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CORRESPONDENCE MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 23, 2003
TO: Group Insurance Board
FROM: Sonya Sidky, Project Manager
Health Benefits and Insurance Plans
SUBJECT: HEDIS 2002 Data

The following report is an analysis of the Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set (HEDIS) submitted by the participating HMOs to the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF). This memo is meant to inform the Board about HEDIS data and how our participating HMOs compare to each other as well as to available national averages. **This is an informational piece and does not require board action.**

HEDIS is the most widely used set of performance measures in the managed care industry. HEDIS is developed and maintained by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), a not-for-profit organization. The purpose of HEDIS is to improve upon the quality of care provided by organized delivery systems by providing measures designed to increase accountability of managed care.

ETF has been collecting HEDIS data since 1996 (1995-measurement year) and has expanded the use of this data as the quality of the data collected by the HMOs has improved. It should be noted that the HEDIS data measured reflects an HMO's entire block of Wisconsin business. NCQA strongly discourages HMOs from providing HEDIS data that reflects the experience of particular employers. HEDIS data is expensive and difficult to collect and even large HMOs struggle to obtain an adequate sample for certain measures with limited events in their covered population, such as treatment after a heart attack.

Executive Summary

- HEDIS results were incorporated into the Health Plan Report Card (section E) for second year in the 2004 "It's Your Choice" booklets.
- HEDIS and CAHPS results were used for the first time in 2003 to give credit to high performing plans towards their 2004 premiums.

Reviewed and approved by Tom Korpady, Division of Insurance Services.

Signature

Date

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- The comparability of HMO scores continues to improve as NCQA, HMOs and ETF gain more experience in working with HEDIS data, however it is clear that larger HMOs do have advantages over smaller HMOs in collecting HEDIS data. Higher scores from larger HMOs may at least in part reflect more resources available to measure HEDIS data rather than actual performance differences. Should HEDIS data be included in a formula to qualify health plans or determine employer contribution towards premium, an adjustment would need to be made to account for the size of an HMO offering the plan.
- Overall, participating HMOs scored higher on HEDIS Effectiveness of Care measures than HMOs nationwide for the 2002 measurement year. Touchpoint was rated as the number one HMO in the country for the Effectiveness of Care measures for the second year in a row. Three of the five top HMOs for Effectiveness of Care in the East North Central Region (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin) are Wisconsin HMOs: GHC South Central, Network Health Plan, and Touchpoint. On average, Wisconsin participating HMOs scored higher than the national averages on measures such as adolescent immunizations, beta blocker treatment after a heart attack, breast cancer treatment, cervical cancer treatment, chlamydia screening, cholesterol management after acute cardiovascular events, comprehensive diabetes care, and use of appropriate medications for people with asthma.
- Last year (measurement year 2001) there was only one score in which the participating HMO average did not meet the national average: Childhood Immunization Status/VZV. The participating HMO average for this score rose from 68.9 percent in 2001 to 84.3 percent in 2002, which exceeds the national average of 82.0 percent. This remarkable improvement is due to the following HMOs achieving double-digit increases in their scores:
 - Atrium
 - CompcareBlue
 - GHC Eau Claire
 - Health Tradition
 - Medical Associates
 - Network Health Plan
 - Physicians Plus
 - Unity
- This year (measurement year 2002), there are only four scores in which on average, participating plans did not meet the national average. However for all of these scores listed below, the participating HMO average was within 2 percentage points of the national average:
 - Prenatal and Postpartum Care/Timeliness of Prenatal Care
 - Children's Access to Primary care Practitioners/ Access 25 months-6 years
 - Children's Access to Primary care Practitioners/Access 7-11 years
 - Adolescent Well-Care Visits
- Overall, participating HMOs scored higher on HEDIS measures in 2002 than in 2001. The most improved measures include:
 - Childhood Immunization Status/VZV (up 15.2 percentage points) *see appendix #4*
 - Childhood Immunization Status/ Combination #2 (up 12.6 percentage points)
 - Adolescent Immunization Status/VZV (up 11.3 percentage points) *see appendix #5*
 - Adolescent Immunization Status/Combination #2 (up 6.8 percentage points)
 - Comprehensive Diabetes Care/ LDL-C Level (up 6.6 percentage points) *see appendix #6*

