

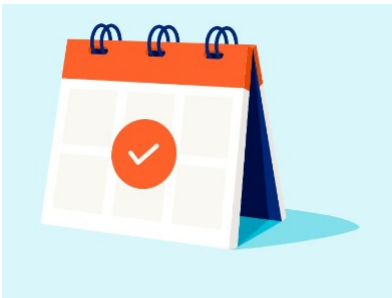
New in 2025: Changes to Follow-up Care after Hospitalization

Helping patients get care within 7 days of discharge

Effective January 1, 2025

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) has made changes to the Follow-up after Hospitalization (FUH) measure that includes new options for post-discharge mental health appointments:

- Follow-up appointment focus is now on mental health services rather than on the specialty of the provider delivering the service
- In addition to licensed mental health care providers, medical health care providers and other non-licensed mental health providers can now close the gap with post-discharge mental health services using qualified billing and diagnostic codes
- Peer support and residential treatment services are now options for gap closure



Why are post discharge appointments important?

Timely post discharge appointments after inpatient stays for mental health are vital to patient success increasing community tenure and reducing readmissions.

FUH measures post-discharge appointment attendance for a qualified mental health service **within 7 days of discharge**.

How you can help

- Prior to discharge, schedule an appointment for a mental health service to occur within 7 days of discharge
 - If the patient is unable to be seen within 7 days, schedule an appointment within 30 days of discharge
 - Appointments by virtual visit/telemental health qualify for FUH
 - The appointment will not count if it occurs on the day of discharge
- Review the discharge plan and appointment details with the patient
- Report the appointment details to Optum upon discharge so we can help support appointment adherence
- The patient must attend the appointment in order to meet the requirements of the measure

Day 1 is the **day after discharge**:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
13	14 Discharged	15 Day 1	16 Day 2	17 Day 3	18 Day 4	19 Day 5
20 Day 6	21 Day 7	22 Day 8	23 Day 9	24 Day 10	25 Day 11	26 Day 12

Appointment adherence resources

The [Optum Provider Directory](#) includes the **Express Access Network**, a network of Optum-credentialed providers (individuals and group practices) who offer Optum patients a routine appointment within 5 business days of a request. Providers enrolled in Express Access will have a notation next to their name in the directory.



[Search the directory](#)

Follow-up care best practices

- Engage the patient and their supports in the discharge planning, ensuring they understand and commit to their follow-up appointment to increase the likelihood of their attendance
- Address any barriers related to attending their follow-up appointment
- Suggest they set up a reminder in their phone/calendar and/or provide an appointment card
- Schedule a 3-day FUH visit to allow for rescheduling/missed appointments
- Suggest virtual appointments, if appropriate to meet the patient's needs
- Request that patients sign a release of information
- Send discharge paperwork and inform Optum of the appointment details to the appropriate outpatient provider within 24 hours of discharge
- Develop a crisis plan with the patient to prevent readmissions