
Advancing State Implementation of the Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Quality Rating System (MAC QRS)

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Agenda

Topic	Speaker
CMS Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Deirdra Stockmann, CMS
Overview of MAC QRS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shaelyn Hawkins, CMS
New MAC QRS Implementation Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Measurement Year (MY) 2026 Technical Resource Manual (TRM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Amanda Paige Burns, CMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Measure Assignment TA Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hannah Klukoff, Mathematica
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Question and Answer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Jenn Gordon, MathematicaShaelyn Hawkins, CMS

Overview of the Medicaid and CHIP Quality Rating System (MAC QRS)

MAC QRS

- **The MAC QRS is a state-run public website that provides quality information about Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) managed care plans (MCPs).**
- **States contracting with managed care organizations (MCOs), prepaid inpatient health plans (PIHPs), or prepaid ambulatory health plans (PAHPs) must establish a MAC QRS.**
 - MCPs that have 500 or more Medicaid or CHIP enrollees must be included in the MAC QRS.
- **Goals of the MAC QRS are to:**
 - Empower beneficiaries and their caregivers to make choices about their health care and increase transparency into Medicaid and CHIP MCP performance.
 - Support states in driving MCP performance improvements.
 - Hold states and MCPs accountable for the quality of care provided to enrollees.

MAC QRS Key Terms

- **Managed care program-** A state's Medicaid or CHIP managed care delivery system.
- **MAC QRS mandatory measure set-** The quality measures identified as mandatory by CMS in the current MAC QRS Technical Resource Manual.
- **Performance rate-** The numeric value calculated for a MAC QRS quality measure.
- **Quality rating-** The numeric value calculated for a MAC QRS quality measure (i.e., the performance rate) or, if the data are unavailable, an assigned indicator reflecting the absence of data.
- **Issuing a quality rating-** The display of a quality rating for a MAC QRS quality measure by a state.
- **MAC QRS framework-** The mandatory measure set, the methodology for calculating the quality ratings, and the website display requirements.