- Follow-Up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness/7-day follow-up (up 5.5 percentage points)
- Controlling High Blood Pressure/ Blood Pressure Measure (up 4.9 percentage points)

- There were some measures in which the HMOs on average declined in performance from 2001 to 2002:
 - Prenatal and Postpartum Care/ Postpartum Care (declined by 7.6 percentage points)
 - Prenatal and Postpartum Care/ Timeliness of Prenatal Care (declined by 6.4 percentage points)
 - Comprehensive Diabetes Care/ Eye Exam (declined by 5.6 percentage points)

- There continue to be large differences in the relative performance of Wisconsin participating HMOs on their HEDIS scores. A number of HMOs stood out as scoring higher or lower than the average of participating HMOs across several measures. For example, Touchpoint health plan performed significantly above average on 12 scores across five measures—Adolescent Immunization Status, Cholesterol Management after Acute Cardiovascular Events, Comprehensive Diabetic Care, Prenatal and Postpartum Care, and Well-Child Visits in the First 15 Months of Life. By contrast, Prevea performed significantly below average on 22 scores across 6 measures—Adolescent Immunization Status, Childhood Immunization Status, Controlling High Blood Pressure, Cholesterol Management after Acute Cardiovascular Events and Comprehensive Diabetic Care, and Prenatal and Postpartum Care.
- There may be measurement issues that at least in part account for the poor scores Prevea achieved. According to Lori Turek, Manager of Quality Improvement with Prevea:

“Prevea Health Plan experienced data collection issues that contributed to lower HEDIS scores. Unexpected staff turnover at the time of data collection occurred both internally and with our administrative services vendor. Several claim file issues were experienced. Prevea Health Plan is currently working with MetaStar, an auditing firm to improve data collection methods for 2004. In addition, Prevea Health Plan is pursuing NCQA accreditation and has initiated quality improvement activities to improve future measures. Prevea Health Plan's provider panel and practice patterns have been stable and we feel that negative changes in our scores reflect the data collection problems and not the care provided by our physicians.”

Definition of Measures and Scores Examined in this Study

HEDIS 2003 (measurement year 2002) consists of 51 measures across 8 domains of care:

- Effectiveness of Care
- Access/Availability of Care
- Satisfaction with the Experience of Care (CAHPS)
- Health Plan Stability
- Use of Services
- Cost of Care
- Informed Health Care Choices
- Health Plan Descriptive Information

For the purposes of this study, we focus on 18 measures across 3 domains—Effectiveness of Care, Access/Availability of Care, and Use of Services for a total of 48 scores. The three measures examined in the Use of Service domain are newly being report to the Board this year

because they are similar to the other measures reported here. They are expressed as a percentage of members who received a service that should have received a service in the past year. Please see Appendix 1 for a more detailed explanation of the following new measures as well as existing measures: Well-Child Visits in the First 15 Months of Life, Well-Child Visits in the Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Years of Life, and Adolescent Well-Care Visits.

For most of the 48 scores examined, a higher score is considered better; however, the one exception to this is the HbA1c control rate for the Comprehensive Diabetes Care measure. For this particular score, a lower score is better because it indicates that fewer diabetics were poorly controlled. (Please see Appendix 1 for a description of each measure analyzed in this report.)

Methods for determining statistically significant differences

According to NCQA, when comparing differences among HMOs, the number of cases should be greater than 100 for each plan. Although NCQA indicates that HMOs should report numerators and denominators for measures in which the denominator is less than 30, the reported rate should not be calculated in these cases.

The reported rates for the 16 participating HMOs for the Effectiveness of Care, Access/Availability of Care, and Use of Services domains were compared according to NCQA guidelines. For measures in which an HMO has a denominator greater than 100, a difference of at least 10 percentage points between scores is needed to conclude that the difference is meaningful. For measures in which an HMO has a denominator between 30 to 99, a difference of at least 20 percentage points between scores is needed to conclude that the difference is meaningful.

