LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

State Fiscal Year July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023

External Quality Review Technical Report

Aggregate Report for the Healthy Louisiana Managed Care Organizations

April 2024

HSAG HEALTH SERVICES ADVISORY GROUP

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Acknowledgments and Copyrights

1. Executive Summary

Introduction

The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA), Public Law 105-33, requires states that contract with managed care organizations (MCOs), prepaid ambulatory health plans (PAHPs), and prepaid inpatient health plans (PIHPs) (collectively referred to as "managed care entities [MCEs]" in this report) for administering Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) programs to contract with a qualified external quality review organization (EQRO) to provide an independent external quality review (EQR) of the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of services provided by the contracted MCEs. Revisions to the regulations originally articulated in the BBA were released in the May 2016 Medicaid and CHIP Managed Care Regulations,[1-1] with further revisions released in November 2020.[1-2] The final rule is provided in Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations (42 CFR) Part 438 and cross-referenced in the CHIP regulations at 42 CFR Part 457. To comply with 42 CFR §438.358, the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) has contracted with Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. (HSAG), a qualified EQRO.

The Louisiana Medicaid Managed Care Program

The day-to-day operations of the Louisiana Medicaid managed care program are the responsibility of the Bureau of Health Services Financing within LDH, with oversight of specialized behavioral health services, 1115 Substance Use Demonstration Waiver, and the Coordinated System of Care Waiver provided by the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH). In addition, the Bureau of Health Services Financing receives support from other LDH "program offices"—Office of Public Health (OPH), Office of Aging and Adult Services (OAAS), and Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD). Louisiana Medicaid managed care provides services to over 1.8 million Louisianans, which is approximately 39 percent of the State's population.

The current MCE contracts are full-risk capitated Louisiana Medicaid managed care contracts. Under the authority of a 1915(b) waiver from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), LDH contracts with six Healthy Louisiana MCOs to provide physical and behavioral healthcare, including Humana Healthy Horizons, which started on January 1, 2023; and two dental PAHPs to provide dental services for Louisiana's Medicaid and CHIP members. Additionally, under the authority of a

[1-1] Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Programs; Medicaid Managed Care, CHIP Delivered in Managed Care, and Revisions Related to Third Party Liability, May 6, 2016. Available at: https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/05/06/2016-09581/medicaid-and-childrens-health-insurance-program-chip-programs-medicaid-managed-care-chip-delivered. Accessed on: Jan 9, 2024.

[1-2] Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Medicaid Program; Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Managed Care, November 13, 2020. Available at: https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/11/13/2020-24758/medicaid-program-medicaid-and-childrens-health-insurance-program-chip-managed-care. Accessed on: Jan 9, 2024.

1915(b)/1915(c) waiver from CMS, OBH contracts with a single behavioral health PIHP, Coordinated System of Care (CSoC), to help children with behavioral health challenges who are at risk for out-of-home placement. The MCEs contracted during state fiscal year (SFY) 2023 (July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023) are displayed in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1—Louisiana's Medicaid MCEs

MCE Name	Plan Type	Services Provided	Service Region	Acronym or Abbreviated Reference
Aetna Better Health	MCO	Behavioral and physical health	Statewide	ABH
AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana	MCO	Behavioral and physical health	Statewide	ACLA
Healthy Blue	MCO	Behavioral and physical health	Statewide	HBL
Humana Healthy Horizons (new plan as of 01/01/2023)	MCO	Behavioral and physical health	Statewide	HUM
Louisiana Healthcare Connections	MCO	Behavioral and physical health	Statewide	LHCC
UnitedHealthcare Community	MCO	Behavioral and physical health	Statewide	UHC
DentaQuest USA Insurance Company (DentaQuest)	PAHP	Dental	Statewide	DQ
Managed Care North America	PAHP	Dental	Statewide	MCNA
Magellan of Louisiana	PIHP	Behavioral health services for children and youth with significant behavioral health challenges	Statewide	Magellan

Scope of External Quality Review

As set forth in 42 CFR §438.358, HSAG conducted all EQR-related activities in compliance with the CMS EQR Protocols released in February 2023.[1-3] For the SFY 2023 assessment, HSAG used findings from the mandatory and optional EQR activities to derive conclusions and make recommendations about

[1-3] Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. *External Quality Review (EQR) Protocols, February 2023*. Available at: https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/2023-eqr-protocols.pdf. Accessed on: Jan 9, 2024.

the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of healthcare services provided by each MCE. Table 1-2 depicts the EQR activities conducted for each plan type.

Table 1-2—EQR Activities Conducted for Each Plan Type

EQR Activities	Description	CMS EQR Protocol	MCO	PAHP	PIHP
Performance Improvement Project (PIP) Validation	This activity verifies whether a PIP conducted by an MCE used sound methodology in its design, implementation, analysis, and reporting, and whether the PIP demonstrated significant improvement in performance.	Protocol 1. Validation of Performance Improvement Projects	✓	✓	✓
Performance Evaluation and Improvement	This activity assesses whether the performance measures calculated by an MCE are accurate based on the measure specifications and State reporting requirements.	Protocol 2. Validation of Performance Measures	✓	✓	✓
Compliance Reviews (CRs)	This activity determines the extent to which a Medicaid and CHIP MCE is in compliance with federal standards and associated state-specific requirements, when applicable.	Protocol 3. Review of Compliance With Medicaid and CHIP Managed Care Regulations	✓	✓	✓
Network Adequacy and Availability Validation (NAV)	This activity assesses the extent to which an MCE has adequate provider networks in coverage areas to deliver healthcare services to its managed care members.	Protocol 4. Validation of Network Adequacy*	✓		
Consumer Surveys: CAHPS-A and CAHPS-C	This activity reports the results of each MCO's CAHPS survey to HSAG for inclusion in this report.	Protocol 6. Administration or Validation of Quality of Care Surveys	✓		
Behavioral Health Member Satisfaction Survey	This activity assesses adult members with a behavioral or mental health diagnosis and child members with a mental health diagnosis who have received behavioral health services and are enrolled in an MCO.	Protocol 6. Administration or Validation of Quality of Care Surveys	✓		
Case Management Performance Evaluation (CMPE)	This activity evaluates case management (CM) services to determine the number of individuals, the types of conditions, and the impact that CM	Protocol 9. Conducting Focus Studies of Health Care Quality	✓		

EQR Activities	Description	CMS EQR Protocol	MCO	PAHP	PIHP
	services have on members receiving those services.				
Quality Rating System (QRS)	This activity evaluates and applies a rating to measure the quality of care and performance of the MCOs to provide information to help eligible members choose an MCO.	Protocol 10. Assist With Quality Rating of Medicaid and CHIP MCOs, PIHPs, and PAHPs	✓		

**Protocol 4. Validation of Network Adequacy* was released in February 2023; therefore, full implementation will occur with the 2024 NAV activities.

Report Purpose

To comply with federal healthcare regulations at 42 CFR Part 438, LDH contracts with HSAG to annually provide to CMS an assessment of the performance of the State's Medicaid and CHIP MCEs, as required at 42 CFR §438.364. This annual EQR technical report includes results of all EQR-related activities that the EQRO conducted with Louisiana Medicaid MCEs throughout SFY 2023. This EQR technical report is intended to help the Louisiana Medicaid managed care program:

- Identify areas for quality improvement (QI).
- Ensure alignment among an MCE's Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement (QAPI) requirements, the State's quality strategy, and the annual EQR activities.
- Purchase high-value care.
- Achieve a higher performance healthcare delivery system for Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries.
- Improve the State's ability to oversee and manage the MCEs with which it contracts for services.
- Help the MCEs improve their performance with respect to the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of care.

Definitions

HSAG used the following definitions to evaluate and draw conclusions about the performance of each Louisiana Medicaid MCE in each of the domains of quality, timeliness, and access.

Quality	Timeliness	Access
as it pertains to the EQR, means the degree to which an MCO, PIHP, PAHP, or primary care case management (PCCM) entity (described in §438.310[c][2]) increases the likelihood of desired health outcomes of its enrollees through its structural and operational characteristics; the provision of services that are consistent with current professional, evidence-based knowledge; and interventions for performance improvement.	as it pertains to EQR, is described by NCQA to meet the following criteria: "The organization makes utilization decisions in a timely manner to accommodate the clinical urgency of a situation." It further discusses the intent of this standard to minimize any disruption in the provision of healthcare. HSAG extends this definition to include other managed care provisions that impact services to members and that require a timely response from the MCO (e.g., processing expedited member appeals and providing timely follow-up care).	as it pertains to EQR, means the timely use of services to achieve optimal outcomes, as evidenced by managed care plans successfully demonstrating and reporting on outcome information for the availability and timeliness elements defined under §438.68 (network adequacy standards) and §438.206 (availability of services). Under §438.206, availability of services means that each state must ensure that all services covered under the state plan are available and accessible to enrollees of MCOs, PIHPs, and PAHPs in a timely manner.

[1] Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Federal Register Vol. 81 No. 18/Friday, May 6, 2016, Rules and Regulations, p. 27882. 42 CFR §438.320 Definitions; Medicaid Program; External Quality Review, Final Rule.
[2] National Committee for Quality Assurance. *2013 Standards and Guidelines for MBHOs and MCOs.*

Methodologies

Requirement 42 CFR §438.364(a)(1) describes the manner in which (1) the data from all activities conducted in accordance with 42 CFR §438.358 were aggregated and analyzed, and (2) conclusions were drawn as to the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of care furnished by each MCO.

Aggregating and Analyzing Statewide Data

HSAG follows a four-step process to aggregate and analyze data collected from all EQR activities and draw conclusions about the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of care furnished by each MCO, as well as the program overall. To produce Healthy Louisiana's MCO aggregate SFY 2023 EQR technical report, HSAG performed the following steps to analyze the data obtained and draw statewide conclusions about the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of care and services provided by the MCOs:

Step 1: HSAG analyzed the quantitative results obtained from each EQR activity for each MCO to identify strengths and weaknesses in each domain of quality, timeliness, and access to services furnished by the MCO for the EQR activity.

Step 2: From the information collected, HSAG identified common themes and the salient patterns that emerged across EQR activities for each domain and drew conclusions about overall quality, timeliness, and access to care and services furnished by the MCO.

Step 3: From the information collected, HSAG identified common themes and the salient patterns that emerged across all EQR activities related to strengths and opportunities for improvement in one or more of the domains of quality, timeliness, and access to care and services furnished by the MCO.

Step 4: HSAG identified any patterns and commonalities that exist across the program to draw conclusions about the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of care for the program.

Louisiana's Medicaid Managed Care Quality Strategy

In accordance with 42 CFR §438.340, LDH implemented a written quality strategy for assessing and improving the quality of healthcare and services furnished by the MCEs to Louisiana Medicaid managed care members under the Louisiana Medicaid managed care program. Louisiana's Medicaid Managed Care Quality Strategy (quality strategy) dated June 2022 is guided by the Triple Aim of the National Quality Strategy.

LDH's mission is to protect and promote health and to ensure access to medical, preventive, and rehabilitative services for citizens of the State of Louisiana. The Louisiana Medicaid managed care program is responsible for providing high-quality, innovative, and cost-effective healthcare to Medicaid members.

Goals and Objectives

The quality strategy identified goals and objectives that focus on process as well as achieving outcomes. The goals and supporting objectives are measurable and take into consideration the health status of all populations served by the Louisiana Medicaid managed care program.

The quality strategy identifies the following three aims and eight associated goals:

Better Care: Make healthcare more person-centered, coordinated, and accessible so it occurs at the "Right care, right time, right place."

Goal 1: Ensure access to care to meet enrollee needs

Goal 2: Improve coordination and transitions of care

Goal 3: Facilitate patient-centered, whole-person care

Healthier People, Healthier Communities: Improve the health of Louisianans through better prevention and treatment and proven interventions that address physical, behavioral, and social needs.

Goal 4: Promote wellness and prevention

Goal 5: Improve chronic disease management and control

Goal 6: Partner with communities to improve population health and address health disparities

Smarter Spending: Demonstrate good stewardship of public resources by ensuring high-value, efficient care.

Goal 7: Pay for value and incentivize innovation

Goal 8: Minimize wasteful spending

Quality Strategy Evaluation[1-4]

Strengths

LDH considers the quality strategy to be its roadmap for the future. Overall, the quality strategy represents an effective tool for measuring and improving the quality of Louisiana's Medicaid managed care services. The quality strategy promotes identification of creative initiatives to continually monitor, assess, and improve access to care, the quality of care and services, member satisfaction, and the timeliness of service delivery for Louisiana Medicaid managed care members. Additionally, LDH's initiatives tie to the quality strategy aims, goals, and objectives. The quality strategy strives to ensure members receive high-quality care that is safe, efficient, patient-centered, timely, value- and quality-based, data-driven, and equitable.

LDH conducts oversight of the MCEs in coordination with the quality strategy to promote accountability and transparency for improving health outcomes. The MCE should be committed to QI and its overall approach, and specific strategies will be used to advance the quality strategy and incentive-based quality measures.

Recommendations

HSAG's EQR results and guidance on actions assist LDH in evaluating the MCEs' performance and progress in achieving the goals of the program's quality strategy. These actions, if implemented, may assist LDH and the MCEs in achieving and exceeding goals. In addition to providing each MCE with specific guidance, HSAG offers LDH the following recommendations, which should positively impact the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of services provided to Medicaid members:

- HSAG recommends LDH consider a change in metric benchmarks so the MCEs can strive toward a consistent performance level. HSAG recommends LDH remove the target objectives and improvement objectives and establish benchmarks for all MCEs that align with nationally recognized quality measures (e.g., NCQA Quality Compass, CMS Adult and Child Core Sets) or the State's performance published in the CMS Annual State Measure Trends Snapshot, Chart Packs for the Child Core Set and Adult Core Set, or the State Profile pages on Medicaid.gov.

[1-4] Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. Medicaid Managed Care Quality Strategy Evaluation, Review Period: March 20, 2022–March 19, 2023, July 2023. Louisiana Department of Health. Available at: https://ldh.la.gov/assets/docs/MQI/Strategy/MQIStrategyEvaluation.pdf. Accessed on: Jan 9, 2024.

- HSAG recommends LDH consider using the measurement year (MY) 2023 reported rates in the 2024 quality strategy evaluation, which could include MY 2021 through MY 2023 results in order to include the most current data for evaluation.
- HSAG recommends LDH remove the duplicate objective, promote healthy development and wellness in children and adolescents.
- HSAG recommends LDH consider adding the objectives, improve overall health and promote reproductive health objectives, to the quality strategy.
- HSAG recommends LDH continue to collaborate with the MCOs to support adequate QI capacity, skills, and resources to support current and future PIPs. HSAG recommends LDH continue to meet regularly with the MCOs and share best practices for identifying QI goals, objectives, and interventions. Furthermore, LDH could consider incorporating a similar mechanism for the PAHPs to collaborate on current and future PIPs. HSAG also recommends LDH consider hosting a forum in which the MCEs could discuss programwide solutions to overcome barriers. These QI activities provide opportunities to improve population health by implementing best practices and addressing barriers and challenges.
- HSAG recommends LDH identify expectations for improvement targets over a three-year period. Current target improvements compare to the previous measurement year and do not consider the baseline measurement year.
- HSAG recommends the MCEs consider whether there are disparities within their populations that contributed to lower performance in a particular race or ethnicity, age group, ZIP Code, etc. HSAG recommends the MCEs target QI interventions to reduce the identified disparities.
- HSAG recommends LDH consider working with the MCEs to share performance measure best practices and identify interdependencies across measures.
- HSAG recommends LDH consider a contract statement for all MCEs that the MCE's quality initiatives must be designed to help achieve the goals outlined in the quality strategy. Currently only the MCOs have this contract requirement.
- HSAG recommends LDH consider removing aim statements from the quality strategy. CMS defines "quality strategy goals" as SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound), high-level managed care performance aims that provide direction for the State. CMS defines quality strategy (SMART) objectives as measurable steps toward meeting the State's goals that typically include quality measures.

Overview of External Quality Review Findings

Validation of Performance Improvement Projects

With the start of HSAG's EQRO contract with LDH in March 2023, HSAG initiated PIP validation training and technical assistance activities to assist LDH and the MCOs in transitioning to HSAG's PIP validation process and methodology. The MCOs actively worked on PIPs throughout SFY 2023, and PIP validation activities were initiated. LDH required the MCOs to conduct PIPs on the following five state-mandated topics during SFY 2023:

- *Behavioral Health Transitions in Care*
- *Ensuring Access to the COVID-19 [coronavirus disease 2019] Vaccine Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees*
- *Fluoride Varnish Application to Primary Teeth of Enrollees Aged 6 Months to 5 Years*
- *Improving Cervical Cancer Screening Rates Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees*
- *Screening for HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] Infection*

At the time this report was drafted, HSAG's first validation cycle of the MCOs' PIPs was in progress and is scheduled to be completed in SFY 2024; therefore, final validation findings, including assessment of indicator results, interventions, strengths and opportunities, and recommendations will be reported in next year's annual EQR technical report.

Validation of Performance Measures

HSAG's validation of the MCOs' performance measures confirmed compliance with the standards of Title 42 CFR §438.330(a)(1). The results of the validation activity determined that each MCO was compliant with the standards of Title 42 CFR §438.330(c)(2).

Information Systems Capabilities Assessment

Based on a review of the final audit reports (FARs) issued by each MCO's independent certified HEDIS compliance auditor, HSAG found that all MCOs met the standard for all seven of the applicable NCQA HEDIS information systems (IS) standards.

Of note, HUM was a new MCO to Louisiana Medicaid as of January 1, 2023; therefore, HUM did not have an MY 2022 FAR to submit for SFY 2023 reporting. As such, HSAG's findings related to each HEDIS IS standard is not reflected in the SFY 2023 EQR technical report. However, results from an Information Systems Capabilities Assessment (ISCA) performed as part of HUM's contract readiness review by Mercer, issued on November 7, 2022, can be referenced in HUM's SFY 2023 EQR technical report.

HEDIS—Quality, Timeliness, and Access

HSAG's analysis was based on comparison of HEDIS measures/measure indicators to the MY 2022 NCQA national 50th percentile, which served as the benchmark. A total of 47 measures, comprising 89 measure indicators, were selected for analysis. Of the 89 measure indicators, 11 were not reported in Quality Compass and were therefore removed from the respective analyses due to lack of a benchmark.

Of the 78 HEDIS measures/measure indicators with an associated benchmark, UHC demonstrated the highest performance with 39 measure indicators performing greater than the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark (51 percent), with ACLA and HBL also demonstrating higher performance with 31 (41 percent) and 30 (39 percent) measure indicators performing greater than the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark, respectively. ABH and LHCC had the most measure indicators that performed lower than the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark, with 58 (76 percent) and 51 (67 percent), respectively. Detailed results are shown in Section 3—Validation of Performance Measures.

Assessment of Compliance With Medicaid Managed Care Regulations

HSAG conducted a CR for Standard I—Enrollment and Disenrollment. Of the five MCOs reviewed, all MCOs met the requirements for three elements (3, 4, and 5), demonstrating that policies indicated that member disenrollment was not requested as a result of an adverse change in a member's health status, utilization of services, or diminished mental capacity. The MCOs implemented documented processes that focused on ensuring that members were not disenrolled for any reason other than those stated in the LDH contract. However, the MCOs did not consistently include all member for cause and without cause reasons to disenroll in MCO policies, procedures, manuals, or handbooks.

HSAG also reviewed the MCOs' corrective action plans (CAPs) from the LDH-approved 2022 CR. All MCOs demonstrated positive improvements in implementing CAPs from 2022 and must implement the remaining approved CAPs for elements for which compliance was not achieved.

Validation of Network Adequacy

PDV

HSAG's provider directory validation (PDV) indicated that, overall, the provider information maintained and provided by the plans was poor, which impacted access to care due to the inability of members to find a provider that delivered the requested services. Table 1-3 provides a summary of the findings from the study.

Table 1-3—Summary of Findings

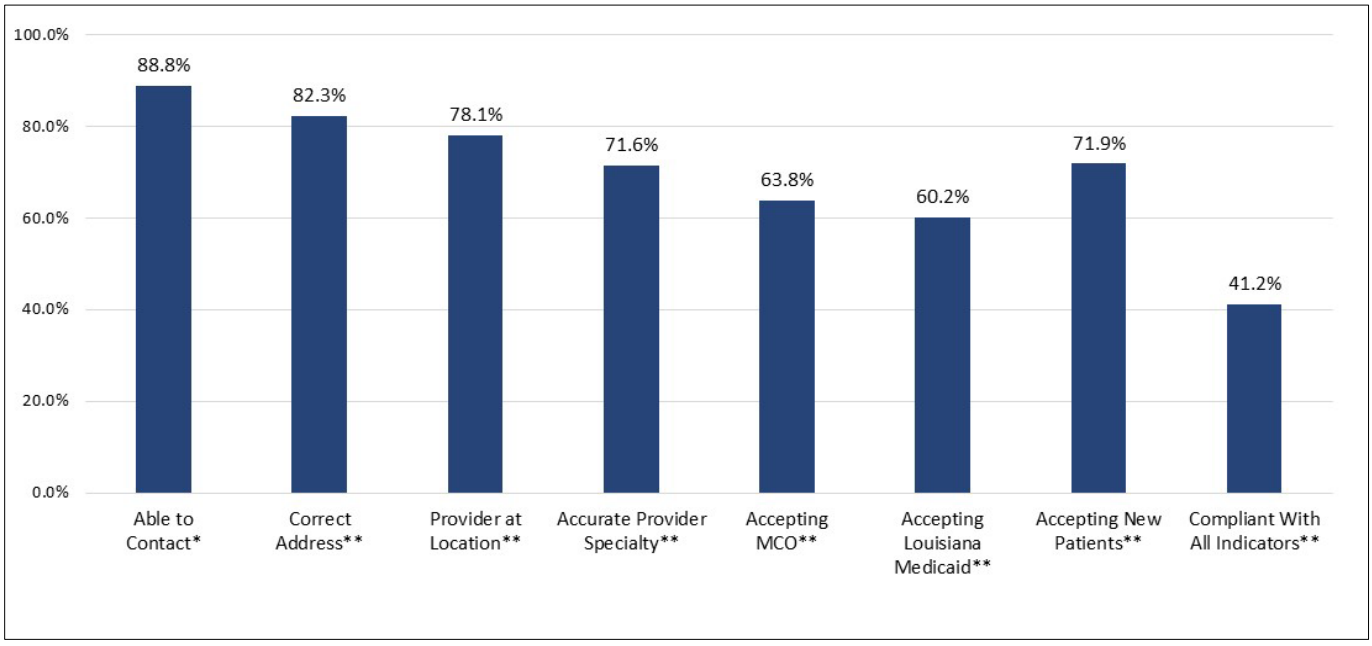
Concerns	Findings
Acceptance of Louisiana Medicaid was inaccurate.	Overall, 60.2 percent of providers accepted Louisiana Medicaid.
Acceptance of the MCO was inaccurate.	Overall, 63.8 percent of providers accepted the requested MCO.