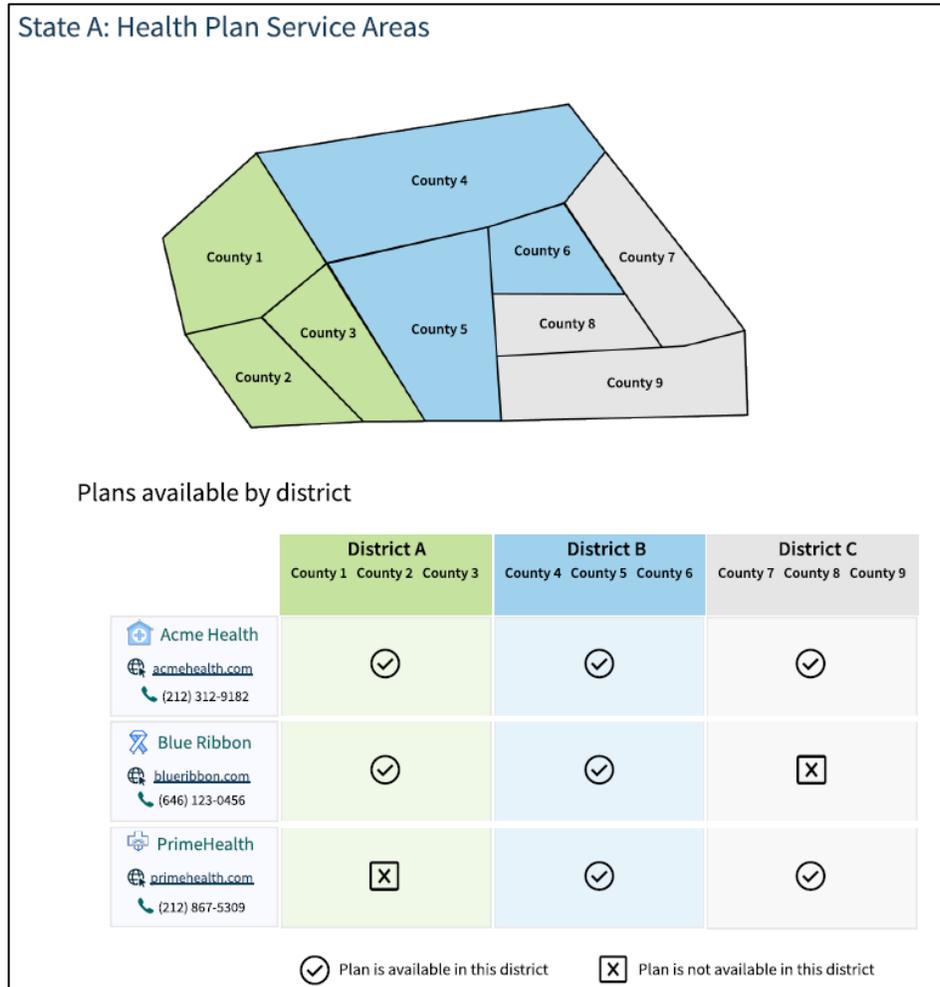
MAC QRS Requirements

- **States must adopt the MAC QRS framework, which includes:**
 - The MAC QRS mandatory measures, as defined by CMS in the technical resource manual.
 - The CMS-developed MAC QRS methodology or an alternate methodology approved by CMS, including required processes for assigning measures to MCPs.
 - The MAC QRS website display requirements, including information that Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries indicated would be meaningful to them when identifying a managed care plan that meets their needs and preferences.
- **States may go beyond CMS's requirements by:**
 - Including additional quality measures that are not in the technical resource manual.
 - Implementing enhanced website features to improve user experience and transparency.

Note: See 42 C.F.R. 438.337, 438.510, 438.515, and 438.505 for more details on MAC QRS requirements, available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/05/10/2024-08085/medicaid-program-medicare-and-childrens-health-insurance-program-chip-managed-care-access-finance>.



Example State MAC QRS (1 of 3)



- MAC QRS websites should enable users to easily view all MCPs for which they may be eligible, based on age, geographic location, and dual eligibility status.
- This figure shows how a state could present MCP availability by location.

Example State MAC QRS (2 of 3)

- **MAC QRS websites should also enable users to compare MCPs on various factors, including cost of covered services, extra benefits, and performance on quality measures.**
- **The figure on the next slide shows how a state could present plan performance comparisons on behavioral health care measures for children and adolescents.**

Example State MAC QRS (3 of 3)

<p>Select a domain</p> <p>Behavioral Health Care</p> <p>Select a population</p> <p>Child and Adolescent</p> <p>Child and Adolescent</p> <p>Adult</p>	<p> Acme Health</p> <p> acmehealth.com</p> <p> (222) 312-9182</p> <p>Acme Health is for people age 65 and older and those 18 and older with a disability, including those who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. View the plan's five-star quality rating for Medicare services here.</p>	<p> Blue Ribbon</p> <p> blueribbon.com</p> <p> (644) 123-0456</p> <p>Blue Ribbon is for people under age 65, excluding those who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid.</p>	<p> PrimeHealth</p> <p> primehealth.com</p> <p> (222) 867-5309</p> <p>PrimeHealth is for children and adolescents under age 18.</p>
<p>Use of First-Line Psychosocial Care for Children & Adolescents on Antipsychotics (APP)</p> <p>The percentage of members who had a new prescription for an antipsychotic medication and had documentation of psychosocial care as first-line treatment.</p> <p>Ages: 1 to 17</p> <p>Why it matters?</p> <p>Psychosocial care is recommended as the first-line treatment for most psychiatric conditions in children and adolescents. This measure assesses whether children and adolescents with conditions for which antipsychotic medications are not indicated had documentation of psychosocial care as first-line treatment before being prescribed an antipsychotic medication.</p>	<p>↑ Higher is better</p> <p>This measure does not apply to the population covered by this plan for this age group.</p>	<p>55.2%</p>	<p>60.5%</p>

New MAC QRS Implementation Resources

New MAC QRS Implementation Resources



MY 2026 TRM: Includes the final list of MAC QRS mandatory measures and guidance on stratification and reporting measures with multiple rates.



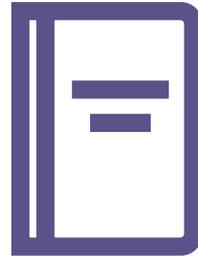
Measure Assignment Resource: Provides guidance on how to assign each MAC QRS mandatory measure to the applicable MCPs.



Design Guide Modules: Shares findings from CMS's website display usability testing and provides guidance on how states can incorporate human-centered design into their MAC QRS website development processes.

Note: MAC QRS resources are available at the CMS MAC QRS website at <https://www.medicare.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/medicaid-managed-care-quality/quality-rating-system>.