Limitations

Although HEDIS data is a valuable method of evaluating how well an HMO takes action to keep their members healthy, there are some limitations that should be acknowledged when comparing the reported rates of multiple HMOs. For example, results can differ for the following reasons:

- Random Chance
- Different Population of Members
- Data Collection and Record keeping Issues

These limitations should be kept in mind when comparing the performance of HMOs. NCQA recommends that no measure be looked at in isolation. Rather, look for patterns in performance for multiple measures that address a particular issue such as how well an HMO keeps its members healthy or takes steps in implementing effective preventive medicine initiatives.

Some of the limitations inherent in HEDIS scores may be more pronounced in smaller HMOs. In fact smaller HMOs face barriers in data collection that may make accurately comparing their scores to that of other HMOs more difficult. Low scores may be in part attributed to lack of staff available to collect data and sicker populations rather than to actual plan performance.

Individual HMOs Compared to State Average: Better than Average Performance

The ETF HMOs are listed in order of number of measures for which they achieved a significantly better score than the average of all participating HMOs with audited data. A score is considered significantly better if it is 10 percentage points above the mean for a plan with a sample size of 100 or greater or 20 percentage points above the mean for a plan with a sample size of at least 30 but less than 100. Not all HMOs were included in all of the measures (see Appendix #3) due to sample size issues; therefore, it is important to keep in mind that smaller HMOs or HMOs that have a limited presence in Wisconsin do not have as much opportunity to either overachieve or underachieve.

Touchpoint Health Plan—12 above average rates (and 2 below average ratings)

- Adolescent Immunization Status/MMR
- Adolescent Immunization Status/Hepatitis B
- Adolescent Immunization Status/VZV
- Adolescent Immunization Status/Combination #1
- Adolescent Immunization Status/Combination #2
- Cholesterol Management after Acute Cardiovascular Events: LDL-C Level
- Comprehensive Diabetic Care/Eye Exam
- Comprehensive Diabetes Care/ Poor HbA1c Control
- Comprehensive Diabetic Care/LDL-C Level
- Comprehensive Diabetic Care/Monitoring for Diabetic Nethorpathy
- Prenatal and Postpartum Care/ Postpartum Care
- Well-Child Visits in the First 15 Months of Life

Health Tradition had 7 above average rates (and 3 below average rates)

- Adolescent Immunization Status/ Hepatitis B
- Adolescent Immunization Status/ Combination #1
- Antidepressant Medication Management/ Effective Acute Phase Treatment
- Antidepressant Medication Management/ Effective Continuation Phase Treatment
- Comprehensive Diabetic Care/Eye Exam
- Comprehensive Diabetes Care/ Poor HbA1c Control
- Prenatal and Postpartum Care/ Timeliness of Prenatal Care

Network-Fox Valley had 7 above average rates (and 1 below average rate)

- Adolescent Immunization Status/ Combination #1
- Adolescent Immunization Status/ Combination #2
- Adolescent Immunization Status/ Hepatitis B
- Adolescent Immunization Status/ VZV
- Childhood Immunization Status/ Combination #2
- Prenatal and Postpartum Care/ Postpartum Care
- Well-Child Visits in the First 15 Months of Life

GHC-South Central had 6 above average rates (and zero below average ratings)

- Adolescent Immunization Status/ Hepatitis B
- Adolescent Immunization Status/VZV
- Adolescent Immunization Status/Combination #1
- Adolescent Immunization Status/Combination #2
- Comprehensive Diabetes Care/ Monitoring for Diabetic Nephropathy

- Prenatal and Postpartum Care/ Timeliness of Prenatal Care

CompcareBlue had 4 above average ratings (and 2 below average rates)

- Antidepressant Medication Management/Optimal Practitioner Contacts for Medication Management
- Antidepressant Medication Management/Effective Acute Phase Treatment
- Antidepressant Medication Management/Effective Continuation Phase Treatment
- Comprehensive Diabetes Care/ Eye Exam

Gundersen Lutheran had 3 above average rates (and 2 below average rates)

- Adolescent Immunization Status/ Hepatitis B
- Comprehensive Diabetic Care/Monitoring for Diabetic Nephropathy
- Prenatal and Postpartum Care/ Postpartum Care