Concerns	Findings
Provider's specialty in the provider directory was incorrect.	Overall, 71.6 percent of providers confirmed the specialty listed in the online provider directory was accurate.
Overall acceptance of new patients was low.	Overall, 71.9 percent of providers accepted new patients; however, only providers listed as accepting new patients in the online provider directory were selected for the PDV reviews.
Affiliation with the sampled provider was low.	Overall, 78.1 percent of the locations confirmed affiliation with the sampled provider.
Address information was incorrect.	Overall, 82.3 percent of respondents reported that the MCO provider directory reflected the correct address.

While the overall response rate was relatively high at 88.8 percent, once contacted, the offices reported varying degrees of match rates for the online provider directory information. Accuracy of the provider's specialty, MCO acceptance, and Louisiana Medicaid acceptance exhibited the lowest match rates. Overall, only 41.2 percent of providers were compliant with all PDV indicators.

Figure 1-1 presents the summary results for all sampled providers and the percent compliant with all PDV indicators.

Figure 1-1—Summary Results for All Sampled Providers



*The denominator includes all sampled providers.
** The denominator includes cases reached.

Table 1-4 presents the PDV weighted compliance scores by MCO. Please see the NAV methodology for the weighted compliance score calculation criteria.

Table 1-4—PDV Weighted Compliance Scores

MCO	Total	Compliant	Weighted Compliance Score
Overall	**750**	**309**	**47.8%**
ABH	125	21	27.5%
ACLA	125	72	62.1%
HBL	125	43	42.4%
HUM	125	49	44.0%
LHCC	125	65	59.5%
UHC	125	59	51.2%

Quarter 2 through Quarter 4 PDV and provider access survey results were not final at the time of reporting. Final results from these activities will be included in the SFY 2024 EQR technical report.

GeoAccess

For geographic access (GeoAccess), the MCOs reported the percentage of members having access within required distance standards for 22 physical health provider types and 19 behavioral health provider types for urban and rural distance targets. For each provider type, LDH set standards for urban and rural distances and requires the MCOs to achieve 100 percent. The MCOs reported results for four quarters of SFY 2023 (except for HUM, which only reported quarters 3 and 4 for behavioral health providers).

The GeoAccess results indicated that the MCOs achieved greater compliance with physical health than behavioral health, and the rural standards were met more often than urban standards. Overall, all MCOs failed to meet LDH's 100 percent target for all provider types in both urban and rural areas. There were six physical health specialty provider types that all MCOs achieved above 99 percent for both urban and rural areas for the entire state fiscal year. All MCOs also achieved above 99 percent for the state fiscal year in rural areas for adult and pediatric primary care, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Rural Health Centers (RHCs), and ancillary care—pharmacy. For the behavioral health provider types, all MCOs met urban and rural standards for SFY 2023 for pediatric psychiatric residential treatment facilities (PRTFs) and inpatient psychiatric. Please note that HUM was excluded from this results summary as it was a new MCO to the Louisiana market as of January 2023; therefore, HUM did not report results for all four quarters.

Consumer Surveys: CAHPS-A and CAHPS-C

HSAG compared the MCOs' 2023 achievement scores to the 2023 Healthy Louisiana statewide average (SWA) to determine whether there were statistically significant differences.

Overall, some MCOs' individual 2023 achievement scores revealed strengths in the adult and general child populations. For the adult population, results revealed HBL's achievement score for *Rating of Health Plan* was statistically significantly higher than the 2023 Healthy Louisiana SWA. For the general child population, results revealed UHC's achievement score for *How Well Doctors Communicate* was statistically significantly higher than the 2023 Healthy Louisiana SWA.

Furthermore, opportunities for improvement were not identified for the MCOs' adult and general child populations as 2023 achievement scores were not statistically significantly lower than the 2023 Healthy Louisiana SWA for any measures.

Behavioral Health Member Satisfaction Survey

HSAG compared the MCOs' 2023 achievement scores to the 2023 Healthy Louisiana SWA to determine whether there were statistically significant differences. Overall, the MCOs' adult and child 2023 scores were not statistically significantly higher or lower than the Healthy Louisiana SWA; therefore, no strengths or opportunities for improvement were identified.

Case Management Performance Evaluation

During SFY 2023, HSAG and LDH collaborated to determine the scope, methodology, data sources, and timing of the CMPE. HSAG will conduct the focus study in SFY 2024. Results, including conclusions, strengths, and opportunities for improvement, will be reported in the SFY 2024 EQR technical report.

Quality Rating System

Figure 1-2 displays the 2023 Health Plan Report Card, which presents the 2023 rating results for each MCO. The 2023 Health Plan Report Card shows that, for the Overall Rating, four MCOs (ABH, ACLA, HBL, and UHC) received 3.5 stars, and one MCO (LHCC) received 3.0 stars. For the Consumer Satisfaction composite, three MCOs (ACLA, HBL, and UHC) received 4.0 stars, and one MCO (LHCC) received 3.0 stars. The remaining MCO (ABH) did not have sufficient CAHPS data to receive a rating for this composite. For the Prevention composite, ACLA, HBL, and UHC each received 3.0 stars, while ABH received the lowest rating at 2.0 stars. For the Treatment composite, ABH, HBL, and UHC each received 3.0 stars, while the remaining two MCOs (ACLA and LHCC) both received 2.5 stars.

Figure 1-2—2023 Health Plan Report Card

Issued 09/2023

Healthy Louisiana

2023 HEALTH PLAN REPORT CARD

The ratings below compare the performance of Louisiana's Medicaid health plans. This report card shows the results of care in the areas of Consumer Satisfaction, Prevention, and Treatment, and can aid you and your family when deciding on a health plan.

PERFORMANCE KEY	Lowest	Low	Average	High	Highest	Insufficient Data
	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	—

	Aetna Better Health	AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana	Healthy Blue	Humana Healthy Horizons	Louisiana Healthcare Connections	UnitedHealthcare Community Plan
Overall Rating	★★★½	★★★½	★★★½	*New	★★★	★★★½
CONSUMER SATISFACTION						
Overall Consumer Satisfaction	—	★★★★	★★★★	*New	★★★	★★★★
Getting care: How easily and quickly did members get appointments, preventive care, tests, and treatments?	—	★★★½	★★★½	*New	★★½	★★★★
Satisfaction with plan physicians: How happy are members with their primary care doctors?	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	*New	★★★½	★★★★
Satisfaction with plan services: How happy are members with their health plan and their overall care?	★★★½	★★★★	★★★★½	*New	★★★	★★★★½
PREVENTION						
Overall Prevention	★★	★★★	★★★	*New	★★½	★★★
Children/adolescent well-care: Do children and adolescents receive vaccines and weight assessments?	★½	★★½	★★½	*New	★★	★★½
Women's reproductive health: Do women receive care before and after their babies are born?	★★★	★★★	★★★	*New	★★½	★★★

Continued on next page...

Figure 1-2—2023 Health Plan Report Card (cont.)

	Aetna Better Health	AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana	Healthy Blue	Humana Healthy Horizons	Louisiana Healthcare Connections	UnitedHealthcare Community Plan
Cancer screening: Do female members receive important cancer screenings?	★★★	★★★½	★★★	*New	★★★½	★★★★
Other preventive services: Do members receive important preventive services?	★★½	★★★½	★★★	*New	★★★	★★★
TREATMENT						
Overall Treatment	★★★	★★½	★★★	*New	★★½	★★★
Respiratory: Do people with respiratory issues get the services/treatments they need?	★★	★★	★★½	*New	★★½	★½
Diabetes: Do people with diabetes get the services/ treatments they need?	★★★½	★★★	★★★½	*New	★★	★★★★
Heart disease: Do people with heart disease get the services/ treatments they need?	★★★	★★★	★★	*New	★★½	★★★
Behavioral health—care coordination: Do people with behavioral health issues get the follow-up care they need?	★	★½	★½	*New	★½	★½
Behavioral health—medication adherence: Do people with behavioral health issues stay on prescribed medications?	★★★	★★½	★★	*New	★★★	★★
Behavioral health—access, monitoring, and safety: Do people on behavioral health medications receive the services/ monitoring they need?	★★★★	★★★	★★★½	*New	★★★	★★★★
Risk-adjusted utilization: Do members who are discharged from the hospital have unplanned readmissions within 30 days?	★★★	★★★	★★★	*New	★★★	★

This report card is reflective of data collected between January 2022 and December 2022.

**Due to Humana Healthy Horizons being a new plan in 2023, data are not available yet. Humana Healthy Horizons will be included in future health plan report cards.*

The categories and measures included in this report card are based on the 2023 National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Health Plan Ratings and LDH required measures lists. When feasible, categories and measures were kept consistent with the prior year's health plan report card, but some measures and categories were removed due to data availability. Any analysis, interpretation, and conclusions based on the data is solely that of the author. Anyone desiring to use or reproduce the materials must obtain approval from LDH.

2. Validation of Performance Improvement Projects

Aggregate Results

SFY 2023 was the first year that HSAG was contracted as the EQRO for LDH. HSAG's EQRO contract with LDH was initiated in March 2023, and HSAG initiated PIP validation transition activities, training, and technical assistance activities the same month. During SFY 2023, HSAG worked with LDH to transition the MCOs to HSAG's PIP validation process and methodology. The MCOs actively worked on PIPs throughout SFY 2023, and PIP validation activities were initiated. At the time this report was drafted, HSAG's first validation cycle of the MCOs' PIPs was in progress; therefore, final validation findings, including assessment of indicator results, interventions, strengths and opportunities, and recommendations will be reported in next year's annual EQR technical report.

LDH required the MCOs to carry out PIPs to address five state-mandated topics during SFY 2023. Table 2-1 summarizes the PIP topics carried out by each MCO.

Table 2-1—SFY 2023 MCO PIP Topics and Targeted Age Groups

PIP Topic	Targeted Age Group
Behavioral Health Transitions in Care	• 6 years and older • 13 years and older
Ensuring Access to the COVID-19 Vaccine Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	• 5–11 years • 12–15 years • 16 years and older
Fluoride Varnish Application to Primary Teeth of Enrollees Aged 6 Months to 5 Years	• 6 months–18 months • 19 months–2 years • 3–5 years
Improving Cervical Cancer Screening Rates Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	• 21–64 years
Screening for HIV Infection	• 13 years and older • 15–65 years

For each PIP topic, the MCOs collaborated on improvement strategies, meeting at least monthly with LDH and other MCOs, throughout the year. The MCOs also submitted updates on improvement strategies and interim indicator results for each PIP topic quarterly that were reviewed by HSAG and LDH. HSAG provided feedback and technical assistance on PIPs to LDH and the MCOs at group and one-on-one meetings throughout the contract year.

Table 2-2 summarizes key PIP validation milestones that occurred from March through June 2023, the end of SFY 2023.

Table 2-2—SFY 2023 MCO PIP Activities

PIP Activities and Milestones	Dates
HSAG provided training to LDH and the MCOs on HSAG's PIP validation process and templates	March–April 2023
Monthly collaborative PIP meeting with LDH, the MCOs, and HSAG	March 2023
Monthly collaborative PIP meeting with LDH, the MCOs, and HSAG	April 2023
The MCOs submitted Quarter 1 PIP updates	April 2023
Monthly collaborative PIP meeting with LDH, the MCOs, and HSAG	May 2023
Monthly collaborative PIP meeting with LDH, the MCOs, and HSAG	June 2023
The MCOs submitted PIP proposals to HSAG for initial review and feedback	June 2023

In SFY 2024, the MCOs will submit the draft PIP reports for initial validation in January 2024 and the final PIP reports for final validation in March 2024. HSAG will complete the first annual validation cycle in April 2024.

Validation Results and Confidence Ratings

HSAG will complete validation of the SFY 2023 MCO PIPs in April 2024, and the final validation results and ratings will be reported in next year's annual EQR technical report.

Performance Indicator Results

The MCOs will report final calendar year (CY) 2023 indicator results in January through March 2024. HSAG will validate the performance indicator results in SFY 2024 and the final performance indicator results for each PIP topic will be included in next year's annual technical report. Table 2-3 summarizes the measurement period that is being completed in CY 2023 and which results will be reported in SFY 2024.

Table 2-3—Measurement Periods in CY 2023 by PIP Topic

PIP Topic	Measurement Period in CY 2023*
Behavioral Health Transitions in Care	Remeasurement 1
Ensuring Access to the COVID-19 Vaccine Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	Remeasurement 1
Fluoride Varnish Application to Primary Teeth of Enrollees Aged 6 Months to 5 Years	Remeasurement 1
Improving Cervical Cancer Screening Rates Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	Baseline
Screening for HIV Infection	Baseline

*The measurement periods listed for CY 2023 apply to all MCOs except Humana Healthy Horizons. For Humana, CY 2023 was the baseline measurement period for all PIP topics because the MCO began operations for the Louisiana Medicaid Program on January 1, 2023.

Interventions

The MCOs will report final 2023 QI activities and interventions in January through March 2024. Table 2-4 through Table 2-9 include barriers and interventions each MCO initially reported early in the validation cycle initiated at the end of SFY 2023. The MCOs will report updated QI activities and interventions in SFY 2024, and HSAG will complete the assessment of each MCO's QI activities and interventions when the validation cycle is completed in SFY 2024. An updated summary of the MCOs' interventions for each PIP topic will be included in next year's annual EQR technical report.

Table 2-4—Barriers and Interventions Reported by ABH for Each PIP Topic

PIP Topic	Barriers	Interventions
Behavioral Health Transitions in Care	• Lack of timely notification for hospital discharge • Providers do not receive details of enrollee's diagnosis and discharge plan • Enrollees not aware of the importance of follow-up care	• Electronic health information exchange of admissions, discharges, and transfers (ADTs) • Enrollee outreach to facilitate CM engagement and follow-up visits
Ensuring Access to the COVID-19 Vaccine Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	• Lack of access to the COVID-19 vaccine • Enrollees may not remember to obtain the second dose of a two-dose vaccine series	• Targeted enrollee outreach to increase awareness on vaccine access and availability • Distribution of eligible enrollee lists and vaccination site lists to primary care providers (PCPs) and facilitation of referrals as needed • Enrollee outreach to eligible enrollees to provide reminder for second vaccine dose
Fluoride Varnish Application to Primary Teeth of Enrollees Aged 6 Months to 5 Years	• Lack of PCP training in varnish application • Lack of enrollee parent/guardian understanding of benefits and importance of fluoride varnish treatment	• Provider outreach and education to include enrollee care gaps, clinical guidelines, training opportunities, and provider reimbursement information • Outreach and education of enrollee parents/guardians on obtaining fluoride varnish from a PCP
Improving Cervical Cancer Screening Rates Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	• Lack of enrollee awareness of the importance of cervical cancer screening • Enrollees may not remember to schedule annual preventive	• Targeted enrollee and community-based educational outreach on cervical cancer screening • Text message reminder campaign for enrollees to schedule preventive services and screenings

PIP Topic	Barriers	Interventions
	appointments, which include cervical cancer screening	
Screening for HIV Infection	• Lack of enrollee knowledge on importance of HIV screening and on resources for obtaining screening	• Text message campaign to provide education for enrollees on the importance of HIV screening and on how to access screening services • Community-based distribution of educational materials to promote HIV screening awareness

Table 2-5—Barriers and Interventions Reported by ACLA for Each PIP Topic

PIP Topic	Barriers	Interventions
Behavioral Health Transitions in Care	• Lack of hospital participation in health information exchange • Provider difficulty in identifying patients needing follow-up care • Lack of member access to care	• Utilization of ADT notification report of emergency department (ED) admits or discharges from the Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for Mental Illness and Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for Substance Use populations • Enrollee outreach and documentation of follow-up appointments scheduled for members discharged from an inpatient facility when enrolled in CM
Ensuring Access to the COVID-19 Vaccine Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	• Lack of access to the COVID-19 vaccine • Challenges with reaching a large volume of eligible members via CM outreach alone	• Develop and implement COVID-19 vaccination outreach to enrollees engaged in CM and not in CM • Distribution of eligible enrollee lists and vaccination site lists to PCPs and facilitate referrals
Fluoride Varnish Application to Primary Teeth of Enrollees Aged 6 Months to 5 Years	• Lack of access to a dental provider • Lack of provider knowledge that fluoride varnish applications can be done in a PCP office	• Outreach and education of members • Dental appointment scheduling assistance for members • Conducting provider outreach and education using care gap reports
Improving Cervical Cancer Screening Rates Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	• Lack of enrollee knowledge of multiple health conditions and	• Enhanced CM outreach to assist members with scheduling cervical cancer screening

PIP Topic	Barriers	Interventions
	importance of obtaining screening • Providers do not consistently recommend screening for enrollees	• Text message reminder campaign for enrollees to schedule preventive services and screenings
Screening for HIV Infection	• Lack of enrollee knowledge on importance of HIV screening and on resources for obtaining screening	• Enhanced Bright Start CM outreach for HIV screening during pregnancy • Enhanced CM outreach for HIV screening for members with current/past injection drug use

Table 2-6—Barriers and Interventions Reported by HBL for Each PIP Topic

PIP Topic	Barriers	Interventions
Behavioral Health Transitions in Care	• Members forget to schedule appointments • Providers' lack of resources to schedule timely appointments	• Enhance timely hospital-to-MCO notification of hospital and ED ADTs • Link enrollees to follow-up care with behavioral health providers prior to discharge from hospital or ED
Ensuring Access to the COVID-19 Vaccine Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	• Lack of transportation and lack of access to nearby vaccine sites • Lack of understanding of vaccine safety and benefits	• Refer and facilitate making appointments for eligible enrollees engaged in CM to COVID-19 vaccination sites • Educate and inform enrollees on vaccine merits, safety, and accessibility
Fluoride Varnish Application to Primary Teeth of Enrollees Aged 6 Months to 5 Years	• Lack of member education and access to appointments • Lack of provider education	• CM member outreach education with dental provider appointment scheduling • Text message campaign for enrollee education • Member outreach at community events
Improving Cervical Cancer Screening Rates Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	• Lack of provider awareness of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) screening guidelines and recommendations • Lack of enrollee knowledge of the screening procedure	• CM to educate members on the steps of the procedure to address fear • Text message campaign for enrollee education of screening guidelines

PIP Topic	Barriers	Interventions
Screening for HIV Infection	• Enrollee fear of screening results • Lack of enrollee awareness on importance of HIV screening and CDC recommendations	• Educate on enrollee screening and results • Text message campaign for enrollee education on prevention and testing

Table 2-7—Barriers and Interventions Reported by HUM for Each PIP Topic

PIP Topic	Barriers	Interventions
Behavioral Health Transitions in Care	• CM team is only alerted on members that have a certain risk level • Lack of means to track scheduled visits	• Enhance timely hospital-to-MCO notification of hospital and ED ADTs • Link enrollees to follow-up care with behavioral health providers prior to discharge from hospital or ED
Ensuring Access to the COVID-19 Vaccine Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	• Lack of access to the COVID-19 vaccine • Challenges with reaching a large volume of eligible members via CM outreach alone	• Offering COVID-19 vaccination at community events • Distribution of educational materials at community events • COVID-19 vaccination outreach to enrollees engaged in CM
Fluoride Varnish Application to Primary Teeth of Enrollees Aged 6 Months to 5 Years	• Lack of enrollee knowledge on fluoride varnish education and access to screening	• Distribution of educational materials at community events • Offering fluoride varnish application at community events
Improving Cervical Cancer Screening Rates Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	• Lack of provider awareness of CDC screening guidelines and recommendations	• Distribution of educational materials at community events • Text message reminder campaign for enrollees to schedule preventive services and screenings
Screening for HIV Infection	• Lack of enrollee knowledge on importance of HIV screening and on resources for obtaining screening	• Community-based distribution of educational materials to promote HIV screening awareness • Offering HIV screenings at community events

Table 2-8—Barriers and Interventions Reported by LHCC for Each PIP Topic

PIP Topic	Barriers	Interventions
Behavioral Health Transitions in Care	• Limited behavioral health provider participation in ADT feeds/applications • Lack of engagement from members with substance use disorders (SUD) in follow-up care	• Enhance hospital-to-MCO workflow for notification of hospital ADTs • Linkage to aftercare with behavioral health providers prior to discharge from hospital
Ensuring Access to the COVID-19 Vaccine Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	• Lack of access to the COVID-19 vaccine • Challenges with reaching a large volume of eligible members via CM outreach alone	• COVID-19 vaccination outreach to enrollees engaged in CM and to enrollees not engaged in CM • Distribution of eligible enrollee lists and vaccination site lists to providers and facilitate referrals
Fluoride Varnish Application to Primary Teeth of Enrollees Aged 6 Months to 5 Years	• Lack of PCP training in varnish application • Lack of enrollee parent/guardian understanding of need to establish a dental provider	• Targeted member outreach and education on dental appointment scheduling for members in CM and members identified as having disparities (Geographic Region 1, Geographic Region 8, Hispanic ethnicity, and 6–18 months of age) • Community partnership with mobile units for dental exams and fluoride varnish treatments • Provider outreach and education using care gap report
Improving Cervical Cancer Screening Rates Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	• Lack of enrollee awareness of the importance of cervical cancer screening • Lack of provider knowledge of proper coding to capture screening	• Targeted enrollee educational outreach on cervical cancer screening • Outreach for members with no cervical cancer screening and aiding with appointment scheduling • Provider outreach and education on CCS guidelines, billing guidelines, and the use of care gap reports to identify members eligible for CCS
Screening for HIV Infection	• Lack of enrollee knowledge on importance of HIV screening and on resources for obtaining screening • Enrollee's lack of transportation to screening appointments	• Outreach to pregnant members providing education on recommendations for HIV screening • Outreach for member assistance with scheduling an appointment and transportation

Table 2-9—Barriers and Interventions Reported by UHC for Each PIP Topic

PIP Topic	Barriers	Interventions
Behavioral Health Transitions in Care	• Lack of timely notification for hospital discharge • Difficult to engage enrollees in follow-up treatment	• Enhance timely hospital-to-MCO notification of hospital and ED ADTs • Link enrollees to follow-up care with behavioral health providers prior to discharge from hospital or ED
Ensuring Access to the COVID-19 Vaccine Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	• Lack of access to COVID-19 vaccine • Challenges with reaching a large volume of eligible members via CM outreach alone • Enrollees may not remember to obtain second dose of two-dose vaccine series	• Targeted enrollee outreach to increase awareness on vaccine access and availability • Distribute eligible enrollee lists and vaccination site lists to PCPs and facilitate referrals as needed
Fluoride Varnish Application to Primary Teeth of Enrollees Aged 6 Months to 5 Years	• Lack of PCP training in varnish application	• Member outreach and education for dental provider appointment scheduling • Provider outreach and education using care gap report
Improving Cervical Cancer Screening Rates Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	• Lack of enrollee awareness of guidelines for cervical cancer screening	• Member outreach for education on cervical cancer screening • Member education on transportation services through Medicaid
Screening for HIV Infection	• Lack of enrollee and provider knowledge on guidelines for HIV screening and on resources for obtaining screening	• Outreach for HIV screening education for all eligible members

Statewide MCO Strengths, Opportunities for Improvement, and Recommendations

HSAG will report statewide strengths, opportunities for improvement, and recommendations for the MCOs' PIPs in next year's annual EQR technical report, when HSAG has completed the first annual validation cycle for the MCOs' PIPs in SFY 2024.