MY 2026 Technical Resource Manual (TRM)

MY 2026 MAC QRS TRM and Future Resources

- **CMS released the MY 2026 TRM on July 31, 2025.**
- **States can use the TRM to verify the mandatory measure set, the measures' required rates, and stratification criteria.**
 - CMS is not requiring states to stratify any MAC QRS mandatory measures for MY 2026.
- **CMS will release technical resources for calculating the MY 2026 mandatory measures in calendar year 2027.**
- **MY 2026 measures must be displayed no later than December 31, 2028.**
- **On an annual basis starting in 2027, CMS will release a MAC QRS mandatory measure set update and technical resources for calculating QRS mandatory measures to support MAC QRS implementation.**

Note: The initial MY 2026 TRM is available at <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/my2026-tech-res-manual.pdf>.



MY 2026 MAC QRS Mandatory Measure Set (1 of 2)

CMIT ^a	Measure Steward	Measure Name
743	NCQA	Use of First-Line Psychosocial Care for Children and Adolescents on Antipsychotics (APP)
394	NCQA	Initiation and Engagement of Substance Use Disorder Treatment (IET)
672	CMS	Preventive Care and Screening: Screening for Depression and Follow-Up Plan (CDF)
268	NCQA	Follow-Up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness (FUH)
761	NCQA	Well-Child Visits in the First 30 Months of Life (W30)
24	NCQA	Child and Adolescent Well-Care Visits (WCV)
93	NCQA	Breast Cancer Screening (BCS-E)
118	NCQA	Cervical Cancer Screening (CCS, CCS-E)
139	NCQA	Colorectal Cancer Screening (COL-E)
897	DQA (ADA)	Oral Evaluation, Dental Services (OEV)
166	OPA	Contraceptive Care - Postpartum Women (CCP)
581	NCQA	Prenatal and Postpartum Care (PPC)
1820	NCQA	Glycemic Status Assessment for Patients with Diabetes (GSD)

^a The CMS Measures Inventory Tool (CMIT) is the repository record for information about the measures that CMS uses in various quality, reporting, and payment programs. More information is available at <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/quality/measures/cms-measures-inventory>.



MY 2026 MAC QRS Mandatory Measure Set (2 of 2)

CMIT ^a	Measure Steward	Measure Name
167	NCQA	Controlling High Blood Pressure (CBP)
151/152	AHRQ ^b	CAHPS – How people rated their health plan
151/152	AHRQ ^b	CAHPS – Getting care quickly
151/152	AHRQ ^b	CAHPS – Getting needed care
151/152	AHRQ ^b	CAHPS – How well doctors communicate
151/152	AHRQ ^b	CAHPS – Health plan customer service

Note: The MY 2026 MAC QRS Mandatory Measure Set can be found at <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/medicaid-managed-care-quality/quality-rating-system> or in the TRM at <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/my2026-tech-res-manual.pdf>.

^a The CMS Measures Inventory Tool (CMIT) is the repository record for information about the measures that CMS uses in various quality, reporting, and payment programs. More information is available at <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/quality/measures/cms-measures-inventory>.

^b AHRQ is the measure steward for the CAHPS health plan survey instrument (CMIT 151/152) and NCQA is the developer of the survey administration protocol.



Guidance on Reporting Measures with Multiple Performance Rates

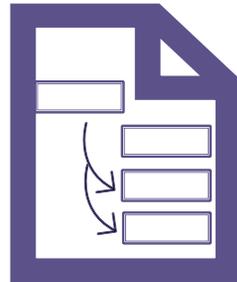
- **Some MAC QRS mandatory measures include multiple performance rates (e.g., different age groups or service types).**
 - States must assign a quality rating for each required performance rate that applies to each of their MCPs.

Example: Reporting Measures with Multiple Performance Rates

- **Blue Bird MCP provides services to beneficiaries of all ages.**
 - When reporting the IET measure for Blue Bird MCP, the state should report all four required quality ratings.
- **Red Bird MCP provides services only to adults.**
 - When reporting the IET measure for Red Bird MCP, the state should report two adult quality ratings: (1) Initiation of SUD Treatment: Ages 18–64, and (2) Engagement of SUD Treatment: Ages 18–64.