Humana had 3 above average rate (and 2 below average rates)

- Adolescent Well-Care Visits
- Chlamydia Screening/ Chlamydia age 21-26
- Well-Child Visits in the Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Years of Life

Medical Associates had 3 above average rates (and 8 below average rates)

- Adolescent Immunization Status/ VZV
- Comprehensive Diabetic Care/Monitoring for Diabetic Nephropathy
- Prenatal and Postpartum Care/ Timeliness of Prenatal Care

Physician Plus had 3 above average rates (and 3 below average rates)

- Adolescent Immunization Status/ Hepatitis B
- Adolescent Immunization Status/ Combination #1
- Adolescent Immunization Status/ Combination #2

GHC-Eau Claire had 2 above average ratings (and 3 below average rating)

- Antidepressant Medication Management/Effective Acute Phase Treatment
- Antidepressant Medication Management/Effective Continuation Phase Treatment

Unity had 2 above average rates (and 3 below average rates)

- Follow-Up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness/ 7-day follow-up
- Prenatal and Postpartum Care/ Timeliness of Prenatal Care

Prevea Health Plan had 1 above average rates (and 21 below average rates)

- Follow-Up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness/ 7-day follow-up

Valley Health Plan had 1 above average rate (and 2 below average rates)

- Comprehensive Diabetic Care/Monitoring for Diabetic Nephropathy

Atrium Health Plan had zero above average rates (and 5 below average rates)

Dean Health Plan had zero above average rates (and 3 below average rates)

MercyCare Health Plan had zero above average rates (and 1 below average rate)

- Follow-Up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness/ 7-day follow-up

Individual HMOs Compared to State Average: Below Average Performance

The HMOs are listed in the order of the most rates with a below average score. A score is considered significantly below average if it is 10 percentage points below the mean for a plan with a sample size of 100 or greater or 20 percentage points below the mean for a plan with a sample size of at least 30 but less than 100. As with above average performance, it should be taken into consideration that the smaller HMOs that experienced sample size issues were excluded from some measures (see Appendix 3).

It is also important to keep in mind that although an HMO may have scored below the average, they may have achieved the national average provided by NCQA. Those rates in which the HMO met the national average are noted below.

Prevea Health Plan had 21 below average rates (and 1 above average rate)

- Adolescent Immunization Status/MMR
- Adolescent Immunization Status/Hepatitis B
- Adolescent Immunization Status/VZV
- Adolescent Immunization Status/Combination #1
- Adolescent Immunization Status/Combination #2
- Childhood Immunization Status/ DTaP
- Childhood Immunization Status/ IPV
- Childhood Immunization Status/ MMR
- Childhood Immunization Status/ HiB
- Childhood Immunization Status/ Hepatitis B
- Childhood Immunization Status/ Combination #1
- Childhood Immunization Status/ Combination #2
- Cholesterol Management after Acute Cardiovascular Events/ LDL-C Level
- Comprehensive Diabetes Care/HbA1c Testing
- Comprehensive Diabetes Care/Poor HbA1c Control
- Comprehensive Diabetes Care/Eye Exam
- Comprehensive Diabetes Care/ LDL-C Screening
- Comprehensive Diabetes Care/ LDL-C Level
- Comprehensive Diabetes Care/ Monitoring for Diabetic Nethropathy
- Controlling High Blood Pressure/ Blood Pressure Measure
- Prenatal and Postpartum Care/Timeliness of Prenatal Care

Medical Associates had 8 below average rates (and 3 above average rates)

- Adolescent Immunization Status/ Hepatitis B
- Adolescent Immunization Status/ Combination #1
- Adolescent Immunization Status/ Combination #2
- Antidepressant Medication Management/ Effective Acute Phase Treatment
- Antidepressant Medication Management/ Effective Continuation Phase Treatment
- Chlamydia Screening/Age 21-26
- Chlamydia Screening/Chlamydia Total
- Well-Child Visits in the First 15 Months of Life

Atrium Health Plan had 5 below average rates (and no above average rates)

- Adolescent Immunization Status/ MMR
- Adolescent Immunization Status/Hepatitis B
- Adolescent Immunization Status/VZV