Methodology

Objectives

The purpose of conducting PIPs is to achieve—through ongoing measurements and intervention—significant, sustained improvement in clinical or nonclinical areas. This structured method of assessing and improving MCO processes was designed to have favorable effects on health outcomes and member satisfaction.

The primary objective of PIP validation is to determine each MCO's compliance with requirements set forth in 42 CFR §438.240(b)(1), including:

- Measurement of performance using objective quality indicators.
- Implementation of systematic interventions to achieve improvement in performance.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the interventions.
- Planning and initiation of activities for increasing or sustaining improvement.

The goal of HSAG's PIP validation is to ensure that LDH and key stakeholders can have confidence that any reported improvement is related and can be reasonably linked to the QI strategies and activities the MCO conducted during the PIP. HSAG's scoring methodology evaluated whether the MCO executed a methodologically sound PIP.

Technical Methods of Data Collection

HSAG, as the State's EQRO, validated the PIPs through an independent review process. In its PIP evaluation and validation, HSAG used CMS' EQR *Protocol 1. Validation of Performance Improvement Projects: A Mandatory EQR-Related Activity*, February 2023 (CMS Protocol 1).[2-1]

HSAG's evaluation of each PIP includes two key components of the QI process:

1. HSAG evaluates the technical structure of the PIP to ensure that the MCO designs, conducts, and reports the PIP in a methodologically sound manner, meeting all State and federal requirements. HSAG's review determines whether the PIP design (e.g., PIP Aim statement, population, sampling techniques, performance indicator, and data collection methodology) is based on sound methodological principles and could reliably measure outcomes. Successful execution of this component ensures that reported PIP results are accurate and capable of measuring sustained improvement.

[2-1] Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. *Protocol 1. Validation of Performance Improvement Projects: A Mandatory EQR-Related Activity*, February 2023. Available at: https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/2023-eqr-protocols.pdf. Accessed on: Jan 9, 2024.

2. HSAG evaluates the implementation of the PIP. Once designed, a PIP's effectiveness in improving outcomes depends on the systematic data collection process, analysis of data, and the identification of barriers and subsequent development of relevant interventions. Through this component, HSAG evaluates how well the MCO improves indicator results through implementation of effective processes (i.e., barrier analyses, interventions, and evaluation of results).

Description of Data Obtained

HSAG's methodology for PIP validation provided a consistent, structured process and a mechanism for providing the MCOs with specific feedback and recommendations. The MCOs used a standardized PIP Submission Form to document information on the PIP design, completed PIP activities, and performance indicator results. HSAG evaluated the documentation provided in the PIP Submission Form to conduct the annual validation.

How Data Were Aggregated and Analyzed

Using the PIP validation tool and standardized scoring, HSAG scored each PIP on a series of evaluation elements and scored each evaluation element within a given activity as *Met*, *Partially Met*, *Not Met*, *Not Applicable (NA)*, or *Not Assessed*. HSAG designated some of the evaluation elements pivotal to the PIP process as "critical elements." For a PIP to produce valid and reliable results, all critical elements needed to achieve a *Met* score. HSAG assigned each PIP an overall percentage score for all evaluation elements (including critical elements), calculated by dividing the total number of elements scored as *Met* by the sum of elements scored as *Met*, *Partially Met*, and *Not Met*. HSAG also calculated a critical element percentage score by dividing the total number of critical elements scored as *Met* by the sum of the critical elements scored as *Met*, *Partially Met*, and *Not Met*.

In alignment with CMS Protocol 1, HSAG assigned two PIP validation ratings, summarizing overall PIP performance. One validation rating reflected HSAG's confidence that the MCO adhered to acceptable methodology for all phases of design and data collection and conducted accurate data analysis and interpretation of PIP results. HSAG based this validation rating on the scores for applicable evaluation elements in steps 1 through 8 of the PIP validation tool. The second validation rating was only assigned for PIPs that have progressed to the Outcomes stage (Step 9) and reflected HSAG's confidence that the PIP's performance indicator results demonstrated evidence of significant improvement. The second validation rating is based on scores from Step 9 in the PIP validation tool. For each applicable validation rating, HSAG reported the percentage of applicable evaluation elements that received a *Met* score and the corresponding confidence level: *High Confidence*, *Moderate Confidence*, *Low Confidence*, or *No Confidence*. The confidence level definitions for each validation rating are as follows:

1. **Overall Confidence of Adherence to Acceptable Methodology for All Phases of the PIP (Steps 1 Through 8)**
   a. *High Confidence*: High confidence in reported PIP results. All critical evaluation elements were *Met*, and 90 percent to 100 percent of all evaluation elements were *Met* across all steps.

b. *Moderate Confidence*: Moderate confidence in reported PIP results. All critical evaluation elements were *Met*, and 80 percent to 89 percent of all evaluation elements were *Met* across all steps.
c. *Low Confidence*: Low confidence in reported PIP results. Across all steps, 65 percent to 79 percent of all evaluation elements were *Met*; or one or more critical evaluation elements were *Partially Met*.
d. *No Confidence*: No confidence in reported PIP results. Across all steps, less than 65 percent of all evaluation elements were *Met*; or one or more critical evaluation elements were *Not Met*.

2. Overall Confidence That the PIP Achieved Significant Improvement (Step 9)

a. *High Confidence*: All performance indicators demonstrated *statistically significant* improvement over the baseline.
b. *Moderate Confidence*: One of the three scenarios below occurred:
   i. All performance indicators demonstrated improvement over the baseline, **and** some but not all performance indicators demonstrated *statistically significant* improvement over the baseline.
   ii. All performance indicators demonstrated improvement over the baseline, **and** none of the performance indicators demonstrated *statistically significant* improvement over the baseline.
   iii. Some but not all performance indicators demonstrated improvement over baseline, **and** some but not all performance indicators demonstrated *statistically significant* improvement over baseline.
c. *Low Confidence*: The remeasurement methodology was not the same as the baseline methodology for at least one performance indicator **or** some but not all performance indicators demonstrated improvement over the baseline and none of the performance indicators demonstrated *statistically significant* improvement over the baseline.
d. *No Confidence*: The remeasurement methodology was not the same as the baseline methodology for all performance indicators or none of the performance indicators demonstrated improvement over the baseline.

HSAG analyzed the quantitative results obtained from the above PIP validation activities to identify strengths and weaknesses in each domain of quality, timeliness, and accessibility of services furnished by each MCO. HSAG then identified common themes and the salient patterns that emerged across the MCOs related to PIP validation or performance on the PIPs conducted.

How Conclusions Were Drawn

PIPs that accurately addressed CMS Protocol 1 requirements were determined to have high validity and reliability. Validity refers to the extent to which the data collected for a PIP measured its intent. Reliability refers to the extent to which an individual could reproduce the project results. For each completed PIP, HSAG assessed threats to the validity and reliability of PIP findings and determined whether a PIP was credible.

To draw conclusions about the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of care and services provided by the MCOs, HSAG assigned each PIP topic to one or more of these three domains. While the focus of an MCO's PIP may have been to improve performance related to healthcare quality, timeliness, or accessibility, PIP validation activities were designed to evaluate the validity and quality of the MCO's process for conducting valid PIPs. Therefore, HSAG assigned all PIPs to the quality domain. In

addition, all PIP topics were assigned to other domains as appropriate. This assignment to domains is shown in Table 2-10.

Table 2-10—Assignment of PIPs to the Quality, Timeliness, and Access Domains

PIP Topic	Quality	Timeliness	Access
Behavioral Health Transitions in Care	✓	✓	✓
Fluoride Varnish Application to Primary Teeth of Enrollees Aged 6 Months to 5 Years	✓	✓	✓
Ensuring Access to the COVID-19 Vaccine Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	✓		✓
Improving Cervical Cancer Screening Rates Among Healthy Louisiana Enrollees	✓	✓	✓
Screening for HIV Infection	✓	✓	✓

3. Validation of Performance Measures

Aggregate Results

Information Systems Standards Review

HSAG reviewed the FARs produced for each MCO by the MCO's independent certified HEDIS compliance auditor to ensure that each MCO calculated its rates based on accurate data and according to NCQA's established standards.

The FARs include information on the MCOs' IS capabilities, findings for each measure, supplemental data validation results, medical record review validation (MRRV) results, results of any corrected programming logic (including corrections to numerators, denominators, or sampling used for final measure calculation), and opportunities for improvement. HSAG analyzed the MCOs' HEDIS MY 2022 results and evaluated each MCO's current performance levels in reference to NCQA's Quality Compass national Medicaid percentiles.

HSAG evaluated each MCO's IS to verify accurate HEDIS reporting. As part of the evaluation, each FAR, which contained the licensed organization's (LO's) assessment of IS capabilities, was reviewed. The IS evaluation focused on aspects of the MCOs' systems that could affect the HEDIS Medicaid reporting set.

In accordance with the MY 2022 NCQA HEDIS Compliance Audit: Standards, Policies, and Procedures, Volume 5, the LOs evaluated compliance with NCQA's IS standards. NCQA's IS standards detail the minimum requirements of an MCO's IS, as well as criteria that must be met for any manual processes used to report HEDIS information. The final audit results included final determinations of validity made by the independent certified HEDIS compliance auditor for each performance measure. The IDSS file detailed all rates that were submitted to NCQA and whether the LO deemed them to be reportable.

HSAG used the FAR and the MCO rates provided on the Interactive Data Submission System (IDSS) file as the primary data sources. Based on a review of the FARs issued by each MCO's independent certified HEDIS compliance auditor, HSAG found that the MCOs were determined to be fully compliant with all seven of the applicable NCQA IS standards. HEDIS rates produced by the MCOs were reported to NCQA.

Of note, HUM was a new MCO to Louisiana Medicaid as of January 1, 2023; therefore, HUM did not have an MY 2022 FAR to submit for SFY 2023 reporting. As such, HSAG's findings related to each HEDIS IS standard is not reflected in the SFY 2023 EQR technical report. However, results from an ISCA performed as part of HUM's contract readiness review by Mercer, issued on November 7, 2022, can be referenced in HUM's SFY 2023 EQR technical report.

The MCOs' compliance with IS standards are highlighted in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1—MCO Compliance With IS Standards—MY 2022

IS Standard	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC
IS 1.0 Medical Services Data	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met
IS 2.0 Enrollment Data	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met
IS 3.0 Practitioner Data	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met
IS 4.0 Medical Record Review Processes	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met
IS 5.0 Supplemental Data	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met
IS 6.0 Data Preproduction Processing	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met
IS 7.0 Data Integration and Reporting	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met

Performance Measures

For SFY 2023, LDH required each contracted MCO to collect and report on 47 HEDIS measures, which includes 89 total measures indicators for HEDIS MY 2022 specified in the provider agreement. The measurement set includes 11 incentive measures. Table 3-2 displays the 89 measure indicators required by LDH. Rates highlighted in red indicate the measure or SWA performance fell below the NCQA national 50th percentile, and rates highlighted in green indicate that the measure or SWA performance was at or above the NCQA national 50th percentile. Table 3-2 through Table 3-5 display a summary of the MCOs' HEDIS measure performance.

Table 3-2—MCO HEDIS Effectiveness of Care Performance Measures—MY 2022

HEDIS Measure	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC	SWA
Follow-Up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness						
Within 7 Days of Discharge	17.29%	18.77%	20.35%	18.74%	20.90%	19.52%
Within 30 Days of Discharge[I]	35.27%	36.26%	39.26%	39.48%	38.41%	38.33%
Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for Mental Illness						
Within 7 Days of Discharge	20.18%	22.93%	21.35%	22.54%	23.89%	22.45%
Within 30 Days of Discharge[I]	33.57%	35.30%	36.44%	37.76%	36.83%	36.52%
Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for Substance Use[B]						
Within 7 Days of Discharge	22.24%	17.38%	16.87%	15.88%	16.39%	17.19%
Within 30 Days of Discharge[I]	33.81%	28.94%	27.70%	26.05%	25.98%	27.70%

HEDIS Measure	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC	SWA
Plan All-Cause Readmissions*						
Observed Readmissions (Numerator/Denominator)	10.37%	10.21%	9.76%	9.52%	11.14%	10.15%
Expected Readmissions Rate	9.79%	9.65%	9.56%	9.40%	9.65%	9.57%
Observed-to-Expected (O/E) Ratio (Observed Readmissions/Expected Readmissions)	1.0594	1.0574	1.0214	1.0122	1.1540	1.0603
CAHPS Health Plan Survey 5.1H, Adult (Rating of Health Plan, 8+9+10)	76.09%	81.21%	87.63%	77.08%	82.05%	80.81%
CAHPS Health Plan Survey 5.1H, Child (Rating of Health Plan—General Population, 8+9+10)	86.45%	86.33%	83.17%	86.26%	89.86%	86.41%
Depression Screening and Follow-Up for Adolescents and Adults						
Depression Screening (Total)	0.00%	2.59%	0.00%	0.00%	0.58%	1.00%
Follow-Up on Positive Screen (Total)	0.00%	54.11%	0.00%	0.00%	72.73%	58.25%
Diabetes Screening for People With Schizophrenia or Bipolar Disorder Who Are Using Antipsychotic Medications	83.33%	84.13%	82.84%	82.52%	82.08%	82.78%
Diabetes Monitoring for People With Diabetes and Schizophrenia	63.26%	69.07%	66.89%	67.44%	68.64%	67.47%
Cardiovascular Monitoring for People With Cardiovascular Disease and Schizophrenia	67.65%	75.81%	73.42%	76.84%	81.71%	76.14%
Metabolic Monitoring for Children and Adolescents on Antipsychotics						
Blood Glucose Testing	56.23%	54.74%	57.32%	52.04%	55.99%	54.46%
Cholesterol Testing	30.70%	29.05%	33.38%	25.42%	30.63%	28.80%
Blood Glucose and Cholesterol Testing	30.70%	28.09%	32.61%	24.73%	29.76%	28.05%
Lead Screening in Children	62.04%	66.91%	62.86%	61.64%	65.45%	63.59%
Childhood Immunization Status						
Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Acellular Pertussis (DTaP)	61.56%	70.80%	69.34%	68.13%	67.88%	68.23%
Polio Vaccine, Inactivated (IPV)	81.51%	88.81%	86.13%	89.05%	85.64%	87.00%
Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)	80.29%	85.64%	83.45%	85.16%	84.43%	84.34%
Haemophilus Influenzae Type B (HiB)	79.32%	85.16%	83.45%	84.67%	85.40%	84.33%
Hepatitis B	83.45%	89.54%	87.83%	91.00%	87.59%	88.75%
Varicella-Zoster Virus (VZV)	80.29%	85.64%	83.70%	85.40%	83.94%	84.35%

HEDIS Measure	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC	SWA
Pneumococcal Conjugate	64.48%	69.34%	70.32%	66.91%	69.83%	68.57%
Hepatitis A	77.62%	81.75%	80.78%	80.78%	80.78%	80.70%
Rotavirus	65.69%	65.45%	66.42%	67.15%	66.91%	66.63%
Influenza	25.06%	28.22%	27.25%	27.98%	23.60%	26.49%
Combination 3[I]	57.66%	63.50%	64.72%	61.80%	62.04%	62.44%
Combination 7	50.36%	54.26%	55.23%	51.82%	54.01%	53.35%
Combination 10	17.27%	22.87%	21.65%	20.92%	18.00%	20.30%
Immunization Status for Adolescents						
Meningococcal	76.89%	83.21%	82.73%	83.76%	84.67%	83.48%
Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis/ Tetanus and Diphtheria (Tdap/Td)	76.40%	83.70%	83.70%	84.46%	85.89%	84.30%
Human Papillomavirus (HPV)	30.17%	40.39%	40.15%	37.60%	41.12%	39.08%
Combination 1	75.91%	82.97%	82.24%	83.59%	84.67%	83.26%
Combination 2[I]	29.68%	40.39%	39.90%	37.27%	40.39%	38.69%
Colorectal Cancer Screening[I]	31.85%	35.17%	32.94%	34.06%	34.48%	33.81%
Flu Vaccinations for Adults Ages 18 to 64	33.33%	40.86%	35.98%	35.14%	37.77%	36.62%
Weight Assessment and Counseling for Nutrition and Physical Activity for Children/Adolescents						
Body Mass Index (BMI) Percentile Documentation	77.62%	73.20%	77.13%	60.58%	83.21%	72.22%
Counseling for Nutrition	66.67%	62.28%	62.53%	57.18%	68.86%	62.46%
Counseling for Physical Activity	62.29%	53.35%	55.96%	51.58%	60.10%	55.47%
HIV Viral Load Suppression [B, I]	80.62%	75.50%	80.86%	79.78%	77.60%	79.04%
Low-Risk Cesarean Delivery (Cesarean Rate for Low-Risk First Birth Women)[*, I]	26.67%	23.59%	26.97%	27.47%	26.47%	26.61%
Chlamydia Screening in Women						
Total	59.22%	64.40%	60.72%	63.84%	64.02%	63.13%
Breast Cancer Screening	54.72%	55.54%	55.07%	55.74%	57.11%	55.83%
Medical Assistance With Smoking and Tobacco Use Cessation						
Advising Smokers to Quit	71.93%	78.40%	74.55%	72.73%	67.65%	73.05%
Discussing Cessation Medications	46.49%	53.62%	50.91%	45.16%	48.00%	48.84%
Discussing Cessation Strategies	46.43%	50.74%	50.00%	39.52%	48.51%	47.04%
Controlling High Blood Pressure[I]	59.85%	59.90%	53.77%	55.23%	61.31%	57.62%

HEDIS Measure	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC	SWA
Statin Therapy for Patients With Cardiovascular Disease						
Received Statin Therapy—Total	81.37%	81.14%	80.54%	80.41%	80.50%	80.66%
Statin Adherence 80%—Total	73.65%	67.81%	63.87%	73.30%	63.81%	67.86%
Hemoglobin A1c Control for Patients With Diabetes						
Poor HbA1c Control (>9.0%)[*,I]	33.09%	39.66%	37.47%	45.99%	34.55%	38.96%
HbA1c Control (<8.0%)	56.20%	53.04%	53.77%	44.77%	57.91%	52.48%
Eye Exam for Patients With Diabetes	52.31%	50.36%	55.23%	53.04%	55.72%	53.85%
Blood Pressure Control for Patients With Diabetes (<140/90 mm Hg)	61.31%	56.20%	64.48%	50.61%	67.15%	59.93%
Pharmacotherapy for Opioid Use Disorder	34.26%	29.55%	22.62%	34.90%	21.84%	27.67%
Initiation and Engagement of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment						
Initiation of SUD[B]	60.02%	64.68%	65.35%	55.86%	58.78%	60.37%
Engagement of SUD[B]	25.54%	28.33%	28.52%	21.55%	25.97%	25.62%
Use of First-Line Psychosocial Care for Children and Adolescents on Antipsychotics	67.24%	60.06%	65.71%	60.10%	67.86%	63.46%
Adherence to Antipsychotic Medications for Individuals With Schizophrenia	55.81%	55.42%	47.03%	59.14%	48.69%	53.17%
Follow-Up Care for Children Prescribed Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Medication						
Initiation Phase	43.29%	40.70%	40.71%	42.92%	44.13%	42.65%
Continuation Phase	60.00%	51.99%	53.59%	54.84%	58.40%	55.44%
Antidepressant Medication Management						
Effective Acute Phase Treatment	60.92%	54.72%	55.41%	56.85%	53.91%	55.83%
Effective Continuation Phase Treatment	45.35%	36.31%	37.51%	39.76%	35.51%	38.18%
Appropriate Treatment for Children With Upper Respiratory Infection	79.17%	78.87%	79.93%	79.95%	79.48%	79.64%
Avoidance of Antibiotic Treatment in Adults With Acute Bronchitis	51.77%	53.82%	52.80%	52.58%	49.60%	51.85%
Use of Imaging Studies for Low Back Pain[B]	69.73%	72.61%	71.66%	71.47%	70.81%	71.31%
Non-Recommended Cervical Screening in Adolescent Females[*]	0.58%	2.08%	0.58%	2.07%	2.37%	1.81%
Cervical Cancer Screening[I]	52.07%	55.36%	53.37%	56.69%	61.07%	56.53%

HEDIS Measure	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC	SWA
Self-Reported Overall Health (Adult)	34.59%	25.80%	24.61%	26.97%	27.78%	27.63%
Adult—Very Good	22.70%	17.52%	18.46%	18.67%	18.69%	18.98%
Adult—Excellent	11.89%	8.28%	6.15%	8.30%	9.09%	8.65%
Self-Reported Overall Health (Child—General)	79.57%	70.07%	72.73%	72.20%	71.02%	73.27%
Child General—Very Good	35.48%	37.83%	35.89%	39.04%	32.37%	36.17%
Child General—Excellent	44.09%	32.24%	36.84%	33.16%	38.65%	37.10%
Self-Reported Overall Health (Child-CCC)	61.91%	52.58%	64.18%	54.64%	61.48%	59.04%
Child CCC—Very Good	38.10%	33.09%	39.18%	34.54%	38.13%	36.64%
Child CCC—Excellent	23.81%	19.49%	25.00%	20.10%	23.35%	22.40%
Self-Reported Overall Mental or Emotional Health (Adult)	45.65%	40.20%	37.25%	40.33%	28.94%	38.64%
Adult—Very Good	25.00%	24.44%	23.47%	24.28%	13.20%	22.37%
Adult—Excellent	20.65%	15.76%	13.78%	16.05%	15.74%	16.27%
Self-Reported Overall Mental or Emotional Health (Child-General)	72.92%	63.36%	65.39%	59.14%	65.39%	65.65%
Child General—Very Good	32.13%	28.38%	28.85%	22.04%	28.37%	28.34%
Child General—Excellent	40.79%	34.98%	36.54%	37.10%	37.02%	37.31%
Self-Reported Overall Mental or Emotional Health (Child-CCC)	41.63%	38.60%	45.15%	35.42%	42.74%	40.97%
Child CCC—Very Good	22.49%	24.26%	27.61%	18.23%	25.88%	24.08%
Child CCC—Excellent	19.14%	14.34%	17.54%	17.19%	16.86%	16.89%

* Indicates a lower rate is desirable.
B Indicates a break in trending between the most recent year and the prior year.
I Incentive Measure.
Green: ≥ NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark; red: < NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark.