Required Rates for the IET Measure

MAC QRS Mandatory Measure	Required Rates
Initiation and Engagement of Substance Use Disorder Treatment (IET)	4 rates:
	1. Initiation of SUD Treatment: <i>Ages 13–17</i>
	2. Initiation of SUD Treatment: <i>Ages 18–64</i>
	3. Engagement of SUD Treatment: <i>Ages 13–17</i>
	4. Engagement of SUD Treatment: <i>Ages 18–64</i>



Measure Assignment Resource

MAC QRS Quality Ratings Requirements

- **States must issue a quality rating for each MCP for each program in which the MCP participates.**
- **Ratings are required for every MAC QRS mandatory measure that assesses services or actions covered under the MCP's state contract.**
- **For states with multiple managed care programs, this means states must:**
 1. Identify which MCPs belong to each managed care program (e.g., Medicaid managed care, CHIP, specialty programs).
 2. Determine which MAC QRS measures apply to each managed care program.
- **The Measure Assignment resource provides guidance for completing these steps.**

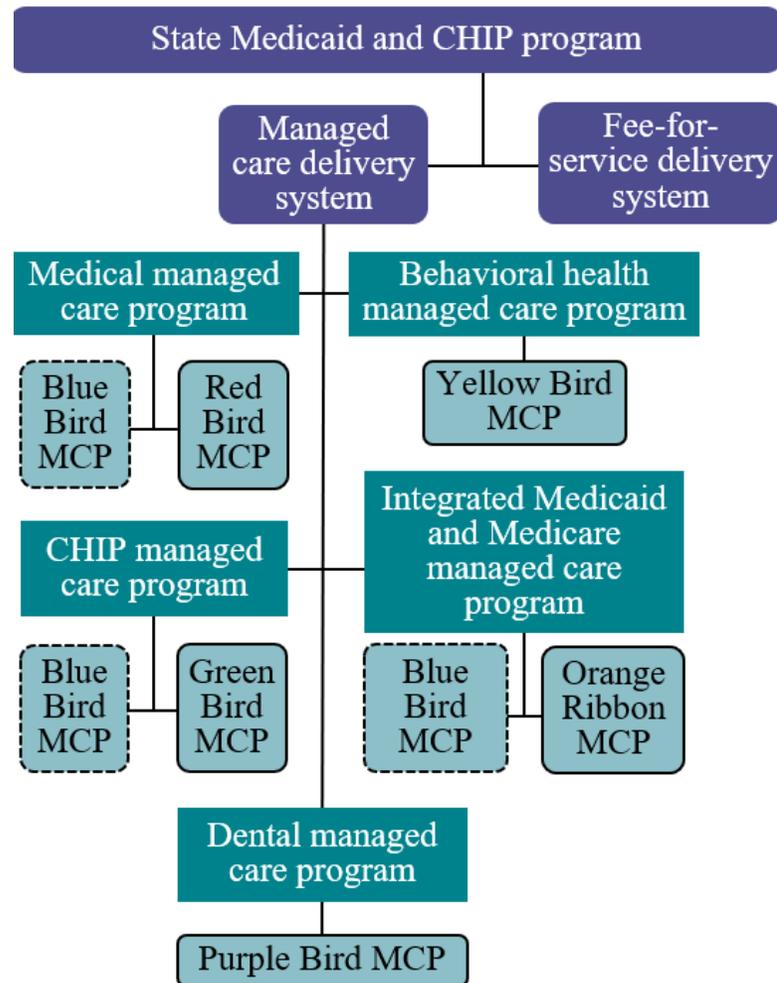
Note: The Measure Assignment resource is available at <https://www.medicaid.gov/media/207131>.



Step 1: Identify Participating MCPs

- **To meet MAC QRS requirements, states must map each MCP to the managed care programs in which it participates.**
 - The mapping is crucial for determining which MCPs require ratings for each MAC QRS measure - particularly in cases where MCPs participate in multiple programs.

Example: State Medicaid and CHIP Program



- **State's Blue Bird MCP participates in three programs.**
- **Therefore, Blue Bird MCP would be issued a unique quality rating for each MAC QRS measure applicable to each program.**

Step 2: Identify Measures for Each Program

- **The state must next determine which MAC QRS measures apply to each managed care program.**
- **States should consult three resources:**
 1. **MAC QRS TRM:** Defines the services, populations, and data elements assessed by each measure.
 2. **MCP contracts for each program:** Specifies which services and benefits are included in each MCP's scope of responsibility.
 3. **Measure Assignment TA resource:** Includes a table that summarizes services assessed by each 2026 MAC QRS mandatory measure and provides examples of language that may appear in managed care contracts to describe benefits and coverage.

