and increasing the use of measures in Medicaid and CHIP quality improvement initiatives.² Core Set reporting is also important because the State Health System Performance pillar of the Medicaid and CHIP Scorecard uses Core Set data for most measures.

Each year, CMS reports state performance on the Child and Adult Core Set measures. This fact sheet summarizes state reporting on the Child and Adult Core Sets for FFY 2021, including an overview of performance on measures reported by at least 25 states

and that met CMS’s standards for data quality.³ For most measures, the performance reflects services provided in calendar year (CY) 2020, which was during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to substantial disruptions in health care during CY 2020, this fact sheet does not compare performance reported by states for FFY 2021 with performance reported for prior years. Table 1 shows key metrics for FFY 2021 reporting.

Table 1. FFY 2021 Child and Adult Core Set Reporting at a Glance

Core Set Reporting Metrics	Child Core Set	Adult Core Set
Number of measures in 2021 Core Set	23	32
Number of publicly reported measures	21	27
Number of states reporting at least half the measures	49	42
Median number of measures reported by states	20	23.5
Number of states reporting more measures for FFY 2021 than for FFY 2020	20	18
Number of states voluntarily reporting at least one measure	52	50

¹ April 2023 Medicaid and CHIP Enrollment Data Highlights are available at <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/program-information/medicaid-and-chip-enrollment-data/report-highlights/index.html>.

² Through its Quality Improvement Program, CMS works with state Medicaid and CHIP agencies and their partners to use the Core Set

measures to improve health care delivery and outcomes. More information is available at <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/quality-improvement-initiatives/index.html>.

³ The term “states” includes the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

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FFY 2021 Child Core Set Reporting

The number of states reporting Child Core Set measures has increased substantially since the release of the Child Core Set in 2010.⁴ All states voluntarily reported at least one Child Core Set measure for FFY 2021, and 49 states reported at least half (12) of the measures. The median number of measures reported was 20, up from 19 measures reported for FFY 2020 and consistent with 20 measures reported for FFY 2019. In addition, 20 states reported more Child Core Set measures for FFY 2021 than for FFY 2020.

CMS has also worked with states to increase the number that report performance for both Medicaid and CHIP populations. For FFY 2021, 50 states included both Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries, consistent with 50 states for FFY 2020 and an increase from 48 states for FFY 2019.

Each year, CMS releases Child Core Set data for measures that were reported by at least 25 states and that met CMS's standards for data quality. For FFY 2021, 21 of the 23 Child Core Set measures met CMS's threshold for public reporting of state-specific results.⁵ CMS is publicly reporting four Child Core Set measures for the first time for FFY 2021:

- Well-Child Visits in the First 30 Months of Life
- Child and Adolescent Well-Care Visits
- Low-Risk Cesarean Delivery
- Sealant Receipt on Permanent First Molars

CMS is also publicly reporting two additional rates for the Childhood Immunization Status measure for children who turn age 2 during the measurement year: influenza vaccination and Combination 10 (which includes four diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis [DTaP]; three polio [IPV]; one measles, mumps and rubella [MMR]; two H influenza type B [HiB]; three hepatitis B [HepB]; one chicken pox [VZV]; four pneumococcal conjugate

[PCV]; two hepatitis A [HepA]; two or three rotavirus [RV]; and two influenza [flu] vaccines).

For FFY 2021, CMS is publicly reporting three Child Core Set measures for all states:

- Live Births Weighing Less Than 2,500 Grams: calculated by CMS using data from the CDC Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (CDC WONDER)
- Low-Risk Cesarean Delivery: calculated by CMS using CDC WONDER data
- Percentage of Medicaid Eligibles Ages 1 to 20 Who Received Preventive Dental Services: calculated by CMS using Form CMS-416 data⁶

Public reporting for all states reflects efforts by CMS to use alternate data sources to calculate measures to streamline and standardize Core Set reporting while reducing state burden.

Other Child Core Set measures frequently reported by states for FFY 2021 focused on primary care access and preventive care (receipt of well-care visits, immunizations, and chlamydia screening in women ages 16 to 20), timely prenatal care, asthma management, emergency department use, and behavioral health care (follow-up after hospitalization for mental illness, follow-up after a new prescription for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder [ADHD] medication, and metabolic monitoring for children on antipsychotics).

CMS analyzed state performance on the 21 publicly reported Child Core Set measures for FFY 2021. Median state performance was above 75 percent on measures of:

- Asthma management for 5- to 11-year-olds
- Timeliness of prenatal care
- Receipt of recommended vaccinations among children by age 2 (measles, mumps, and rubella [MMR]) and among adolescents by age 13

⁴ CMS is required to update the Core Sets annually, which results in changes to the measures in the Core Sets. These updates could affect the number of measures publicly reported each year. More information about the updates to the 2021 Child and Adult Core Sets is available at <https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/cib111920.pdf>. The Core Set History Table summarizes changes to the Core Sets and is available at <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/core-set-history-table.pdf>.

⁵ For more information on state-level reporting of the Child Core Set measures, see <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/performance-measurement/adult-and-child-health-care-quality-measures/childrens-health-care-quality-measures/index.html>.

⁶ States had the option to use state-submitted Form CMS-416 data or have CMS produce their Form CMS-416 reports using Transformed Medicaid Statistical Information System (T-MSIS) data.