Table 3-3—MCO HEDIS Access to/Availability of Care Performance Measures—MY 2022

HEDIS Measure	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC	SWA
Well-Child Visits in the First 30 Months of Life						
First 15 Months	58.55%	58.63%	58.59%	58.57%	62.07%	59.52%
15 Months–30 Months	61.09%	63.54%	62.53%	63.41%	66.66%	63.95%
Adults' Access to Preventive/Ambulatory Health Services						
20–44 Years	62.73%	68.28%	69.98%	72.25%	73.82%	70.84%
45–64 Years	75.53%	78.39%	79.52%	81.11%	82.51%	80.13%

HEDIS Measure	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC	SWA
65 Years and Older	71.82%	73.00%	75.56%	78.18%	75.65%	75.93%
Total	67.43%	71.44%	72.84%	74.69%	76.47%	73.65%
Prenatal and Postpartum Care						
Timeliness of Prenatal Care[C]	76.40%	85.67%	85.07%	81.51%	82.97%	82.86%
Postpartum Care[C]	80.05%	76.83%	78.47%	75.18%	77.37%	77.00%

[C] Indicates a caution in trending between the most recent year and the year prior.
Green: ≥ NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark; red: < NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark.

Table 3-4—MCO HEDIS Use of Services Performance Measures—MY 2022

HEDIS Measure	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC	SWA
Child and Adolescent Well-Care Visits						
3–11 Years	50.72%	54.64%	51.96%	55.24%	56.29%	54.57%
12–17 Years	43.09%	52.08%	47.63%	52.49%	52.84%	51.26%
18–21 Years	22.79%	26.97%	24.80%	27.83%	28.28%	27.04%
Total	43.80%	48.50%	45.52%	49.12%	49.99%	48.34%
Ambulatory Care						
Outpatient Visits/1000 MM	4303.35	4670.87	4849.70	4932.72	5284.83	4930.50
Emergency Department Visits/1,000 MM[*]	745.11	764.19	742.68	736.87	753.17	746.42

[*] Indicates a lower rate is desirable.
Green: ≥ NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark; red: < NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark.

Table 3-5—MCO HEDIS Performance Measure Summary—MY 2022

Measure Status	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC
≥ NCQA National 50th Percentile Benchmark	20	31	30	27	39
< NCQA National 50th Percentile Benchmark	58	47	48	51	39
NCQA National Benchmark Unavailable	11	11	11	11	11
Total	89	89	89	89	89

Statewide MCO Strengths, Opportunities for Improvement, and Recommendations

For the MCOs statewide, the following strengths were identified:

- All MCOs' performance and the SWA for the *Diabetes Screening for People With Schizophrenia or Bipolar Disorder Who Are Using Antipsychotic Medications* measure ranked above the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark. Lack of appropriate care for diabetes for people with

schizophrenia or bipolar disorder who use antipsychotic medications can lead to worsening health and death. Addressing these physical health needs is an important way to improve health, quality of life and economic outcomes downstream.[3-1] **[Quality]**

- All MCOs' performance and the SWA for both the *Chlamydia Screening in Women* and *Breast Cancer Screening* measures ranked above the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark. Screening for chlamydia is important, as approximately 75 percent of chlamydia infections in women are asymptomatic.[3-2] Screening for breast cancer can improve outcomes, as early detection reduces the risk of dying from breast cancer and can lead to a greater range of treatment options and lower healthcare costs.[3-3] **[Quality]**
- All MCOs' performance and the SWA for both of the *Initiation and Engagement of Substance Use Disorder Treatment* measure indicators ranked above the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark. Treatment, in conjunction with counseling or other behavioral therapies, is important because it has been shown to reduce alcohol or other drug-associated morbidity and mortality, improve health, productivity and social outcomes, and reduce healthcare spending.[3-4] **[Quality, Timeliness, and Access]**

For the MCOs statewide, the following opportunities for improvement were identified:

- All MCOs' performance and the SWA for the *Follow-Up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness*, *Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for Mental Illness*, and *Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for Substance Use* measures ranked below the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark for all indicators. The importance of providing follow-up care for these measures is critical to improving patient outcomes and decreasing the likelihood of re-hospitalization,[3-5] ensuring fewer repeat ED visits, improved physical and mental function and increased compliance with follow-up instructions,[3-6] as well as a reduction in substance use, future ED use, hospital admissions and bed days,[3-7] respectively. **[Quality, Timeliness, and Access]**

3-1 National Committee for Quality Assurance. Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease Screening and Monitoring for People With Schizophrenia or Bipolar Disorder (SSD, SMD, SMC). Available at: https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/diabetes-and-cardiovascular-disease-screening-and-monitoring-for-people-with-schizophrenia-or-bipolar-disorder/. Accessed on: Jan 10, 2024.

3-2 National Committee for Quality Assurance. Chlamydia Screening in Women (CHL). Available at: https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/chlamydia-screening-in-women/. Accessed on: Jan 10, 2024.

3-3 National Committee for Quality Assurance. Breast Cancer Screening (BCS, BCS-E). Available at: https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/breast-cancer-screening/. Accessed on: Jan 10, 2024.

3-4 National Committee for Quality Assurance. Initiation and Engagement of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse or Dependence Treatment (IET). Available at: https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/initiation-and-engagement-of-alcohol-and-other-drug-abuse-or-dependence-treatment/. Accessed on: Jan 10, 2024.

3-5 National Committee for Quality Assurance. Follow-Up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness (FUH). Available at: https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/follow-up-after-hospitalization-for-mental-illness/. Accessed on: Jan 10, 2024.

3-6 National Committee for Quality Assurance. Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for Mental Illness (FUM). Available at: https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/follow-up-after-emergency-department-visit-for-mental-illness/. Accessed on: Jan 10, 2024.

3-7 National Committee for Quality Assurance. Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse or Dependence (FUA). Available at: https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/follow-up-after-emergency-department-visit-for-alcohol-and-other-drug-abuse-or-dependence/. Accessed on: Jan 10, 2024.

- All MCOs' performance and the SWA for the *Diabetes Monitoring for People With Diabetes and Schizophrenia* measure ranked below the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark. Lack of appropriate care for diabetes for people with schizophrenia can lead to worsening health and death. Addressing these physical health needs is an important way to improve health, quality of life and economic outcomes downstream.[3-8] **[Quality]**
- All MCOs' performance and the SWA for the *Adherence to Antipsychotic Medications for Individuals With Schizophrenia* measure ranked below the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark. Schizophrenia is a chronic and disabling psychiatric disorder that requires ongoing treatment and monitoring. Medication non-adherence is common and a major concern in the treatment of schizophrenia. Using antipsychotic medications as prescribed reduces the risk of relapse or hospitalization.[3-9] **[Quality]**
- All MCOs' performance and the SWA for the *Appropriate Treatment for Children With Upper Respiratory Infection* and *Avoidance of Antibiotic Treatment in Adults for Acute Bronchitis/Bronchiolitis* measures both ranked below the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark. The misuse of antibiotics can have adverse clinical outcomes, so ensuring the appropriate use of antibiotics for individuals will help them avoid harmful side-effects and possible resistance to antibiotics over time.[3-10,3-11] **[Quality]**
- All MCOs' performance and the SWA for the *Use of Imaging Studies for Low Back Pain* measure ranked below the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark. Unnecessary or routine imaging for low back pain is not associated with improved outcomes, and exposes patients to unnecessary harms such as radiation and further unnecessary treatment, so it is important to avoid imaging for patients when there is no indication of an underlying condition.[3-12] **[Quality]**
- All MCOs' performance and the SWA for the *Non-Recommended Cervical Screening in Adolescent Females* measure ranked above the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark. Cervical cancer screening can result in more harm than benefits for adolescent females. Adolescent females tend to have high rates of transient HPV infection and regressive cervical abnormalities. This may produce

3-8 National Committee for Quality Assurance. Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease Screening and Monitoring for People With Schizophrenia or Bipolar Disorder (SSD, SMD, SMC). Available at: https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/diabetes-and-cardiovascular-disease-screening-and-monitoring-for-people-with-schizophrenia-or-bipolar-disorder/. Accessed on: Jan 10, 2024.

3-9 National Committee for Quality Assurance. Adherence to Antipsychotic Medications for Individuals With Schizophrenia (SAA). Available at: https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/adherence-to-antipsychotic-medications-for-individuals-with-schizophrenia/. Accessed on: Jan 10, 2024.

3-10 National Committee for Quality Assurance. Appropriate Treatment for Upper Respiratory Infection (URI). Available at: https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/appropriate-treatment-for-upper-respiratory-infection/. Accessed on: Jan 10, 2024.

3-11 National Committee for Quality Assurance. Avoidance of Antibiotic Treatment for Acute Bronchitis/Bronchiolitis (AAB). Available at: https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/avoidance-of-antibiotic-treatment-for-acute-bronchitis-bronchiolitis/. Accessed on: Jan 10, 2024.

3-12 National Committee for Quality Assurance. Use of Imaging Studies for Low Back Pain (LBP). Available at: https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/use-of-imaging-studies-for-low-back-pain/. Accessed on: Jan 10, 2024.

false-positive results and lead to unnecessary and potentially detrimental follow-up tests and treatment.[3-13] **[Quality]**

For the MCOs statewide, the following recommendations were identified:

- HSAG recommends that the MCOs focus their efforts on increasing timely follow-up care for members following discharge. The MCOs should also consider conducting a root cause analysis for the *Follow-Up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness*, *Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for Mental Illness*, and *Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for Substance Use* measures and implementing appropriate interventions to improve performance, such as providing patient and provider education or improving upon coordination of care following discharge. **[Quality, Timeliness, and Access]**
- HSAG recommends that the MCOs focus their efforts on increasing low-density lipoprotein cholesterol and HbA1c testing among members with diabetes and schizophrenia. The MCOs should consider conducting a root cause analysis for the *Diabetes Monitoring for People With Diabetes and Schizophrenia* measure and implementing appropriate interventions to improve performance, such as patient and provider education. **[Quality]**
- HSAG recommends that the MCOs focus their efforts on increasing antipsychotic medication adherence for members with schizophrenia. The MCOs should consider conducting a root cause analysis for the *Adherence to Antipsychotic Medications for Individuals With Schizophrenia* measure and implementing appropriate interventions to improve performance, such as patient education. **[Quality]**
- HSAG recommends that the MCOs focus their efforts on appropriate treatment of respiratory conditions. The MCOs should also consider conducting a root cause analysis for the *Appropriate Treatment for Upper Respiratory Infection* and *Avoidance of Antibiotic Treatment for Acute Bronchitis/Bronchiolitis* measures and implementing appropriate interventions to improve performance, such as patient and provider education. **[Quality]**
- HSAG recommends that the MCOs focus their efforts on decreasing unnecessary imaging for low back pain. The MCOs should also consider conducting a root cause analysis for the *Use of Imaging Studies for Low Back Pain* measure and implementing appropriate interventions to improve performance, such as addressing provider behaviors, provider incentives, and addressing member expectation with education. **[Quality]**
- HSAG recommends that the MCOs focus their efforts on decreasing unnecessary screenings for cervical cancer among adolescent females. The MCOs should also consider conducting a root cause analysis for the *Non-Recommended Cervical Screening in Adolescent Females* measure and implementing appropriate interventions to improve performance, such as provider education. **[Quality]**

[3-13] National Committee for Quality Assurance. Non-Recommended Cervical Cancer Screening in Adolescent Females (NCS). Available at: https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/non-recommended-cervical-cancer-screening-in-adolescent-females/. Accessed on: Jan 10, 2024.

Methodology

Objectives

In accordance with 42 CFR §438.330(c), states must require MCOs to submit performance measurement data as part of their QAPI programs. The validation of performance measures is one of the mandatory EQR activities that the state Medicaid agencies are required to perform according to the Medicaid managed care regulations.

The primary objectives of the performance measure validation (PMV) process were to:

1. Evaluate the accuracy of performance measure data collected by the MCO.
2. Determine the extent to which the specific performance measures calculated by the MCO (or on behalf of the MCO) followed the specifications established for each performance measure.
3. Identify overall strengths and areas for improvement in the performance measure calculation process.

Technical Methods of Data Collection

CMS' EQR *Protocol 2. Validation of Performance Measures: A Mandatory EQR-Related Activity,* February 2023,[3-14] specifies that, in lieu of conducting a full on-site ISCA, the EQRO may review an assessment of the MCO's IS conducted by another party. If an MCO is accredited by NCQA, the MCO will have received a full IS assessment as part of its annual HEDIS Compliance Audit by an NCQA HEDIS Compliance Audit LO. In this case, HSAG would request and review the MCO's NCQA HEDIS Record of Administration, Data Management, and Processes (Roadmap), FAR, and the data submission tool in lieu of conducting an on-site assessment.

The validation process is described separately for the HEDIS and non-HEDIS measures that the MCOs report.

HEDIS Measure Validation

The MCOs that report HEDIS measures to NCQA must undergo an audit of their data conducted by an NCQA HEDIS Compliance Audit LO. For these HEDIS measures, HSAG reviews the rates submitted on the NCQA reporting tool (Interactive Data Submission System [IDSS]), which is audited prior to submission, and the FAR, which is completed by the LO and describes the process used to produce the measure rates and any problems that the MCOs experienced in the HEDIS process. Included in the FAR are the measures deemed *Not Reportable* due to biases in the calculation process.

[3-14] Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. *Protocol 2. Validation of Performance Measures: A Mandatory EQR-Related Activity*, February 2023. Available at: https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/2023-eqr-protocols.pdf. Accessed on: Jan 10, 2024.

HSAG used the results of the audit to report the results of each measure reported to LDH. Using information provided in the FAR and, if necessary, additional documentation (i.e., NCQA HEDIS Roadmap), HSAG prepared a report indicating the measure results for each of the MCOs that are required to report to LDH. Measures deemed *Not Reportable* were flagged. SWAs were computed, and NCQA Quality Compass benchmarks were provided as well. Results for the prior two years were provided for trending, when appropriate. Any issues in reporting any measure (e.g., medical record abstraction issues) were noted and, if LDH requested any other statistical analyses, the results were included in the report.

Non-HEDIS Measure Validation

For state-specific measures and standardized non-HEDIS measures (e.g., the Prevention Quality Indicators), University of Louisiana Monroe (ULM), contracted by LDH, conducted the audit. Measures that did not pass validation were deemed *Not Reportable*, and the reasons for this designation (e.g., unresolved source code issues) were noted. If LDH requested any other statistical analyses, the results were included in the report. ULM conducted the validation for non-HEDIS measures, and HSAG provided assistance when needed.

Description of Data Obtained

HSAG used the FAR and the MCO rates provided on the IDSS file as the primary data sources. The FAR included information on the MCOs' IS capabilities, findings for each measure, supplemental data validation results, medical record review validation results, results of any corrected programming logic (including corrections to numerators, denominators, or sampling used for final measure calculation), and opportunities for improvement. The FAR included final determinations of validity made by the auditor for each performance measure. The IDSS file detailed all rates that were submitted to NCQA and whether the auditor deemed them to be reportable. The IDSS file is "locked" by the auditor so that no changes can be made to the results.

How Data Were Aggregated and Analyzed

In accordance with the MY 2022 NCQA HEDIS Compliance Audit: Standards, Policies, and Procedures, Volume 5, the LOs evaluated compliance with NCQA's IS standards. NCQA's IS standards detail the minimum requirements of an MCO's IS, as well as criteria that must be met for any manual processes used to report HEDIS information. For each HEDIS measure, the MCO was evaluated on how its rate compared to the NCQA Quality Compass MY 2022 national 50th percentile Medicaid HMO benchmark.

How Conclusions Were Drawn

To draw conclusions about the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of care and services that each MCO provided to members, HSAG evaluated the results for each performance measure and the 2022 performance levels based on comparison to the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark to identify

strengths and weaknesses and determine whether each strength and weakness impacted one or more of the domains of quality, timeliness, or access. Additionally, for each weakness, HSAG made recommendations to support improvement in the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of care and services furnished to the MCO's Medicaid members.

To draw conclusions about the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of care provided by the Medicaid MCOs, HSAG assigned each of the components reviewed for PMV to one or more of three domains of care. This assignment to domains of care is depicted in Table 3-6. The measures marked *NA* are related to utilization of services.

Table 3-6—Assignment of Performance Measures to the Quality, Timeliness, and Access Domains

Performance Measure	Quality	Timeliness	Access
Childhood Immunization Status—DTaP, *IPV*, *MMR*, *HiB*, *Hepatitis B*, *VZV*, *Pneumococcal Conjugate, Hepatitis A*, *Rotavirus*, *Influenza*, *Combination 3*, *Combination 7*, and *Combination 10*	✓		✓
Immunization Status for Adolescents—Meningococcal, *Tdap/Td*, *HPV*, *Combination 1*, and *Combination 2*	✓		
Colorectal Cancer Screening	✓		
Cervical Cancer Screening	✓		
Follow-Up After Hospitalization for Mental Illness—Within 7 Days of Discharge and *Within 30 Days of Discharge*	✓	✓	✓
Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for Mental Illness—Within 7 Days of Discharge and *Within 30 Days of Discharge*	✓	✓	✓
Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for Substance Use—Within 7 Days of Discharge and *Within 30 Days of Discharge*	✓	✓	✓
Hemoglobin A1c Control for Patients With Diabetes—Poor HbA1c Control (>9.0%) and *HbA1c Control (<8.0%)*	✓		
Controlling High Blood Pressure	✓		
HIV Viral Load Suppression	✓		
Low-Risk Cesarean Delivery (Cesarean Rate for Low-Risk First Birth Women)	✓		
Child and Adolescent Well-Care Visits—3–11 Years, *12–17 Years*, *18–21 Years*, and *Total*	✓		✓
Well-Child Visits in the First 30 Months of Life—First 15 Months and *15 Months–30 Months*	✓		✓
Adults' Access to Preventive/Ambulatory Health Services—20–44 Years, *45–64 Years*, *65 Years and Older*, and *Total*	✓		✓
Ambulatory Care—Outpatient Visits/1,000 MM and *Emergency Department Visits/1,000 MM*	NA	NA	NA

Performance Measure	Quality	Timeliness	Access
Plan All-Cause Readmissions—Observed Readmissions, *Expected Readmissions*, and *O/E Ratio*	✓		
CAHPS Health Plan Survey 5.1H, Child (Rating of Health Plan, 8+9+10)	✓		
CAHPS Health Plan Survey 5.1H, Child (Rating of Health Plan—General Population, 8+9+10)	✓		
Diabetes Screening for People With Schizophrenia or Bipolar Disorder Who Are Using Antipsychotic Medications	✓		
Diabetes Monitoring for People With Diabetes and Schizophrenia	✓		
Cardiovascular Monitoring for People With Cardiovascular Disease and Schizophrenia	✓		
Metabolic Monitoring for Children and Adolescents on Antipsychotics—Blood Glucose Testing, *Cholesterol Testing*, and *Blood Glucose and Cholesterol Testing*	✓		
Prenatal and Postpartum Care—Timeliness of Prenatal Care and *Postpartum Care*	✓	✓	✓
Lead Screening in Children	✓		
Flu Vaccinations for Adults Ages 18 to 64	✓		
Weight Assessment and Counseling for Nutrition and Physical Activity for Children/Adolescents—BMI Percentile Documentation, *Counseling for Nutrition*, and *Counseling for Physical Activity*	✓		
Chlamydia Screening in Women—Total	✓		
Breast Cancer Screening	✓		
Medical Assistance With Smoking and Tobacco Use Cessation—Advising Smokers and Tobacco Users to Quit, *Discussing Cessation Medications*, and *Discussing Cessation Strategies*	✓		
Statin Therapy for Patients With Cardiovascular Disease—Received Statin Therapy—Total and *Statin Adherence 80%—Total*	✓		
Blood Pressure Control for Patients With Diabetes	✓		
Eye Exam for Patients With Diabetes	✓		
Pharmacotherapy for Opioid Use Disorder	✓		
Initiation and Engagement of Substance Use Disorder Treatment—Initiation of SUD and *Engagement of SUD*	✓	✓	✓
Use of First-Line Psychosocial Care for Children and Adolescents on Antipsychotics	✓		
Adherence to Antipsychotic Medications for Individuals With Schizophrenia	✓		

Performance Measure	Quality	Timeliness	Access
Follow-Up Care for Children Prescribed ADHD Medication—Initiation Phase and *Continuation and Maintenance Phase*	✓	✓	✓
Antidepressant Medication Management—Effective Acute Phase Treatment and *Effective Continuation Phase Treatment*	✓		
Appropriate Treatment for Children With Upper Respiratory Infection	✓		
Avoidance of Antibiotic Treatment in Adults With Acute Bronchitis	✓		
Non-Recommended Cervical Screening in Adolescent Females	✓		
Depression Screening and Follow-Up for Adolescents and Adults	✓		
Self-Reported Overall Health (Adult)—Adult—Very Good and *Adult—Excellent*	✓		
Self-Reported Overall Health (Child General)—Child General—Very Good and *Child General—Excellent*	✓		
Self-Reported Overall Health (Child CCC)—Child CCC—Very Good and *Child CCC—Excellent*	✓		
Self-Reported Overall Mental or Emotional Health (Adult)—Adult—Very Good and *Adult—Excellent*	✓		
Self-Reported Overall Mental or Emotional Health (Child General)—Child General—Very Good and *Child General—Excellent*	✓		
Self-Reported Overall Mental or Emotional Health (Child CCC)—Child CCC—Very Good and *Child CCC—Excellent*	✓		
Use of Imaging Studies for Low Back Pain	✓		

4. Assessment of Compliance With Medicaid Managed Care Regulations

Aggregate Results

In CY 2022, the first year of a new three-year review cycle, LDH's former EQRO conducted a CR covering a review period of CY 2021 and most of the federally required standards. In CY 2023, HSAG conducted a CR for Standard I—Enrollment and Disenrollment (this standard had not been included in the prior year's CR), thereby completing the required evaluation for the administrative and compliance process in a three-year period. LDH plans to use CY 2024 for remediation and to prepare for a new CR cycle. Table 4-1 presents an overview of the results of the CR for the MCOs.