- Adolescent Immunization Status/Combination #1
- Adolescent Immunization Status/Combination #2

GHC-Eau Claire had 4 below average rates (and 2 above average rates)

- Adolescent Immunization Status/VZV
- Adolescent Immunization Status/Combination #1 (met the national average)
- Adolescent Immunization Status/Combination #2
- Comprehensive Diabetic Care/ Monitoring for Diabetic Nephropathy

Health Tradition had 3 below average rates (and 7 above average rates)

- Adolescent Immunization Status/VZV
- Adolescent Immunization Status/Combination #2
- Well-Child Visits in the Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Years of Life

Physicians Plus had 4 below average rates (and 3 above average rates)

- Controlling High Blood Pressure/Blood Pressure Measure
- Cholesterol Management after Acute Cardiovascular Events/LDL-C Level
- Comprehensive Diabetes Care/Eye Exam
- Well-Child Visits in the First 15 Months of Life

Dean Health Plan had 3 below average rates (and zero above average rates)

- Adolescent Immunization Status/ Hepatitis B (met the national average)
- Comprehensive Diabetes Care/Monitoring for Diabetic Nephropathy
- Well-Child Visits in the First 15 Months of Life

Humana had 3 below average rates (and 3 above average rates)

- Comprehensive Diabetes Care/Eye Exam (met the national average)
- Comprehensive Diabetes Care/ Monitoring for Diabetic Nethropathy (met the national average)
- Antidepressant Medication Management/ Optimal Practitioner Contacts for Medication Management

Unity Health Plan had 3 below average rates (and 2 above average rates)

- Adolescent Immunization Status/VZV
- Adolescent Immunization Status/Combination #2
- Follow-Up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness/30-day follow-up

CompcareBlue had 2 below average rates (and 4 above average rates)

- Use of Appropriate Medications for People with Asthma/ Asthma age 5-9
- Comprehensive Diabetes Care/Monitoring for Diabetic Nephropathy

Gundersen Lutheran had 2 below average rates (and 3 above average rates)

- Follow-Up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness/7-day follow-up
- Well-Child Visits in the First 15 Months of Life

Touchpoint Health Plan had 2 below average rates (and 14 above average rates)

- Children's Access to Primary care Practitioners/Access 7-11 years
Adolescent Well-Care Visits

Valley Health Plan had 2 below average rates (and one above average rate)

- Adolescent Immunization Status/VZV
- Adolescent Immunization Status/Combination #2

MercyCare Health Plan had 1 below average rate (and 1 above average rate)

- Childhood Immunization Status/ Combination #1

Network-Fox Valley had 1 below average rates (and 7 above average rates)

- Follow-Up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness/7-day follow-up

GHC-South Central had zero below average rates (and 6 above average rates)

Conclusions

Overall Wisconsin HMOs continue to perform better than HMOs across the country. However, there are significant differences in the performance of HMOs. HMOs such as Touchpoint, Network health Plan, and GHC-South Central scored high on several measures while HMOs such as Prevea scored below average on scores across several important measures and had few high scores.

These findings are significant and address actionable areas in which improvements could be made to better serve Wisconsin state and local employees. These findings, and the findings of future HEDIS studies, need to continue to be shared with consumers and addressed with the HMOs. In fact, according to NCQA, organizations that have their HEDIS scores published score higher than organizations that do not have their scores published. As we gain more experience with HEDIS data it makes sense to consider rewarding high quality care as measured by HEDIS and other measures of quality such as CAHPS and Leapfrog.

Summary of Appendixes

Appendix 1: Description of HEDIS Measures

Appendix 2: Comparison of 2002 Participating HMO averages to 2001 averages and 2002 National Averages

Appendix 3: HEDIS 2002 State HMO Performance on 48 scores

Appendix 4: Childhood Immunization Status/VZV (Chicken Pox): A comparison between 2001 and 2002 HMO performance

Appendix 5: Adolescent Immunization Status/VZV (Chicken Pox): A comparison between 2001 and 2002 HMO performance

Appendix 6: Comprehensive Diabetes Care/LDL Level: A comparison between 2001 and 2002 HMO performance