(meningococcal conjugate and tetanus, diphtheria toxoids, and acellular pertussis [Tdap] vaccines)

Median performance was below 50 percent for:

- Two measures of dental and oral health care: use of preventive dental services and receipt of dental sealants
- Two measures of behavioral health care: follow-up visit within 30 days of a new prescription for ADHD medication and blood glucose and cholesterol testing for children and adolescents on antipsychotics
- Three indicators of adolescent health care: chlamydia screening in women ages 16 to 20, human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination by age 13, and well-care visits among children and adolescents ages 12 to 17 and ages 18 to 21
- Two measures of preventive health care: developmental screening in the first three years of life, and influenza vaccinations among children turning age 2

FFY 2021 Adult Core Set Reporting

For FFY 2021, 50 states voluntarily reported at least one measure for the Adult Core Set, consistent with FFY 2020. A total of 42 states reported at least half (16) of the measures for FFY 2021. The median number of Adult Core Set measures reported by states was 23.5, an increase from 22 measures for FFY 2020 and 22.5 measures for FFY 2019. In addition, 18 states reported more Adult Core Set measures for FFY 2021 than for FFY 2020.

As with the Child Core Set, CMS releases data each year for Adult Core Set measures that were reported by at least 25 states and that met CMS's standards for data quality. For FFY 2021, CMS is publicly reporting state performance on 27 of the 32 Adult Core Set measures, similar to 28 of the 33 measures for FFY 2020.⁷ CMS is publicly reporting one Adult Core Set measure for the first time for FFY 2021:

- Use of Pharmacotherapy for Opioid Use Disorder

The most frequently reported measures for FFY 2021 focus on access to primary care and preventive care

⁷ For more information on state-level reporting of the Adult Core Set measures, see <https://www.medicare.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/performance-measurement/adult-and-child-health-care-quality-measures/adult-health-care-quality-measures/index.html>.

(breast cancer screening, cervical cancer screening, and chlamydia screening in women ages 21 to 24), postpartum care visits, asthma management, behavioral health care (follow-up after hospitalization for mental illness, follow-up after emergency department visits for mental illness, follow-up after emergency department visits for alcohol and other drug abuse or dependence, diabetes screening for people using antipsychotic medications, antidepressant medication management, and adherence to antipsychotic medications for individuals with schizophrenia).

CMS analyzed state performance on the 27 publicly reported Adult Core Set measures for FFY 2021. No measures had median state performance above 75 percent. For two measures where lower rates are better, median state performance was below 25 percent, signifying higher performance:

- Concurrent use of opioids and benzodiazepines
- Use of opioids at high dosage in persons without cancer

Median state performance was below 50 percent for:

- Flu vaccinations among adults ages 18 to 64
- At least one indicator of care for six measures of behavioral health care:
 - Antidepressant medication management
 - Follow-up after emergency department visits for alcohol and other drug abuse or dependence
 - Follow-up after emergency department visits for mental illness
 - Follow-up after hospitalization for mental illness
 - Initiation of and engagement in alcohol and other drug dependence treatment
 - Medical assistance with smoking and tobacco use cessation

Concluding Remarks

The number of states reporting the Child and Adult Core Set measures and the number of measures that states report have increased over time. Relatedly, the number of measures that CMS can publicly report has increased over time. CMS appreciates states' efforts to report Core Set measures for the FFY 2021 reporting cycle.

The FFY 2021 Core Sets generally cover health care services provided in CY 2020, which was during the COVID-19 pandemic. CMS worked closely with states to support Core Set reporting during the pandemic, but the full impact of COVID-19 on state performance rates is unknown.

CMS will continue to provide technical assistance to states to improve data completeness and quality, especially as reporting on the Child Core Set and the behavioral health measures on the Adult Core Set become mandatory in 2024.^{8,9} In particular, CMS continues to look for ways to increase efficiency and reduce state burden, streamline Core Set reporting for states, and improve the transparency and comparability of the data reported across states. For the first time, CMS used the CDC WONDER tool to calculate the Live Births Weighing Less Than 2,500 Grams and Low-Risk Cesarean Delivery measures for all states.

CMS continues to work with states to use the Core Set measures to drive improvement in the quality of care provided to Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries. As the completeness and quality of data continue to improve, the Child and Adult Core Sets are foundational for identifying disparities in health care delivery and outcomes in Medicaid and CHIP and for focusing quality improvement efforts to advance health equity.

⁸ Legislation making reporting of the Child Core Set measures mandatory: Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 available at <https://www.congress.gov/115/bills/hr1892/BILLS-115hr1892enr.xml>.

⁹ Legislation making reporting of the behavioral health measures on the Adult Core Set mandatory: Section 5001 of the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment

For More Information

More information on the Child Core Set is available at <https://www.medicare.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/performance-measurement/adult-and-child-health-care-quality-measures/child-core-set/index.html>.

More information on the Adult Core Set is available at <https://www.medicare.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/performance-measurement/adult-and-child-health-care-quality-measures/adult-core-set/index.html>.

The webpages linked above contain descriptions of the Core Sets and resources on state reporting, including state-specific performance on measures reported by at least 25 states and that meet CMS standards for data quality. Annual resources include:

- Adult and Child Chart Packs summarizing state reporting on the quality of health care furnished by Medicaid and CHIP, including detailed analysis of publicly reported measures
- Measure Performance Tables including state-specific data for each publicly reported Core Set measure
- Core Set Health Care Quality Measures Dataset providing state reported measure-level data for publicly reported measures and rates

for Patients and Communities Act (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act of 2018 available at <https://www.congress.gov/115/bills/hr6/BILLS-115hr6enr.pdf>.