Table 4-1—Summary of CR Scores for the Three-Year Review Period: CY 2021–CY 2023[1,2,3]

Standard Name	ABH			ACLA			HBL			LHCC			UHC		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Enrollment and Disenrollment		42.9%			100%			71.4%			85.7%			85.7%	
Member Rights and Confidentiality	93.0%			99.1%			99.1%			99.1%			99.5%		
Member Information															
Coverage and Authorization of Services	98.5%			99.2%			100%			99.2%			100%		
Emergency and Post-Stabilization Services															
Availability of Services	99.2%			95.0%			99.6%			100%			98.8%		
Assurances of Adequate Capacity and Services	100%			100%			100%			100%			100%		
Coordination and Continuity of Care	91.6%			95.2%			100%			91.0%			90.7%		
Provider Selection	97.8%			100%			97.8%			100%			97.8%		
Subcontractual Relationships and Delegation	100%			100%			100%			100%			100%		
Practice Guidelines	100%			100%			100%			100%			100%		
Health Information Systems	100%			100%			100%			100%			100%		

Standard Name	ABH			ACLA			HBL			LHCC			UHC		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement Program	98.6%			98.6%			100%			100%			100%		
Grievance and Appeal Systems	100%			100%			99.3%			100%			100%		
Program Integrity	95.8%			100%			100%			94.6%			100%		

[1] Grey shading indicates the standard was not reviewed in the calendar year.

[2] Bold text indicates scores that were determined by HSAG. All other scores were determined by LDH's former EQRO. HSAG's scoring methodology included three levels: *Met*, *Not Met*, and *Not Applicable*.

[3] HUM was excluded from this results summary as it was a new MCO to the Louisiana market as of January 2023; therefore, HUM was not subject to the CR.

Follow-Up on Previous Compliance Review Findings

LDH contracted HSAG to assess the remediation MCOs' conducted as a result of the deficiencies identified in the prior year's compliance review (conducted by LDH's previous EQRO). The MCOs were issued a CAP and required to remediate each element as recommended by the previous EQRO. During this year's virtual partial compliance audit, HSAG reviewed the recommendations made by the previous EQRO and the MCOs' responses. The MCOs submitted additional documentation or implemented policies and procedures to meet requirements. The MCOs also completed a response document to describe its remediation efforts for each element. HSAG then assessed all remediation elements to determine if compliance with requirements had been met and assigned a final score. The findings of the remediation assessment were published in the individual MCO reports.

Statewide MCO Strengths, Opportunities for Improvement, and Recommendations

For the MCOs statewide, the following strengths were identified:

- The MCOs demonstrated that member disenrollment was not requested as a result of an adverse change in a member's health status, utilization of services, or diminished mental capacity. **[Quality and Access]**
- The MCOs implemented documented processes that focused on ensuring members were not disenrolled for any reason other than those stated in the LDH contract. **[Quality and Access]**

For the MCOs statewide, the following opportunity for improvement was identified:

- The MCOs did not consistently include all member for cause and without cause reasons to disenroll in MCO policies, procedures, manuals, or handbooks. [**Quality and Access]**

For the MCOs statewide, the following recommendations were identified:

- HSAG recommends that the MCOs review and update, as appropriate, policies, procedures, manuals, and handbooks to consistently include all member for cause and without cause reasons for disenrollment. **[Quality and Access]**

Methodology

Standards

Table 4-2 delineates the CR activities as well as the standards that were reviewed during the first two years of the three-year CR cycle. In addition, HSAG conducted a follow-up review of each MCO's implementation of CAPs from the CY 2021 CRs.

Table 4-2—CR Standards

Standard	Year One (CY 2021)			Year Two (CY 2022)		
	MCO	PAHP	PIHP	MCO	PAHP	PIHP
Standard I—Enrollment and Disenrollment				✓	✓	✓
Standard II—Member Rights and Confidentiality	✓	✓	✓			
Standard III—Member Information	✓	✓	✓			
Standard IV—Emergency and Poststabilization Services	✓	NA				✓
Standard V—Adequate Capacity and Availability of Services	✓	✓	✓			
Standard VI—Coordination and Continuity of Care	✓	✓	✓			
Standard VII—Coverage and Authorization of Services	✓	✓	✓			
Standard VIII—Provider Selection	✓	✓	✓			
Standard IX—Subcontractual Relationships and Delegation	✓		✓		✓	
Standard X—Practice Guidelines	✓	✓	✓			
Standard XI—Health Information Systems	✓	✓	✓			
Standard XII—Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement	✓	✓	✓			
Standard XIII—Grievance and Appeal Systems	✓	✓	✓			
Standard XIV—Program Integrity	✓	✓	✓			

HSAG divided the federal regulations into 14 standards consisting of related regulations and contract requirements. Table 4-3 describes the standards and associated regulations and requirements reviewed for each standard.

Table 4-3—Summary of CR Standards and Associated Regulations[1,2]

Standard	Federal Requirements Included	Standard	Federal Requirements Included
Standard I—Enrollment and Disenrollment	42 CFR §438.3(d) 42 CFR §438.56 42 CFR §438.608	Standard VIII—Provider Selection	42 CFR §438.12 42 CFR §438.102 42 CFR §438.106 42 CFR §438.214 42 CFR §438.602(b) 42 CFR §438.608 42 CFR §438.610
Standard II—Member Rights and Confidentiality	42 CFR §438.100 42 CFR §438.224 42 CFR §422.128	Standard IX—Subcontractual Relationships and Delegation	42 CFR §438.230
Standard III—Member Information	42 CFR §438.10	Standard X—Practice Guidelines	42 CFR §438.236
Standard IV—Emergency and Poststabilization Services	42 CFR §438.114	Standard XI—Health Information Systems	42 CFR §438.242
Standard V—Adequate Capacity and Availability of Services	42 CFR §438.206 42 CFR §438.207	Standard XII—Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement	42 CFR §438.330
Standard VI—Coordination and Continuity of Care	42 CFR §438.208	Standard XIII—Grievance and Appeal Systems	42 CFR §438.228 42 CFR §438.400– 42 CFR §438.424
Standard VII—Coverage and Authorization of Services	42 CFR §438.210 42 CFR §438.404	Standard XIV—Program Integrity	42 CFR §438.608

[1] The CR standards comprise a review of all requirements, known as "elements," under the associated federal citation, including all requirements that are cross-referenced within each federal standard, as applicable (e.g., Standard XIII—Grievance and Appeal Systems includes a review of §438.228 and all requirements under 42 CFR Subpart F).

[2] Note that in year one, the previous EQRO utilized a different numbering system for the standards.

Objectives

Private accreditation organizations, state licensing agencies, and state Medicaid agencies all recognize that having standards is only the first step in promoting safe and effective healthcare. Making sure that the standards are followed is the second step. The objective of each virtual review was to provide meaningful information to LDH and the MCOs regarding:

- The MCOs' compliance with federal managed care regulations and contract requirements in the standard areas reviewed.

- Strengths, opportunities for improvement, recommendations, or required actions to bring the MCOs into compliance with federal managed care regulations and contract requirements with the standard areas reviewed.
- The quality, timeliness, and access to care furnished by the MCOs, as addressed within the specific areas reviewed.
- Possible additional interventions recommended to improve the quality of the MCOs' care provided and services offered related to the areas reviewed.

Technical Methods of Data Collection

To assess the MCOs' compliance with regulations, HSAG conducted the five activities described in CMS' EQR *Protocol 3. Review of Compliance With Medicaid and CHIP Managed Care Regulations: A Mandatory EQR-Related Activity,* February 2023.[4-1] Table 4-4 describes the five protocol activities and the specific tasks that HSAG performed to complete each activity.

Table 4-4—Protocol Activities Performed for Assessment of Compliance With Regulations

For this protocol activity,	HSAG completed the following activities:
Activity 1:	**Establish Compliance Thresholds**
	Conducted before the review to assess compliance with federal managed care regulations and LDH contract requirements: • HSAG and LDH collaborated to determine the timing and scope of the reviews, as well as scoring strategies. • HSAG developed and submitted CR tools, report templates, and agendas, and sent review dates to LDH for review and approval. • HSAG forwarded the CR tools and agendas to the MCOs. • HSAG scheduled the virtual reviews to facilitate preparation for the reviews.
Activity 2:	**Perform Preliminary Review**
	• HSAG conducted an MCO pre-virtual review preparation session to describe HSAG's processes and allow the MCOs the opportunity to ask questions about the review process and MCO expectations. • HSAG confirmed a primary MCO contact person for the review and assigned HSAG reviewers to participate. • During the MCO pre-virtual review preparation session, HSAG notified the MCOs of the request for desk review documents. HSAG delivered a desk review form, the CR tool, CAP implementation review tool, and a webinar review agenda via HSAG's Secure Access File Exchange (SAFE) site. The desk review request included

[4-1] Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. *Protocol 3. Review of Compliance With Medicaid and CHIP Managed Care Regulations: A Mandatory EQR-Related Activity*, February 2023. Available at: https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/2023-eqr-protocols.pdf. Accessed on: Jan 10, 2024.

For this protocol activity,	HSAG completed the following activities:
	instructions for organizing and preparing the documents to be submitted. The MCO provided documentation for the desk review, as requested. • Examples of documents submitted for the desk review and CR consisted of the completed desk review form, the CR tool with the MCO's section completed, policies and procedures, staff training materials, reports, minutes of key committee meetings, and member and provider informational materials. • The HSAG review team reviewed all documentation submitted prior to the scheduled webinar and prepared a request for further documentation and an interview guide to use during the webinar.
Activity 3:	**Conduct MCO Virtual Review**
	• HSAG conducted an opening conference, with introductions and a review of the agenda and logistics for HSAG's virtual review activities. • During the review, HSAG met with groups of the MCO's key staff members to obtain a complete picture of the MCO's compliance with Medicaid and CHIP managed care regulations and contract requirements, explore any issues not fully addressed in the documents, and increase overall understanding of the MCO's performance. • HSAG requested, collected, and reviewed additional documents, as needed. • HSAG conducted a closing conference during which HSAG reviewers summarized preliminary findings, as appropriate.
Activity 4:	**Compile and Analyze Findings**
	• HSAG used the 2023 LDH-approved CR Report Template to compile the findings and incorporate information from the CR activities. • HSAG analyzed the findings and calculated final scores based on LDH-approved scoring strategies. • HSAG determined opportunities for improvement, recommendations, and required actions based on the review findings.
Activity 5:	**Report Results to LDH**
	• HSAG populated and submitted the draft reports to LDH and the MCOs for review and comments. • HSAG incorporated the feedback, as applicable, and finalized the reports. • HSAG included a pre-populated CAP template in the final report for all requirements determined to be out of compliance with managed care regulations (i.e., received a score of *Not Met*). • HSAG distributed the final reports to the MCOs and LDH.

Description of Data Obtained

The following are examples of documents reviewed and sources of the data obtained:

- Committee meeting agendas, minutes, and reports
- Written policies and procedures
- Management/monitoring reports and audits
- Narrative and/or data reports across a broad range of performance and content areas
- Records for delegation
- Member and provider materials

How Data Were Aggregated and Analyzed

HSAG aggregated and analyzed the data resulting from the desk review, virtual interviews conducted with key MCO personnel, and any additional documents submitted as a result of the interviews. The data that HSAG aggregated and analyzed included the following:

- Documented findings describing the MCO's performance in complying with each standard requirement.
- Scores assigned to the MCO's performance for each requirement.
- The total percentage-of-compliance score calculated for each standard.
- The overall percentage-of-compliance score calculated across the standards.
- Documentation of the actions required to bring performance into compliance with the requirements for which HSAG assigned scores of *Not Met*.
- Recommendations for program enhancements.

Based on the results of the data aggregation and analysis, HSAG prepared and forwarded draft reports to LDH and to each MCO's staff members for their review and comment prior to issuing final reports.

HSAG analyzed the quantitative results obtained from the above compliance activity to identify strengths and weaknesses in each domain of quality, timeliness, and access to care furnished by each MCO. HSAG then identified common themes and the salient patterns that emerged across MCOs related to the compliance activity conducted.

How Conclusions Were Drawn

To draw conclusions about the quality, timeliness, and access to care provided by the MCOs, HSAG assigned each of the components reviewed for assessment of compliance with regulations to one or more of those domains of care. Each standard may involve assessment of more than one domain of care due to the combination of individual requirements within each standard. HSAG then analyzed, to draw

conclusions and make recommendations, the individual requirements within each standard that assessed the quality, timeliness, or access to care and services provided by the MCOs. Table 4-5 depicts assignment of the standards to the domains of care.

Table 4-5—Assignment of CR Standards to the Quality, Timeliness, and Access Domains

CR Standard	Quality	Timeliness	Access
Standard I—Enrollment and Disenrollment	✓		✓
Standard II—Member Rights and Confidentiality			✓
Standard III—Member Information			✓
Standard IV—Emergency and Poststabilization Services		✓	✓
Standard V—Adequate Capacity and Availability of Services		✓	✓
Standard VI—Coordination and Continuity of Care	✓	✓	✓
Standard VII—Coverage and Authorization of Services		✓	✓
Standard VIII—Provider Selection	✓	✓	✓
Standard IX—Subcontractual Relationships and Delegation	✓		
Standard X—Practice Guidelines	✓		
Standard XI—Health Information Systems	✓		✓
Standard XII—Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement	✓		
Standard XIII—Grievance and Appeal Systems	✓	✓	✓
Standard XIV—Program Integrity	✓	✓	✓

Aggregate Results

Provider Access Surveys

The provider access survey results were not final at the time of reporting. Provider access survey results will be included in the SFY 2024 EQR technical report. At the time of reporting, HSAG and LDH finalized the first semi-annual provider access survey methodology, and HSAG conducted the survey telephone calls.

Provider Directory Accuracy

This section presents the results from the Quarter 1 PDV for all sampled providers by MCO and specialty type. Quarter 2 through Quarter 4 PDV results were not final at the time of reporting and will be included in the SFY 2024 technical report.

Survey Outcomes

Table 5-1 illustrates the survey disposition and response rates by MCO and specialty type.

Table 5-1—Survey Dispositions and Response Rates by MCO and Specialty Type

Specialty Type	Sampled Cases	Respondents	Refusals*	Bad Phone Number**	Unable to Reach***	Response Rate
Overall Total	**750**	**666**	**3**	**34**	**47**	**88.8%**
ABH	**125**	**100**	**1**	**13**	**11**	**80.0%**
Internal Medicine/Family Medicine	25	22	0	2	1	88.0%
Pediatrics	25	21	0	3	1	84.0%
Obstetrics/Gynecology (OB/GYN)	25	19	1	2	3	76.0%
Specialists (any)	25	21	0	3	1	84.0%
Behavioral Health (any)	25	17	0	3	5	68.0%
ACLA	**125**	**118**	**0**	**1**	**6**	**94.4%**
Internal Medicine/Family Medicine	25	22	0	0	3	88.0%
Pediatrics	25	25	0	0	0	100%
OB/GYN	25	25	0	0	0	100%

Specialty Type	Sampled Cases	Respondents	Refusals*	Bad Phone Number**	Unable to Reach***	Response Rate
Specialists (any)	25	25	0	0	0	100%
Behavioral Health (any)	25	21	0	1	3	84.0%
HBL	**125**	**110**	**0**	**8**	**7**	**88.0%**
Internal Medicine/Family Medicine	25	24	0	1	0	96.0%
Pediatrics	25	23	0	1	1	92.0%
OB/GYN	25	22	0	1	2	88.0%
Specialists (any)	25	24	0	1	0	96.0%
Behavioral Health (any)	25	17	0	4	4	68.0%
HUM	**125**	**111**	**2**	**4**	**8**	**88.8%**
Internal Medicine/Family Medicine	25	24	0	0	1	96.0%
Pediatrics	25	21	0	2	2	84.0%
OB/GYN	25	21	2	0	2	84.0%
Specialists (any)	25	24	0	0	1	96.0%
Behavioral Health (any)	25	21	0	2	2	84.0%
LHCC	**125**	**114**	**0**	**5**	**6**	**91.2%**
Internal Medicine/Family Medicine	25	23	0	0	2	92.0%
Pediatrics	25	25	0	0	0	100%
OB/GYN	25	22	0	3	0	88.0%
Specialists (any)	25	25	0	0	0	100%
Behavioral Health (any)	25	19	0	2	4	76.0%
UHC	**125**	**113**	**0**	**3**	**9**	**90.4%**
Internal Medicine/Family Medicine	25	21	0	1	3	84.0%
Pediatrics	25	25	0	0	0	100%
OB/GYN	25	22	0	1	2	88.0%
Specialists (any)	25	25	0	0	0	100%
Behavioral Health (any)	25	20	0	1	4	80.0%

* This includes offices that refused to participate, or the representative did not have enough information to answer the survey questions.
** This includes reaching a disconnected number, fax number, nonmedical facility, or billing office that was unable to transfer/provide corrected number.
*** This includes reaching a voicemail, busy signal, continuous ringing, and/or extended hold time after three attempts.

Correct Address

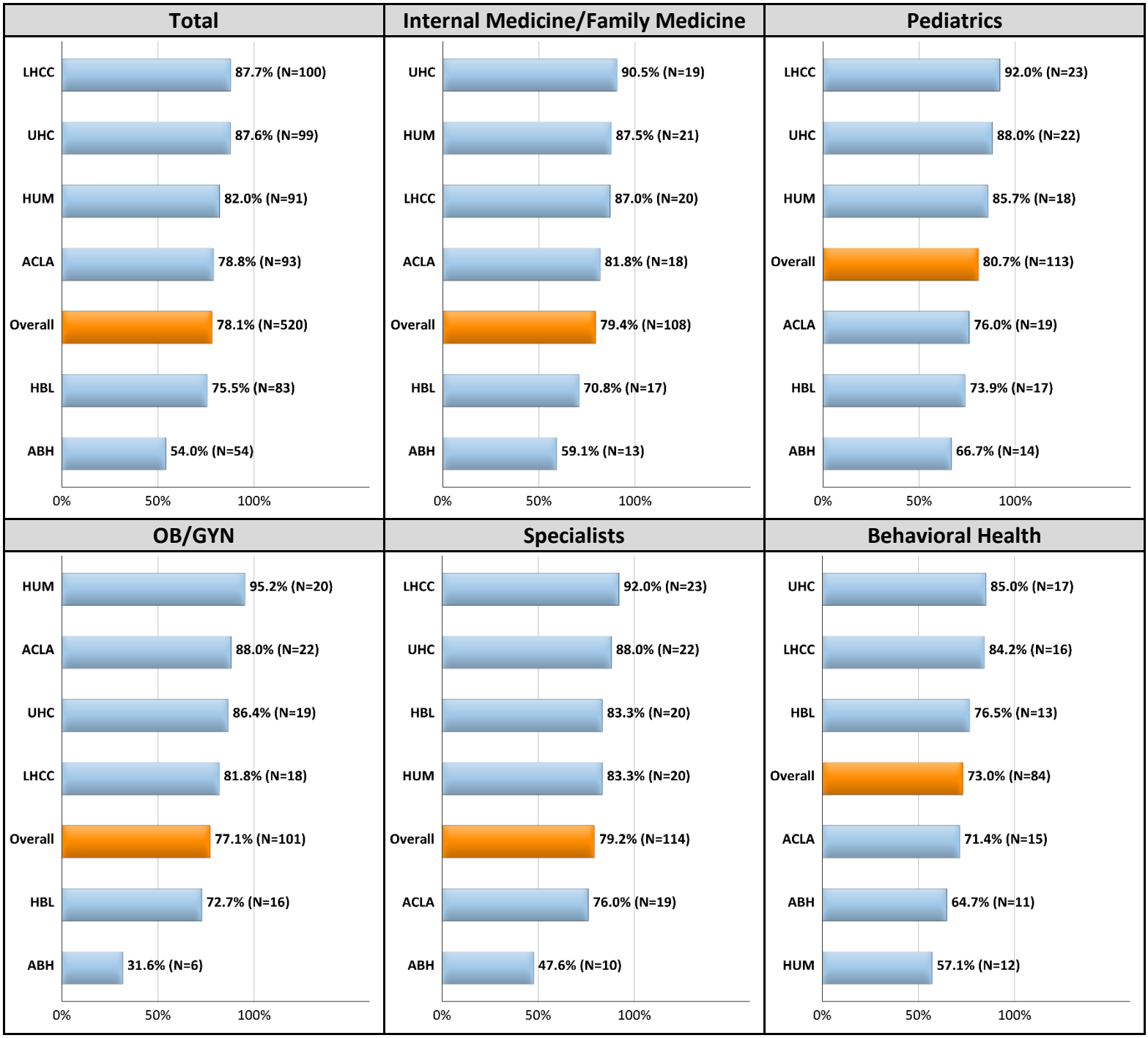
Table 5-1 displays the percentage of cases in which the survey respondent reported that MCOs' provider directory reflected the correct address.