Example: Assigning MAC QRS Measures to Programs

Measure	Services Identified in Measure Numerator Technical Specifications	Examples of Services Included in the Contract
Initiation and Engagement of Substance Use Disorder Treatment (IET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inpatient Substance Use Disorder (SUD) admission (acute or nonacute) • Outpatient SUD treatment (outpatient visit, community health center visit, telehealth visit, or telephone visit) • Intensive outpatient encounter or partial hospitalization • Non-residential SUD treatment facility visit • Medication-assisted treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outpatient substance use disorder (SUD) treatment • Inpatient SUD treatment • Medication-assisted treatment

If an MCP's contract covers any of the services included in the numerator, the MCP should report on the measure.

Medicaid and CHIP program staff familiar with MCP contracts can scan for key terms like those listed in this column. If those terms are found, the measure should be assigned to the program covered by the contract.





Design Guide Modules

Design Guide Modules

The Design Guide Modules provide states with practical tools and insight to support the development of user-friendly MAC QRS websites.

Module 1

Key Findings from Usability Testing

Helps states understand what information users find most valuable and how they interact with quality data online.

Module 2

How CMS Applied Human-Centered Design to Inform Website Prototypes

Offers a step-by-step look at how CMS applied human-centered design to create and refine website prototypes—serving as a model for states.

Module 3

How States Can Use Human-Centered Design to Develop their MAC QRS Website

Provides actionable guidance for states to apply human-centered design principles in their own website development, ensuring accessibility, clarity, and user engagement.

Note: The three Design Guide Modules can be found at <https://www.medicare.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/medicaid-managed-care/medicaid-and-chip-quality-rating-system/design-guidance-resources>.



Module 1 Overview: Key Findings From Usability Testing

Usability testing conducted by CMS between 2018–2022 informed the MAC QRS prototypes and the website display requirements in the 2024 Final Rule. Three key findings emerged:



Streamline information

Beneficiaries want MCP selection tools to be clear, centralized, and easy to use.



Personalize the experience

Beneficiaries want flexible search tools, including filters and interactive maps.



Build trust

Beneficiaries want clear, transparent communication, especially around what the MAC QRS is, how their data are used, and how to interpret quality ratings.

Note: Design Guide Module 1 can be found at <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/dgmod1-usertest.pdf>.



Module 2 Overview: How CMS Applied a Human-Centered Design Framework

- **To inform the design of the MAC QRS website prototypes, CMS applied a Human-Centered Design framework.**
- **This approach helped ensure that the websites meet the needs of users—Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries and their caregivers—by presenting MCP quality information in a clear, understandable, and meaningful way.**
- **Module 2 provides an overview of the Human-Centered Design framework and how CMS applied it during prototype development, from stakeholder engagement to iterative testing and refinement.**

Note: Design Guide Module 2 can be found at <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/dgmod2-hcdcms.pdf>.
MAC QRS website prototypes can be found at <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/mac-qrs-prototype-a.pdf> and <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/mac-qrs-prototype-b.pdf>.



Module 3: Highlights the Benefits of Usability Testing

- **To support the design and development of their MAC QRS websites, states may apply a Human-Centered Design framework.**
- **This approach can help states better understand and incorporate user needs—ensuring that quality information is accessible, understandable, and relevant to Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries and their caregivers.**
- **Module 3 highlights the benefits of user testing, provides examples of when states may consider conducting user testing, and outlines key considerations for applying Human-Centered Design principles to MAC QRS website development.**

Note: Design Guide Module 3 can be found at <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/dgmod3-hcdcms.pdf>.



MAC QRS Prototypes

- **CMS applied usability testing and feedback to create two MAC QRS website prototypes using Human-Centered Design.**
- **MAC QRS Website Prototype A-** Illustrates a simple version of the display requirements.
 - PDF: <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/mac-qrs-prototype-a.pdf>
 - Video walk-through: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTYiGKAhoog>
- **MAC QRS Website Prototype B-** Illustrates an interactive version of the display features.
 - PDF: <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/mac-qrs-prototype-b.pdf>
 - Video walk-through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4WJ_SlsVdo

Question & Answer

Links to Presented Resources

- **MY 2026 Technical Resource Manual:**
<https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/my2026-tech-res-manual.pdf>
- **Measure Assignment TA Resource:** <https://www.medicaid.gov/media/207131>
- **Design Guide Module 1: Key Findings from User Testing:**
<https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/dgmod1-usertest.pdf>
- **Design Guide Module 2: Using Human-Centered Design to Inform Website Prototypes:** <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/dgmod2-hcdcms.pdf>
- **Design Guide Module 3: How States Can Use Human Centered Design to Build Their MAC QRS Website:** <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/dgmod3-hcdcms.pdf>

Thank you for attending!



- If you have **questions**, email MAC_QualityRatingSystem@cms.hhs.gov