Figure 5-1—Respondents With the Correct Address

Provider at Correct Location

Figure 5-2 displays the percentage of cases in which the survey respondent confirmed that the sampled provider was at the location.

Figure 5-2—Respondents That Confirmed Sampled Provider at Correct Location



Specialty

Figure 5-3 displays the percentage of cases in which the survey respondent confirmed that the sampled provider was the specialty indicated in the MCOs' provider directories.

Figure 5-3—Respondents That Confirmed Provider Specialty

Acceptance Rates

Table 5-4 through Figure 5-6 display the percentage of cases in which the survey respondent confirmed the provider accepted the requested MCO, Louisiana Medicaid, and new patients, respectively.

Figure 5-4—Respondents That Confirmed Provider Accepted MCO

Figure 5-5—Respondents That Confirmed Provider Accepted Louisiana Medicaid

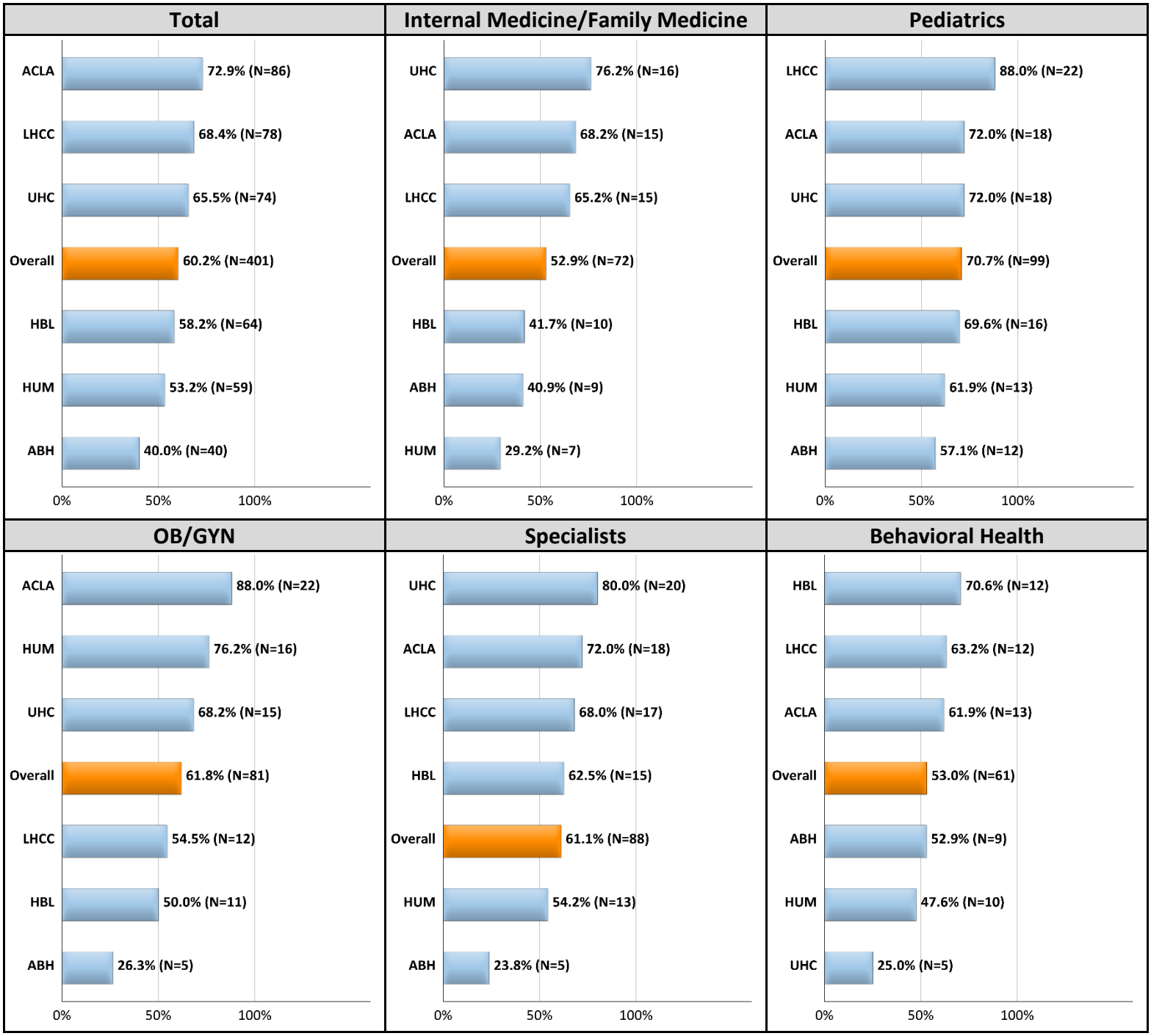


Figure 5-6—Respondents That Confirmed Provider Accepted New Patients

Compliance Scores

Table 5-2 and Table 5-3 present the PDV weighted compliance scores by specialty type and MCO, respectively.

Table 5-2—PDV Weighted Compliance Scores by Specialty Type

Specialty	Total	Compliant[1]	Weighted Compliance Score
Overall	**750**	**309**	**47.8%**
Internal Medicine/Family Medicine	150	56	45.1%
Pediatrics	150	82	59.8%
OB/GYN	150	58	50.0%
Specialists (any)	150	71	50.9%
Behavioral Health (any)	150	42	33.1%

[1] Compliant providers include providers in which all indicators match between the online directory and the information obtained during the survey call to the sampled location.

Table 5-3—PDV Weighted Compliance Scores by MCO and Specialty Type

Specialty Type	Total	Compliant[1]	Weighted Compliance Score[2]
Overall	**750**	**309**	**47.8%**
ABH	**125**	**21**	**27.5%**
Internal Medicine/Family Medicine	25	3	26.7%
Pediatrics	25	9	41.3%
OB/GYN	25	2	29.3%
Specialists (any)	25	2	12.0%
Behavioral Health (any)	25	5	28.0%
ACLA	**125**	**72**	**62.1%**
Internal Medicine/Family Medicine	25	13	60.0%
Pediatrics	25	14	61.3%
OB/GYN	25	20	84.0%
Specialists (any)	25	13	54.7%
Behavioral Health (any)	25	12	50.7%

Specialty Type	Total	Compliant[1]	Weighted Compliance Score[2]
HBL	**125**	**43**	**42.4%**
Internal Medicine/Family Medicine	25	7	38.7%
Pediatrics	25	11	53.3%
OB/GYN	25	6	36.0%
Specialists (any)	25	13	56.0%
Behavioral Health (any)	25	6	28.0%
HUM	**125**	**49**	**44.0%**
Internal Medicine/Family Medicine	25	6	28.0%
Pediatrics	25	12	50.7%
OB/GYN	25	12	58.7%
Specialists (any)	25	11	46.7%
Behavioral Health (any)	25	8	36.0%
LHCC	**125**	**65**	**59.5%**
Internal Medicine/Family Medicine	25	14	61.3%
Pediatrics	25	20	85.3%
OB/GYN	25	9	49.3%
Specialists (any)	25	15	64.0%
Behavioral Health (any)	25	7	37.3%
UHC	**125**	**59**	**51.2%**
Internal Medicine/Family Medicine	25	13	56.0%
Pediatrics	25	16	66.7%
OB/GYN	25	9	42.7%
Specialists (any)	25	17	72.0%
Behavioral Health (any)	25	4	18.7%

[1]Compliant providers include providers in which all indicators match between the online directory and the information obtained during the survey call to the sampled location.
[2] The compliance scores shaded in green indicate the compliance score met the ≥ 75 percent requirement.

Table 5-4 presents the reasons for noncompliance.

Table 5-4—Reasons for Noncompliance

Reason	ABH	ACLA	HBL	HUM	LHCC	UHC	Total
Noncompliant providers	**83.2% (104)**	**42.4% (53)**	**65.6% (82)**	**60.8% (76)**	**48.0% (60)**	**52.8% (66)**	**58.8% (441)**
Total reasons for noncompliance	**124**	**62**	**101**	**94**	**65**	**76**	**522**
Provider does not participate with MCO or Louisiana Medicaid	11.2% (14)	8.0% (10)	15.2% (19)	28.0% (35)	17.6% (22)	21.6% (27)	16.9% (127)
Provider is not at site	25.6% (32)	17.6% (22)	17.6% (22)	12.0% (15)	6.4% (8)	9.6% (12)	14.8% (111)
Provider not accepting new patients	6.4% (8)	0.8% (1)	11.2% (14)	8.8% (11)	0.8% (1)	4.8% (6)	5.5% (41)
Wrong telephone number	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.8% (1)	0.3% (2)
No response/busy signal/disconnected telephone number (after three calls)	19.2% (24)	5.6% (7)	11.2% (14)	9.6% (12)	8.8% (11)	8.8% (11)	10.5% (79)
Representative does not know	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.1% (1)
Incorrect address reported	23.2% (29)	13.6% (17)	14.4% (18)	10.4% (13)	8.0% (10)	9.6% (12)	13.2% (99)
Address (suite number) needs to be updated	6.4% (8)	0.8% (1)	2.4% (3)	1.6% (2)	3.2% (4)	0.8% (1)	2.5% (19)
Wrong specialty reported	6.4% (8)	3.2% (4)	8.0% (10)	4.8% (6)	7.2% (9)	4.8% (6)	5.7% (43)

GeoAccess Provider Network Accessibility

The MCOs' contracts with LDH (effective dates January 1, 2023–December 31, 2025) require the MCOs to comply with the following GeoAccess standards:

- Travel distance to adult primary care (family/general practice, internal medicine, FQHCs, RHCs, and pediatric primary care (pediatric practices, family/general practice, internal medicine, FQHCs, RHCs):
  - Urban—10 miles
  - Rural—30 miles

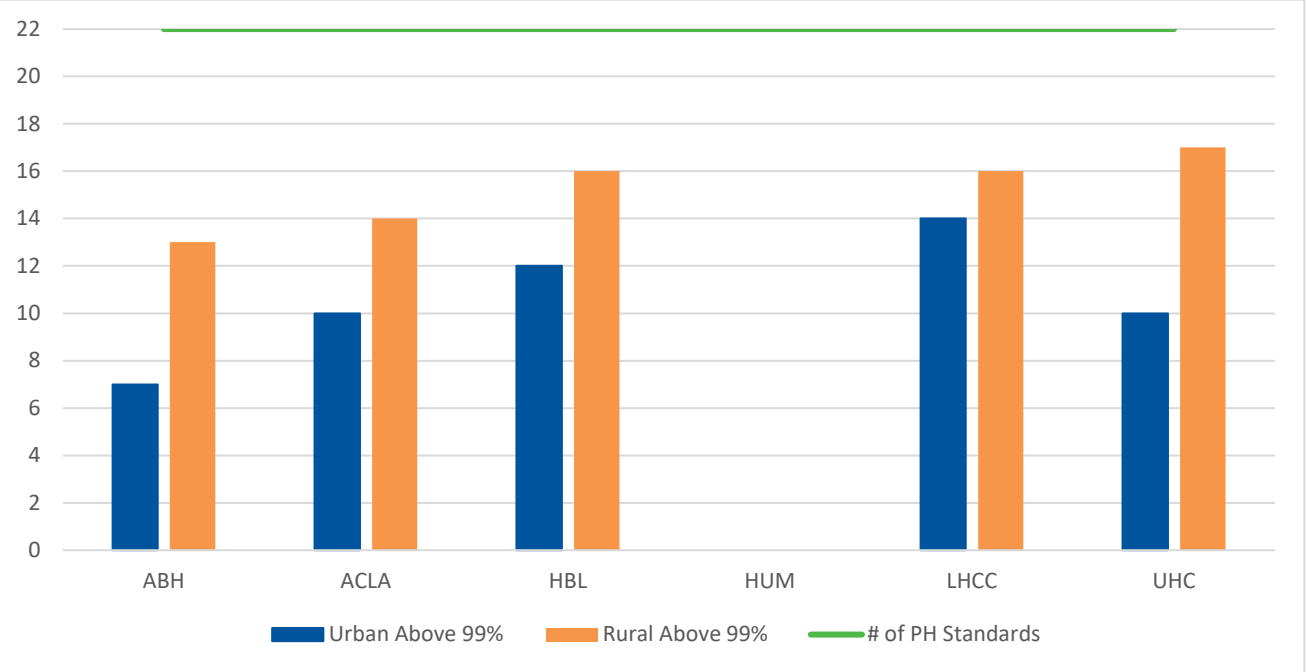
- Travel distance to acute inpatient hospitals
  - Urban—10 miles
  - Rural—30 miles
- Travel distance to ancillary care (laboratory and radiology):
  - Urban—20 miles
  - Rural—30 miles
- Travel distance to ancillary care (pharmacy and hemodialysis):
  - Urban—10 miles
  - Rural—30 miles
- Travel distance to specialty care (OB/GYN and psychiatrists):
  - Urban—15 miles
  - Rural—30 miles
- Travel distance to all other specialty care (except behavioral health care):
  - Urban—60 miles
  - Rural—60 miles
- Travel distance to licensed mental health specialists (advanced practice registered nurse [APRN], psychologist, licensed clinical social worker [LCSW]):
  - Urban—15 miles
  - Rural—30 miles
- Travel distance to pediatric PRTFs (mental health and American Society of Addiction Medicine [ASAM]):
  - Urban—200 miles
  - Rural—200 miles
- Travel distance to ASAM levels of care (LOCs) (both urban and rural):
  - ASAM LOC 1 (adult and pediatric 1):
    - Urban—15 miles
    - Rural—30 miles
  - ASAM LOC 2.1 (adult and pediatric)
    - Urban—15 miles
    - Rural—30 miles
  - ASAM LOC 2 Withdrawal Management (WM) (adult and pediatric)—60 miles
  - ASAM LOC 3.1 (adult)—30 miles
  - ASAM LOC 3.1 (pediatric)—60 miles
  - ASAM LOC 3.2WM (adult and pediatric)—60 miles
  - ASAM LOC 3.3 (adult)—30 miles

  - ASAM LOC 3.5 (adult)—30 miles
  - ASAM LOC 3.5 (pediatric)—60 miles
  - ASAM LOC 3.7 (adult)—60 miles
  - ASAM LOC 3.7WM (adult)—60 miles
- Travel distance to psychiatric inpatient hospital services (free standing, distinct psychiatric unit):
  - Urban—90 miles
  - Rural—90 miles
- Travel distance to behavioral health rehabilitation services (legacy and non-legacy agency):
  - Urban—15 miles
  - Rural—30 miles

The MCOs reported the percentage of members having access within required distance standards for 22 physical health provider types and 19 behavioral health provider types depicted in Attachment F of the MCOs' contracts with LDH for the reporting period of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. (Some standards were reported separately for urban and rural, while the urban and rural populations were reported together for other standards.) For each provider type, LDH set standards for urban and rural distances and requires the MCOs to achieve 100 percent.

Out of 22 physical health provider types, Figure 5-7 displays the number of standards for which each MCO achieved 99 percent or above for urban and rural areas for the entire SFY 2023.

Figure 5-7—Physical Health Provider GeoAccess[5-1]

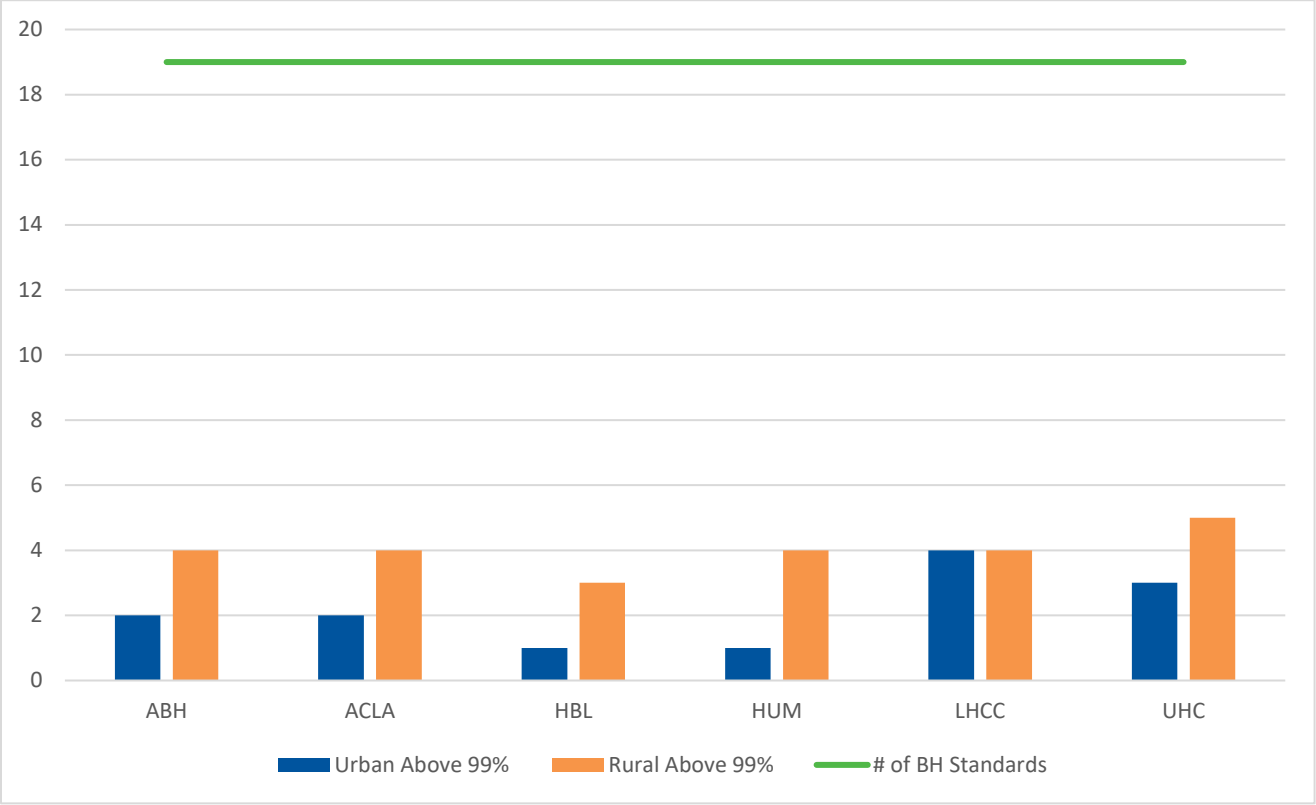


[5-1] HUM's physical health GeoAccess results were unavailable to HSAG at the time of reporting.

As shown in Figure 5-7, of the 22 physical health provider types for rural standards, the lowest performing MCO (ABH) achieved 99 percent or above for 13 provider types, and the highest performing MCO (UHC) achieved 99 percent or above for 17 provider types. Performance in urban areas was lower. The lowest performing MCO (ABH) achieved 99 percent or above for seven provider types, and the highest performing MCO (LHCC) achieved 99 percent or above for 14 provider types.

Out of 19 behavioral health provider types, Figure 5-8 displays the number of standards for which each MCO achieved 99 percent or above for urban and rural areas for the entire SFY 2023.

Figure 5-8—Behavioral Health Provider GeoAccess[5-2]



As shown in Figure 5-8, of the 19 behavioral health provider types for rural standards, the lowest performing MCO (HBL) achieved 99 percent or above for three provider types, and the highest performing MCO (UHC) achieved 99 percent or above for five provider types. Performance in urban areas was lower. The lowest performing MCOs (HBL and HUM) achieved 99 percent or above for one provider type, and the highest performing MCO (LHCC) achieved 99 percent or above for four provider types.

[5-2] HUM only reported behavioral health GeoAccess results for quarters 3 and 4 of SFY 2023.

Statewide MCO Strengths, Opportunities for Improvement, and Recommendations

For the MCOs statewide, the following strengths were identified:

- The overall response rate for the PDV was 88.8 percent. A higher response rate correlates to correct provider data (i.e., telephone number accuracy) and improves a member's ability to contact provider locations when seeking care. **[Quality and Access]**
- The GeoAccess results indicated that there were six physical health specialty provider types for which all MCOs achieved above 99 percent for both urban and rural areas for the entire state fiscal year. **[Quality and Access]**
- All MCOs also achieved GeoAccess above 99 percent for SFY 2023 in rural areas for adult and pediatric primary care, FQHCs, RHCs, and ancillary care—pharmacy. **[Quality and Access]**
- GeoAccess results for behavioral health provider types showed that all MCOs met urban and rural standards for SFY 2023 for pediatric PRTF and inpatient psychiatric provider types. **[Quality and Access]**

For the MCOs statewide, the following opportunities for improvement were identified:

- In the PDV, acceptance of Louisiana Medicaid was inaccurate with 60.2 percent of providers accepting Louisiana Medicaid. **[Quality and Access]**
- In the PDV, acceptance of the MCO was inaccurate with 63.8 percent of providers accepting the requested MCO. **[Quality and Access]**
- Overall, 71.6 percent of providers in the PDV confirmed the specialty listed in the online provider directory was accurate. **[Quality and Access]**
- Overall, acceptance of new patients was relatively low in the PDV, with 71.9 percent of providers accepting new patients; however, only providers listed as accepting new patients in the online provider directory were selected for the PDV reviews. **[Quality and Access]**
- Affiliation with the sampled provider was low in the PDV, with 78.1 percent of the locations confirming affiliation with the sampled provider. **[Quality and Access]**
- PDV compliance scores varied by MCO with an overall compliance score of 47.8 percent. **[Quality and Access]**
- PDV compliance scores also varied by provider type with behavioral health having the lowest compliance score at 33.1 percent and pediatrics having the highest compliance score at 59.8 percent. **[Quality and Access]**
- The MCOs performed poorly on GeoAccess standards for any ASAM or medication-assisted treatment (MAT) provider types. **[Quality and Access]**
- The MCOs' GeoAccess performance was lower in urban areas than rural areas. **[Quality and Access]**
- No MCO met all GeoAccess standards. **[Quality and Access]**

For the MCOs statewide, the following recommendations were identified:

- LDH should provide each MCO with the case-level PDV data files (i.e., flat files) and a defined timeline by which each MCO will address provider data deficiencies identified during the PDV reviews (e.g., provider specialty, MCO acceptance, and Louisiana Medicaid acceptance). **[Quality and Access]**
- In addition to updating provider directory information, each MCO should conduct a root cause analysis to identify the nature of the data mismatches for PDV study indicators that scored below 90 percent. **[Quality and Access]**
- For provider types that did not meet GeoAccess standards, the MCOs should contract with additional providers, if available, or continue to implement strategies for expanding the provider network such as enhanced reimbursement or encouraging providers to expand licensing to add additional ASAM LOCs. **[Quality and Access]**
- The MCOs should conduct an in-depth review of provider types for which GeoAccess standards were not met, with the goal of determining whether failure to meet the standard(s) resulted from a lack of providers or an inability to contract with providers in the geographic area. Analyses should evaluate the extent to which the MCO has requested exemptions from LDH for provider types for which providers may not be available or willing to contract. **[Quality and Access]**
- The MCOs should evaluate whether offering additional telehealth services could increase compliance with GeoAccess standards. **[Quality and Access]**

Methodology

Objectives

The purpose of network adequacy validation (NAV) activities is to evaluate the sufficiency of the provider network as reported by the MCO, ensure the sufficiency of the network to provide adequate access to all services covered under the contract for all members, and provide recommendations to address network deficiencies.

Technical Methods of Data Collection

In February 2023, CMS released updates to the CMS EQR protocols, including the newly developed NAV protocol. As established in the 2016 final rule, states must begin conducting the NAV activity at 42 CFR §438.358(b)(1)(iv) no later than one year from the issuance of CMS' EQR *Protocol 4. Validation of Network Adequacy: A Mandatory EQR-Related Activity*, February 2023 (CMS Protocol 4).[5-3] This means that by February 2024, HSAG will begin conducting NAV activities in accordance with CMS Protocol 4 and will report results in the EQR technical report due April 30, 2025.

Provider Directory Validation

To conduct the NAV analysis, HSAG utilized the MCOs' online provider directories to locate and extract provider data elements. Trained interviewers collected survey responses using a standardized script to validate survey indicators pertaining to provider data accuracy, such as telephone number, address, provider specialty, provider affiliation with the requested MCO, provider's acceptance of Medicaid, and accuracy of new patient acceptance.

Provider Access Survey

To conduct the NAV analysis, each MCO used the data request document prepared by HSAG to identify providers potentially eligible for survey inclusion, and to submit provider data files used to populate its online provider directory to HSAG. At a minimum, the data elements requested for each provider included: provider name, Medicaid identification (ID), National Provider Identification (NPI) number, provider specialty, physical (practice) address, telephone number, provider taxonomy code, and whether or not the provider accepted new patients. Upon receipt of the data files, HSAG assessed the data to ensure alignment with the requested data file format, data field contents, and logical consistency between data elements. HSAG also assessed the distribution of provider specialty data values present in each MCO's data to determine which data values attributed to each provider domain.

[5-3] Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. *Protocol 4. Validation of Network Adequacy: A Mandatory EQR-Related Activity*, February 2023. Available at: https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/2023-eqr-protocols.pdf. Accessed on: Jan 11, 2024.

GeoAccess Provider Network Accessibility Assessment

The MCO was required to submit network analysis reports, GeoAccess mapping and tables, network gap analysis reports, and development plans depicting interventions or activities designed to address identified gaps in the networks. The MCO used GeoAccess mapping software to calculate compliance with contractual distance standards for each required provider type. HSAG compared each MCO's GeoAccess compliance reporting to the contractual standards.

Description of Data Obtained

HSAG, with approval from LDH, conducted the following network adequacy monitoring tasks during CY 2023:

1. PDV, to validate the MCOs' online provider directories to ensure members have appropriate access to provider information. HSAG utilized the MCOs' online provider directories to locate and extract provider data elements required to conduct the survey component of the PDV activity.
2. Provider access survey, to determine the accuracy of the managed care network information supplied to Healthy Louisiana members using the MCOs' provider data files and to ensure that Louisiana provider networks are following the established LDH standard for office-hour appointments. HSAG utilized the MCOs' provider data files used to populate their online provider directories to conduct the survey component of the provider access survey activity.
3. HSAG assessed the GeoAccess Provider Network Accessibility reports and tables, and Gap Analysis reports submitted by each MCO to LDH.

How Data Were Aggregated and Analyzed

Provider Directory Validation

For each sampled case, HSAG compared the MCOs' provider directory values to the information obtained via the survey call for the following list of indicators. All items must match exactly, except for common United States Postal Service (USPS) standard abbreviations and naming conventions (e.g., E and East or 1st and First).

- Telephone number
- Address
- Office affiliation with the sampled provider
- Accuracy of provider specialty
- Provider affiliation with the requested MCO
- Provider's acceptance of Louisiana Medicaid
- Accuracy of new patient acceptance

HSAG used the following validation responses to assess each indicator:

- Yes, the information matched between the online provider directory and the survey call.
- No, the information did not match between the online provider directory and the survey call.

Using the results of the PDV, HSAG calculated a compliance score for each MCO. The criteria in Table 5-5 were used to calculate the weight of each noncompliance survey outcome.

Table 5-5—Noncompliance Reasons and Weighting

Noncompliance Reason	Weight
Provider does not participate with MCO or Louisiana Medicaid	3
Provider is not at site	3
Provider not accepting new patients	3
Wrong telephone number	3
No response/busy signal/disconnected telephone number (after three calls)	3
Representative does not know	3
Incorrect address reported	2
Address (suite number) needs to be updated	1
Wrong specialty reported	1
Refused to participate in survey	0

Table 5-6—Weighted Noncompliance Criteria

Weighted Noncompliance Scores	
Numerator	The numerator is the sum of all provider noncompliance scores for the MCO. Each provider record received a noncompliance score based upon the reasons for noncompliance in Table 5-5. If multiple noncompliance criteria are met, the noncompliance criterion with the largest weight was used.
Denominator	The denominator is the number of provider records multiplied by 3.

Weighted compliance score equation:

MCO's weighted compliance score = 1 – the weighted noncompliance score

Compliance: The MCOs were compliant if their weighted compliance score was ≥ 75 percent **or** have a weighted compliance score ≥ 50 percent **and** have improved by ≥ 2 percentage points from the previous quarter.

Provider Access Survey

Using a survey script approved by LDH, HSAG validated the following information pertaining to provider data accuracy:

- Telephone number
- Address
- Accuracy of provider specialty
- Provider affiliation with the requested MCO
- Provider's acceptance of Louisiana Medicaid
- Accuracy of new patient acceptance
- Sampled provider at location
- Appointment availability

Using the results of the survey, HSAG calculated a compliance score for each MCO. The criteria in Table 5-7 were used to calculate the weight of each noncompliance survey outcome.

Table 5-7—Noncompliance Reasons and Weighting

Noncompliance Reason	Weight
Provider does not participate with MCO or Louisiana Medicaid	3
Provider is not at site	3
Provider not accepting new patients	3
Wrong telephone number	3
No response/busy signal/disconnected telephone number (after three calls)	3
Representative does not know	3
Incorrect address reported	2
Address (suite number) needs to be updated	1
Wrong specialty reported	1
Refused to participate in survey	0

Table 5-8—Weighted Noncompliance Criteria

Weighted Noncompliance Scores	
Numerator	The numerator is the sum of all provider noncompliance scores for the MCO. Each provider record received a noncompliance score based upon the reasons for noncompliance in Table 5-7. If multiple noncompliance criteria are met, the noncompliance criterion with the largest weight was used.
Denominator	The denominator is the number of provider records multiplied by 3.

Weighted compliance score equation:

MCO's weighted compliance score = 1 – the weighted noncompliance score

Compliance: The MCOs were compliant if their weighted compliance score was ≥ 75 percent **or** have a weighted compliance score ≥ 50 percent **and** have improved by ≥ 2 percentage points from the previous quarter.

GeoAccess Provider Network Accessibility Assessment

HSAG used a standard reporting table to aggregate the GeoAccess mapping results for each provider type. HSAG determined whether the results for each provider type were compliant or noncompliant with the contract standards. HSAG then reviewed each MCO's reports to determine whether the MCO developed interventions to address network deficiencies.

How Conclusions Were Drawn

HSAG determined that results of network adequacy activities could provide information about MCO performance related to the quality, timeliness, and access domains of care. For example, HSAG determined that GeoAccess mapping not only provides insight into whether the access to specific providers is sufficient, but also that if network gaps exist, the quality of care a member receives may be impacted if care is received by nonqualified providers or not received at all. HSAG used analysis of the network data obtained to draw conclusions about Healthy Louisiana member access to particular provider networks (e.g., primary, specialty, or behavioral health care) in specified geographic regions. The data also allowed HSAG to draw conclusions regarding the quality of the MCOs' ability to track and monitor their respective provider networks.

To draw conclusions about the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of care provided by the Medicaid MCOs, HSAG assigned each of the components reviewed for NAV activities to one or more of three domains of care. This assignment to domains of care is depicted in Table 5-9.

Table 5-9—Assignment of NAV Activities to the Quality, Timeliness, and Access Domains

NAV Activity	Quality	Timeliness	Access
PDV	✓		✓
Provider Access Survey	✓	✓	✓
GeoAccess Provider Network Accessibility Assessment	✓		✓

6. Consumer Surveys: CAHPS-A and CAHPS-C

Aggregate Results

Table 6-1 presents the 2023 adult achievement scores for each MCO[6-1] and the Healthy Louisiana SWA.

Table 6-1—2023 Adult Achievement Scores for the MCOs and the Healthy Louisiana SWA

Measure	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC	Healthy Louisiana SWA
Rating of Health Plan	76.09%	81.21%	87.63% ↑	77.08%	82.05%	80.38%
Rating of All Health Care	75.68%	82.30%	79.41%	71.43%	79.85%	76.24%
Rating of Personal Doctor	84.56%	85.77%	87.50%	83.25%	88.68%	85.60%
Rating of Specialist Seen Most Often	NA	79.72%	NA	NA	NA	82.46%
Getting Needed Care	NA	82.28%	80.58%	75.06%	87.02%	80.47%
Getting Care Quickly	NA	86.39%	81.45%	85.07%	80.74%	82.54%
How Well Doctors Communicate	91.80%	93.41%	93.43%	92.80%	93.98%	93.11%
Customer Service	NA	95.76%	NA	NA	NA	92.14%

A minimum of 100 respondents is required for a measure to be reported as a CAHPS survey result. Measures that do not meet the minimum number of respondents are denoted as *Not Applicable (NA)*.

↑ *Indicates the 2023 score is statistically significantly higher than the Healthy Louisiana SWA.*

↓ *Indicates the 2023 score is statistically significantly lower than the Healthy Louisiana SWA.*

Table 6-2 presents the 2023 general child achievement scores for each MCO and the Healthy Louisiana SWA.

Table 6-2—2023 General Child Achievement Scores for the MCOs and the Healthy Louisiana SWA

Measure	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC	Healthy Louisiana SWA
Rating of Health Plan	86.45%	86.33%	83.17%	86.26%	89.86%	86.74%
Rating of All Health Care	88.30%	86.57%	87.90%	87.69%	94.33%	89.15%
Rating of Personal Doctor	92.27%	91.85%	92.82%	89.38%	91.79%	90.72%
Rating of Specialist Seen Most Often	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	85.95%
Getting Needed Care	89.56%	86.29%	NA	NA	92.56%	89.06%

[6-1] HUM started providing coverage to child and adult Medicaid beneficiaries throughout Louisiana starting January 1, 2023. Therefore, HUM's members were not eligible to be surveyed in 2023, and results for HUM are not included.

Measure	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC	Healthy Louisiana SWA
Getting Care Quickly	86.59%	90.10%	90.29%	NA	88.03%	89.34%
How Well Doctors Communicate	95.88%	93.08%	93.90%	95.21%	97.49% ↑	95.46%
Customer Service	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	88.47%

A minimum of 100 respondents is required for a measure to be reported as a CAHPS survey result. Measures that do not meet the minimum number of respondents are denoted as *Not Applicable (NA)*.

↑ *Indicates the 2023 score is statistically significantly higher than the Healthy Louisiana SWA.*

↓ *Indicates the 2023 score is statistically significantly lower than the Healthy Louisiana SWA.*

Statewide MCO Strengths, Opportunities for Improvement, and Recommendations

For the MCOs statewide, the following strengths were identified:

- For the adult population, HBL's 2023 achievement score was statistically significantly higher than the Healthy Louisiana SWA for *Rating of Health Plan*. **[Quality]**
- For the general child population, UHC's 2023 achievement score was statistically significantly higher than the Healthy Louisiana SWA for *How Well Doctors Communicate*. **[Quality]**

For the MCOs statewide, no opportunities for improvement were identified:

- For the adult and general child populations, the MCOs' 2023 achievement scores were not statistically significantly lower than the Healthy Louisiana SWA on any measure; therefore, no opportunities for improvement were identified.

For the MCOs statewide, the following recommendation was identified:

- HSAG recommends the MCOs monitor the measures to ensure significant decreases in scores over time do not occur. **[Quality, Timeliness, and Access]**

Methodology

Objectives

The CAHPS activity assesses members' experiences with an MCO and its providers, and the quality of care they receive. The goal of the CAHPS surveys is to provide feedback that is actionable and will aid in improving members' overall experiences.

Technical Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The MCOs accomplished the technical method of data collection by administering the CAHPS 5.1H Adult Medicaid Health Plan Survey to the adult Medicaid population, and the CAHPS 5.1H Child Medicaid Health Plan Survey (with the Children with Chronic Conditions [CCC] measurement set) to the child Medicaid population. The MCOs employed various methods of data collection used for the CAHPS surveys, such as mixed-mode (i.e., mailed surveys followed by telephone interviews of non-respondents) and mixed-mode and Internet protocol methodology (i.e., mailed surveys with an Internet link included on the cover letter followed by telephone interviews of non-respondents). In addition, some MCOs had an option for members to complete the survey in Spanish and Chinese. Adult members and parents/caretakers of child members completed the surveys from February through May 2023, following NCQA's data collection protocol.

The CAHPS 5.1H Medicaid Health Plan Surveys included a set of standardized items (40 items for the CAHPS 5.1H Adult Medicaid Health Plan Survey and 76 items for the CAHPS 5.1H Child Medicaid Health Plan Survey with CCC measurement set) that assessed members' experiences with care. The survey categorized questions into eight measures of experience. These measures included four global ratings and four compositemeasures.[6-2] The global ratings reflected patients' overall experiences with their personal doctor, specialist, MCO, and all healthcare. The composite measures were derived from sets of questions to address different aspects of care (e.g., *Getting Needed Care* and *How Well Doctors Communicate*).

For each of the four global ratings, HSAG calculated the percentage of respondents who chose a positive experience rating (a response value of 8, 9, or 10 on a scale of 0 to 10). For each of the four composite measures, HSAG calculated the percentage of respondents who chose a positive response. CAHPS composite measure response choices were "Never," "Sometimes," "Usually," or "Always." A positive response for the composite measures was a response of "Usually" or "Always."

[6-2] For this report, the 2023 Child Medicaid CAHPS results presented are based on the CAHPS survey results of the general child population only (i.e., results for children selected as part of the general child CAHPS sample). Therefore, results for the CAHPS survey measures evaluated through the CCC measurement set of questions (i.e., five CCC composite scores and items) and CCC population are not presented in this report.

For this report, HSAG included results for a CAHPS measure even when the NCQA minimum reporting threshold of 100 respondents was not met. Caution should be exercised when interpreting results for those measures with fewer than 100 respondents. HSAG used a cross (+) to denote CAHPS scores with fewer than 100 respondents. Additionally, for this report, HSAG compared the adult and general child Medicaid populations' survey findings to the 2023 NCQA CAHPS adult and general child Medicaid national averages.[6-3]

HSAG compared each measure rate to the 2023 NCQA national average and identified a statistically significant difference by using the confidence interval for each measure rate. Information provided below the figures discusses statistically significant differences between each measure rate's lower and upper confidence intervals and the 2023 NCQA national average.

Description of Data Obtained

The CAHPS survey asks adult members or parents/caretakers of child members to report on and to evaluate their/their child's experiences with healthcare. The survey covers topics important to members, such as the communication skills of providers and the accessibility of services. The MCOs contracted with a CAHPS vendor to administer the survey to adult members and parents/caretakers of child members. The CAHPS survey asks about members' experiences with their MCO during the last six months of the measurement period (i.e., July through December 2022).

The MCOs' CAHPS vendors administered the surveys from February to May 2023. The CAHPS survey response rate is the total number of completed surveys divided by all eligible members of the sample. A survey received a disposition code of "completed" if at least three of the designated five questions were completed.[6-4] Eligible members included the entire sample minus ineligible members. Ineligible members met at least one of the following criteria: they were deceased, were invalid (they did not meet the eligible population criteria), had a language barrier, or were mentally or physically incapacitated (adult Medicaid only). The survey also identified ineligible members during the process. The survey vendor recorded this information and provided it to HSAG in the data received.

How Data Were Aggregated and Analyzed

HSAG performed a trend analysis of the results in which the 2023 achievement scores were compared to their corresponding 2022 achievement scores to determine whether there were statistically significant differences. Statistically significant differences between the 2023 achievement scores and the 2022 achievement scores are noted with directional triangles. An MCO's score that performed statistically significantly higher in 2023 than 2022 is noted with a black upward (▲) triangle. An MCO's score that performed statistically significantly lower in 2023 than 2022 is noted with a black downward (▼)

[6-3] National data were obtained from NCQA's 2023 Quality Compass.

[6-4] A survey was assigned a disposition code of "completed" if at least three of the following five questions were completed for adult Medicaid: questions 3, 10, 19, 23, and 28. A survey was assigned a disposition code of "completed" if at least three of the following five questions were completed for child Medicaid: questions 3, 25, 40, 44, and 49.

triangle. An MCO that did not perform statistically significantly higher or lower between years is not denoted with a triangle.

Additionally, HSAG compared MCO scores to the 2023 NCQA national averages to determine if there were any statistically significant differences. An MCO that performed statistically significantly higher than the 2023 NCQA national average was denoted with a green upward (↑) arrow.[6-5] Conversely, an MCO that performed statistically significantly lower than the 2023 NCQA national average was denoted with a red downward (↓) arrow. An MCO that did not perform statistically significantly higher or lower than the 2023 NCQA national average was not denoted with an arrow.

How Conclusions Were Drawn

To draw conclusions about the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of care and services that each MCO provided to members, HSAG compared each MCO's 2023 survey results to the 2023 NCQA national averages to determine if there were any statistically significant differences. HSAG drew conclusions concerning quality of care, timeliness of care, and/or access to care by evaluating the questions included in each of the global ratings and composite measures presented in this report and relating the questions to the definitions of the three domains. This assignment to the domains is depicted in Table 6-3.

Table 6-3—Assignment of CAHPS Survey Measure Activities to the Quality, Timeliness, and Access Domains

CAHPS Survey Measure	Quality	Timeliness	Access
Rating of Health Plan	✓		
Rating of All Health Care	✓		
Rating of Personal Doctor	✓		
Rating of Specialist Seen Most Often	✓		
Getting Needed Care	✓		✓
Getting Care Quickly	✓	✓	
How Well Doctors Communicate	✓		
Customer Service	✓		

[6-5] National Committee for Quality Assurance. *Quality Compass®: Benchmark and Compare Quality Data 2023.* Washington, DC: NCQA, September 2023.

7. Behavioral Health Member Satisfaction Survey

Aggregate Results

Table 7-1 presents the 2023 adult achievement scores for each MCO[7-1] and the Healthy Louisiana SWA.

Table 7-1—2023 Adult Statewide Results

Measure	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC	Healthy Louisiana SWA
Rating of Health Plan	56.12%	58.93%	59.03%	55.65%	60.16%	58.96%
How Well People Communicate	91.59%	92.44%	93.23%	91.35%	87.10%	90.06%
Cultural Competency	90.91%+	90.00%+	61.54%+	66.67%+	75.00%+	73.77%+
Helped by Counseling or Treatment	64.03%	73.65%	69.86%	68.55%	65.63%	67.65%
Treatment or Counseling Convenience	89.21%	90.42%	84.83%	86.29%	86.51%	86.70%
Getting Needed Treatment	75.91%	81.33%	80.28%	81.97%	73.60%	77.08%
Help Finding Counseling or Treatment	38.46%+	34.38%+	45.83%+	37.50%+	54.17%+	47.04%
Customer Service	57.89%+	73.08%+	64.29%+	64.29%+	70.00%+	67.14%+
Helped by Crisis Response Services	63.64%+	78.57%+	71.43%+	85.71%+	79.17%+	76.09%

Scores with fewer than 100 respondents are denoted with a cross (+). In cases of fewer than 100 respondents for a measure, caution should be exercised when interpreting results.

↑ *Indicates the 2023 score is statistically significantly higher than the Healthy Louisiana SWA.*

↓ *Indicates the 2023 score is statistically significantly lower than the Healthy Louisiana SWA.*

Table 7-2 presents the 2023 child achievement scores for each MCO and the Healthy Louisiana SWA.

Table 7-2—2023 Child Statewide Results

Measure	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC	Healthy Louisiana SWA
Rating of Health Plan	52.63%+	64.29%+	55.97%	70.37%+	64.66%	62.67%
How Well People Communicate	93.12%+	93.49%+	90.83%	96.29%+	92.59%	92.54%
Cultural Competency	—	100.00%+	90.00%+	100.00%+	100.00%+	97.85%+
Helped by Counseling or Treatment	58.97%+	70.83%+	54.20%	68.52%+	56.90%	58.20%
Treatment or Counseling Convenience	97.44%+	91.67%+	85.82%	92.45%+	89.66%	89.52%

[7-1] HUM started providing coverage to child and adult Medicaid beneficiaries throughout Louisiana starting January 1, 2023. Therefore, HUM's members were not eligible to be surveyed in 2023, and results for HUM are not included.

Measure	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC	Healthy Louisiana SWA
Getting Needed Treatment	79.49%+	85.92%+	71.43%	84.91%+	77.39%	77.36%
Help Finding Counseling or Treatment	37.50%+	30.77%+	60.00%+	66.67%+	35.00%+	41.85%+
Customer Service	50.00%+	71.43%+	68.75%+	60.00%+	58.82%+	61.54%+
Getting Professional Help	87.18%+	87.14%+	86.57%	90.57%+	89.74%	88.83%
Help to Manage Condition	87.18%+	91.55%+	82.58%	94.23%+	85.47%	85.94%

Scores with fewer than 100 respondents are denoted with a cross (+). In cases of fewer than 100 respondents for a measure, caution should be exercised when interpreting results.

↑ *Indicates the 2023 score is statistically significantly higher than the Healthy Louisiana SWA.*

↓ *Indicates the 2023 score is statistically significantly lower than the Healthy Louisiana SWA.*

— *Indicates the MCO's score was not reported due to insufficient data.*

Statewide MCO Strengths, Opportunities for Improvement, and Recommendations

For the MCOs statewide, the following strengths were identified:

- For the adult and child populations, the MCOs' 2023 achievement scores were not statistically significantly higher than the Healthy Louisiana SWA on any measure; therefore, no strengths were identified.

For the MCOs statewide, the following opportunities for improvement were identified:

- For the adult and child populations, the MCOs' 2023 achievement scores were not statistically significantly lower than the Healthy Louisiana SWA on any measure; therefore, no opportunities for improvement were identified.

For the MCOs statewide, the following recommendations were identified:

- HSAG recommends the MCOs monitor the measures to ensure significant decreases in scores over time do not occur. **[Quality, Timeliness, and Access]**
- HSAG recommends the MCOs focus on increasing response rates to the behavioral health member satisfaction survey for both populations so there are greater than 100 respondents for each measure. This can be achieved by educating and engaging all employees to increase their knowledge of surveys and providing awareness to members during the survey period. Additionally, member-facing teams, such as the customer service team, could consider asking members if they know about the behavioral health member satisfaction survey and, if they received the survey, what barriers may prevent them from responding to the survey. These questions can be asked during routine contacts with members or when members outreach to the MCO. The information provided by these members could be shared with LDH to help identify solutions to address low response rates. **[Quality, Timeliness, and Access]**

Methodology

Objectives

The primary objective of this activity is to gather direct feedback from Healthy Louisiana adult members and parents/caretakers of child members who received behavioral health services regarding their experiences and the quality of the services they received. The survey covers topics that are important to members, such as the communication skills of people they saw for counseling or treatment and the accessibility of behavioral health services. This feedback will aid in improving overall experiences of adults and parents/caretakers of child members who receive behavioral health services.

Technical Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

To conduct the activity, HSAG, with support from LDH, developed and administered a custom behavioral health member satisfaction survey to the Healthy Louisiana MCO members. The survey was administered to adult members and parents/caretakers of child members identified as having three or more specified outpatient behavioral health encounters during the measurement period. All adult members and parents/caretakers of sampled child members completed the survey from July to September 2023.

The adult and child behavioral health member satisfaction survey included one global measure question, one composite measure, and 11 individual item measures. The global measure (also referred to as global rating) reflects overall member experience with the MCO. The composite measure is a set of questions grouped together to address a specific aspect of care (i.e., *How Well People Communicate*). The individual item measures are individual questions that look at different areas of care (e.g., *Cultural Competency* or *Helped by Counseling or Treatment*).

For the global rating, HSAG calculated the percentage of respondents who chose a positive experience rating (i.e., a response of 9 or 10 on a scale of 0 to 10). For the composite measure, HSAG calculated the percentage of respondents who chose a positive response. The composite measure response choices were "Never," "Sometimes," "Usually," or "Always." A positive response for the composite measure was a response of "Usually" or "Always." For the individual item measures, HSAG calculated the percentage of respondents who chose a positive response (i.e., "Usually/Always," "Yes," "A lot," or "Not a problem").

For this report, HSAG included results for a measure even when there were less than 100 respondents. Caution should be exercised when interpreting results for those measures with fewer than 100 respondents. HSAG used a cross (+) to denote scores with fewer than 100 respondents.

Description of Data Obtained

The behavioral health member satisfaction survey asked adult members or parents/caretakers of child members to report on and to evaluate their/their child's experiences with behavioral health services. HSAG requested sample frame data files from each MCO that included the following information related to each member of the eligible population: name, gender, date of birth, mailing address, telephone number, primary language, race, and ethnicity. HSAG utilized information received in the sample frame data files to conduct the behavioral health member satisfaction survey.

How Data Were Aggregated and Analyzed

HSAG compared the MCO-specific results to the total MCO program average to determine if the results were significantly different. The total MCO program results were weighted based on the eligible population included in each MCO. An MCO that performed statistically significantly higher than the program average was denoted with an upward black (↑) arrow. Conversely, an MCO that performed statistically significantly lower than the program average was denoted with a downward black (↓) arrow. An MCO that did not perform statistically significantly different than the program average was not denoted with an arrow. Comparisons to national data could not be performed given the custom nature of the survey instruments administered.

How Conclusions Were Drawn

To draw conclusions about the quality, timeliness, and access to care and services provided by the MCOs, HSAG assigned the measures evaluated in the behavioral health member satisfaction survey to one or more of these three domains. This assignment to domains is shown in Table 7-3.

Table 7-3—Assignment of Behavioral Health Member Satisfaction Survey Measures to the Quality, Timeliness, and Access Domains

Behavioral Health Member Satisfaction Survey Measure	Quality	Timeliness	Access
Rating of Health Plan	✓		
How Well People Communicate	✓		
Cultural Competency	✓		
Helped by Counseling or Treatment	✓		
Treatment or Counseling Convenience			✓
Getting Counseling or Treatment Quickly	✓	✓	
Getting Needed Treatment	✓		✓
Barriers to Counseling or Treatment	✓		✓
Help Finding Counseling or Treatment	✓		✓

Behavioral Health Member Satisfaction Survey Measure	Quality	Timeliness	Access
Customer Service	✓		
Crisis Response Services Used			✓
Receipt of Crisis Response Services			✓
Helped by Crisis Response Services	✓		
Getting Professional Help	✓		✓
Help to Manage Condition	✓		

8. Case Management Performance Evaluation

Introduction

States may direct their EQROs to conduct focus studies for QI, administrative, legislative, or other purposes. Focus studies may examine clinical or nonclinical aspects of care provided by MCOs and assess quality of care at a specific point in time. LDH contracted with HSAG to conduct a focused CMPE to evaluate each MCO's compliance with the CM provisions of its contract with LDH and determine the effectiveness of CM activities.

Activities Conducted During SFY 2023

During SFY 2023, HSAG and LDH collaborated to determine the scope, methodology, data sources, and timing of the CMPE. HSAG will conduct the focus study, which will commence in SFY 2024, in accordance with CMS EQR *Protocol 9. Conducting Focus Studies of Health Care Quality: An Optional EQR-Related Activity*, February 2023.[8-1]

At the time of this report, the CMPE had not been completed. Results, including conclusions, strengths, and opportunities for improvement, will be reported in the SFY 2024 EQR technical report.

Methodology

Objectives

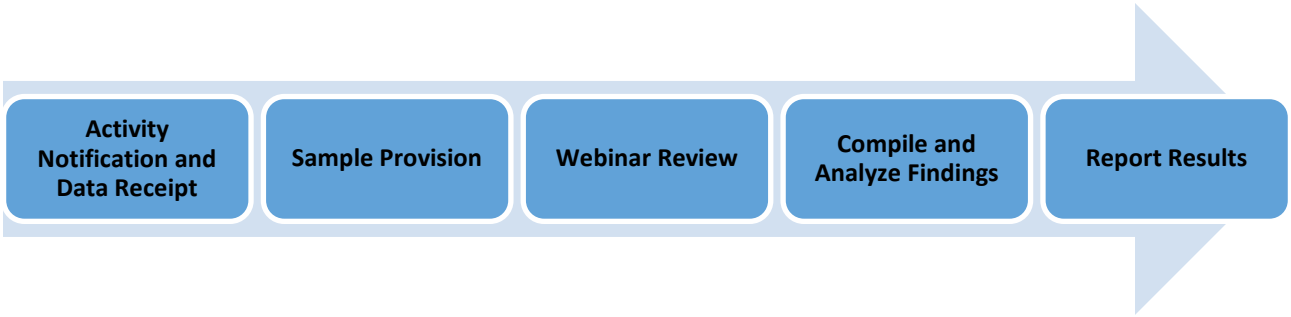
LDH requires the Healthy Louisiana MCO reporting of data on CM services to determine the number of individuals, the types of conditions, and the impact that CM services have on enrollees receiving those services. LDH established CM requirements to ensure that the services provided to enrollees with special health care needs (SHCN) are consistent with professionally recognized standards of care. To assess MCO compliance with CM elements, LDH requested that HSAG evaluate the MCOs' compliance with the CM provisions of their contracts with LDH, including the rates of engagement in CM; the specific services offered to enrollees receiving CM; and the effectiveness of CM in terms of increasing the quality of care, increasing the receipt of necessary services, and reducing the receipt of potentially unnecessary services such as acute care.

[8-1] Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. *Protocol 9. Conducting Focus Studies of Health Care Quality: An Optional EQR-Related Activity*, February 2023. Available at: https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/downloads/2023-eqr-protocols.pdf. Accessed on: Jan 11, 2024.

HSAG's CMPE review tool will comprehensively address the services and supports that are necessary to meet enrollees' needs. The tool will include elements for review of CM documentation and enrollee care plans to ensure that they are consistent with a person-centered approach to care planning and service delivery and that outcomes are being achieved or progress is being made toward their achievement. The CMPE review tool will include MCO contract requirements, evaluation criteria of those requirements, and reviewer determinations of performance.

Review Process

HSAG's CM Review process will include five activities:



Activity 1: Activity Notification and Data Receipt

To initiate the CM Review, HSAG will conduct an activity notification webinar for the MCOs. During the webinar, HSAG will provide information about the activity and expectations for MCO participation, including provision of data. HSAG will request the LA PQ039 Case Management report from each MCO.

Table 8-1—Activity 1: Activity Notification and Data Receipt

For this step,	HSAG will…
Step 1:	**Notify the MCOs of the review.**
	HSAG will host a webinar to introduce the activity to the MCOs. The MCOs will be provided a timeline, review tools, and a question and answer (Q&A) document post-webinar. HSAG will provide assistance to all MCOs prior to the review, including clear instructions regarding the scope of the review, timeline and logistics of the webinar review, identification of expected review participants, and any other expectations or responsibilities.
Step 2:	**Receive data universes from the MCOs.**
	HSAG will review the data received from the MCOs for completeness.

Activity 2: Sample Provision

Upon receipt of each MCO's LA PQ039 Case Management report, HSAG will review the data to ensure completeness for sample selection. To be included in the sample, the enrollee must meet the following criteria:

- Have a classification of "SHCN-MED," "SHCN-BH," or "SHCN-BOTH." HSAG will identify these enrollees by the "reason identified for case management" field provided in the LA PQ039 Case Management report.
- Current CM span began on or before June 1, 2023. HSAG will identify these enrollees by the "date entered case management" field provided in the LA PQ039 Case Management report.
- Enrollees with a CM span of at least three months. HSAG will identify these enrollees by utilizing data from the "date entered case management" and "date exited case management" fields provided in the LA PQ039 Case Management report.

Enrollees who are identified by the MCOs for CM but not enrolled will be excluded from the sample. HSAG will exclude any enrollees identified in the "members identified, but not enrolled" field in the LA PQ039 Case Management report.

In future review years, HSAG will collaborate with LDH to determine any changes to the sampling criteria, including exclusions such as enrollees who were selected for the review the year prior.

Based on the inclusion criteria, HSAG will generate a random sample of 110 enrollees for each MCO, which includes a 10 percent oversample to account for exclusions or substitutions. HSAG will provide each MCO with its sample 10 business days prior to the webinar review. The MCO will be given five business days to provide HSAG with any requests for exclusions or substitutions. If the oversample is not large enough to obtain the necessary sample size, HSAG will select additional random samples to fulfill the sample size. The final sample of cases (100 total) will be confirmed with the MCO no later than three business days prior to the webinar review.

Table 8-2—Activity 2: Sample Provision

For this step,	HSAG will…
Step 1:	**Identify enrollees for inclusion in the sample.**
	HSAG will utilize the data provided in each MCO's LA PQ039 Case Management report.
Step 2:	**Provide the sample to the MCOs.**
	HSAG will provide the 100-enrollee sample and 10-enrollee oversample to each MCO 10 business days prior to the webinar review. The sample will be provided via HSAG's SAFE site.
Step 3:	**Finalize the sample.**
	The MCOs will provide HSAG with any requests for exclusions or substitutions to the sample within five business days of receipt of the sample file from HSAG. HSAG will provide the final sample of 100 enrollee cases to each MCO no later than three business days prior to the webinar.

Activity 3: Webinar Review

HSAG will collaborate with the MCOs to schedule and conduct webinar reviews with key MCO staff members to:

- Ensure understanding of terminology and documents used by the MCO to record CM activities.
- Review sampled cases to determine compliance with contractual requirements.

The webinar review consists of several key activities:

- Entrance Conference: HSAG will dedicate the first 15 minutes of each webinar to introduce the activity and the HSAG review team, and to provide key logistics of the review. HSAG will review documentation naming conventions with the MCO to ensure understanding of the information that will be displayed by the MCO and reviewed during the activity.
- Case Review: HSAG will conduct a review of each sample file. The MCO's CM representative(s) will navigate the MCO's CM system and respond to HSAG reviewers' questions. The review team will determine evidence of compliance with each of the scored elements on the CM Review tool. Concurrent interrater reliability will be conducted by the HSAG team lead to respond to questions from the review team in real time so that feedback can be provided to the MCO, and any discrepancies addressed, prior to the end of the review.
- Leadership Meeting (optional): HSAG will schedule a meeting with the MCO and LDH to discuss the progress of the review and provide preliminary findings. The meeting will also allow HSAG to confirm information that may be needed to complete the review of cases, and for the MCO to ensure understanding of LDH's expectations.
- Exit Conference: HSAG will schedule a 30-minute exit conference with the MCO and LDH. During the exit conference, HSAG will provide a high-level summary of the cases reviewed, preliminary findings, and recommendations to address opportunities for improvement.

Table 8-3—Activity 3: Webinar Review

For this step,	HSAG will…
Step 1:	**Provide the MCOs with webinar dates.**
	HSAG will provide the MCOs with their scheduled webinar dates. HSAG will consider MCO requests for alternative dates or accommodations.
Step 2:	**Identify the number and types of reviewers needed.**
	HSAG will assign review team members who are content area experts with in-depth knowledge of CM requirements who also have extensive experience and proven competency conducting case reviews. To ensure interrater reliability, HSAG reviewers are trained on the review methodology to ensure that the determinations for each element of the review are made in the same manner.

For this step,	HSAG will…
Step 3:	**Conduct the webinar review.**
	During the webinar, HSAG will set the tone, expectations, and objectives for the review. MCO staff members who participate in the webinar reviews will navigate their documentation systems, answer questions, and assist the HSAG review team in locating specific documentation. As a final step, HSAG will meet with MCO staff members and LDH to provide a high-level summary and next steps for receipt of findings.

Scoring Methodology

HSAG will use the CM Review tool to record the results of the case reviews. HSAG will use a two-point scoring methodology. Each requirement will be scored as *Met* or *Not Met* according to the criteria identified below. HSAG will also use a designation of *NA* if the requirement is not applicable to a record; *NA* findings will not be included in the two-point scoring methodology.

Met indicates full compliance defined as the following:

- All documentation listed under contract requirements was present in the case file.
- Cases reviewed met the scoring criteria assigned to each requirement.
- Cases reviewed had documentation that met "due diligence" criteria.

Not Met indicates noncompliance defined as either of the following:

- Cases reviewed did not meet the scoring criteria assigned to each requirement.
- Not all documentation was present.

Not Applicable (NA) indicates a requirement that will not be scored for compliance based on the criteria listed for the specific element in the Review Tool and Evaluation Criteria document.

HSAG will calculate the overall percentage-of-compliance score for each of the requirements. HSAG calculated the score for each requirement by adding the score from each case, indicating either a score of *Met* (value: 1 point) or *Not Met* (value: 0 points), and dividing the summed scores by the total number of applicable cases. Data analysis will also include aggregate performance by domain.

Reporting of Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation (ANE)

If, during the review process, a reviewer identifies potential ANE of an enrollee, HSAG will report the concern to the MCO immediately upon identification and to LDH within 24 hours of identification. If the reviewer identifies a potential health, safety, or welfare concern that does not rise to the level of an ANE, HSAG will report the concern to the MCO and LDH at the identification of the concern and no later than the end of the webinar review.

Activity 4: Compile and Analyze Findings

Following the webinar review, HSAG will compile and analyze findings for each MCO. Findings will include performance by domain and each scored element. Additional data gathering information may be compiled to inform analysis and results (e.g., program information such as the total number of enrollees in CM during the lookback period).

Domain and Element Performance

Findings will be compiled into domains, which represent a set of elements related to a specific CM activity (e.g., assessment, care planning). Domain performance is calculated by aggregating the scores for each element in the domain and dividing by the total number of applicable cases. Domain performance scores provide a high-level result to inform analysis of opportunities for improvement.

Analysis of scored element performance allows for targeted review of individual elements that may impact overall domain performance. Individual element performance scores will be used to inform analysis of specific opportunities for improvement, especially when an element is performing at a lower rate than other elements in the domain.

Analysis of findings will include identification of opportunities for improvement.

Activity 5: Report Results

HSAG will develop a draft and final report of results and findings for each MCO. The report will describe the scores assigned for each requirement, assessment of the MCO's compliance by domain, and recommendations for improvement. Following LDH's approval of the draft report, HSAG will issue the final report to LDH and each MCO.

How Conclusions Were Drawn

Upon completion of the activity, HSAG will provide results for each MCO in three performance domains: Assessment, Care Planning, and Enrollee Interaction and Coordination of Services. Each domain includes scored elements, displayed in Table 7-1, which demonstrate each MCO's compliance with contractual requirements.

Table 8-4—Assignment of CMPE Measures to the Quality, Timeliness, and Access Domains

CMPE Measure	Quality	Timeliness	Access
The enrollee's initial health needs assessment was completed within 90 calendar days of enrollment.		✓	
The enrollee's initial comprehensive assessment was completed within 90 calendar days of identification of SHCN.		✓	

CMPE Measure	Quality	Timeliness	Access
A reassessment was completed in person quarterly with the enrollee.		✓	
A plan of care (POC) was developed within 30 calendar days of identification of risk stratification.		✓	
A POC was developed within 90 calendar days of identification of risk stratification.		✓	
The MCO developed and implemented a person-centered care plan reflective of the most recent assessment and included all enrollee goals, needs, and risks as well as the formal and informal supports responsible for assisting the enrollee with the POC.	✓		
The POC was updated per the enrollee's tier schedule.		✓	
The POC was updated when the enrollee's circumstances or needs changed significantly, or at the request of the enrollee, their parent or legal guardian, or a member of the multidisciplinary care team.	✓		
The MCO developed a multidisciplinary care team, including the case manager, enrollee and/or authorized representative, and members based on the enrollee's specific care needs and goals.	✓		✓
The multidisciplinary care team was convened at regular intervals required for the enrollee's tier level.		✓	
The case manager made valid timely contact, or due diligence is documented in the enrollee's record.		✓	
For enrollees demonstrating needs requiring coordination of services, the case manager coordinated needed care/services, actively linking the enrollee to providers; medical services; and residential, social, community, and other support services.	✓		✓

Aggregate Results

The 2023 (CY 2022) QRS results for each MCO are displayed in Table 9-1.

Table 9-1—2023 (CY 2022) QRS Results

Composites and Subcomposites	ABH	ACLA	HBL	LHCC	UHC
Overall Rating*	**3.5**	**3.5**	**3.5**	**3.0**	**3.5**
Consumer Satisfaction	**Insufficient Data**	**4.0**	**4.0**	**3.0**	**4.0**
Getting Care	Insufficient Data	3.5	3.5	2.5	4.0
Satisfaction with Plan Physicians	5.0	4.0	4.0	3.5	4.0
Satisfaction with Plan Services	3.5	4.0	4.5	3.0	4.5
Prevention	**2.0**	**3.0**	**3.0**	**2.5**	**3.0**
Children and Adolescent Well-Care	1.5	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.5
Women's Reproductive Health	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0
Cancer Screening	3.0	3.5	3.0	3.5	4.0
Other Preventive Services	2.5	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.0
Treatment	**3.0**	**2.5**	**3.0**	**2.5**	**3.0**
Respiratory	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.5	1.5
Diabetes	3.5	3.0	3.5	2.0	4.0
Heart Disease	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.5	3.0
Behavioral Health—Care Coordination	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Behavioral Health—Medication Adherence	3.0	2.5	2.0	3.0	2.0
Behavioral Health—Access, Monitoring, and Safety	4.0	3.0	3.5	3.0	4.0
Risk-Adjusted Utilization	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.0

**This rating includes all measures in the 2023 Health Plan Report Card as well as an Accreditation bonus for those MCOs that are NCQA Accredited.*
Insufficient Data indicates that the plan was most data for the composite or subcomposite.
Note: A sixth MCO, HUM, was not included in the analysis as the MCO did not start providing coverage until MY 2023.

For the Overall Rating, four MCOs (ABH, ACLA, HBL, and UHC) received 3.5 points, and one MCO (LHCC) received 3.0 points.

For the Consumer Satisfaction composite, ACLA, HBL, and UHC each received 4.0 points, with the remaining MCO with sufficient data (LHCC) receiving 3.0 points. For the Prevention composite, ACLA, HBL, and UHC each received 3.0 points, while ABH received the lowest rating at 2.0 points. For the Treatment composite, ABH, HBL, and UHC each received 3.0 points, while the remaining two MCOs (ACLA and LHCC) both received 2.5 points.

Statewide MCO Strengths, Opportunities for Improvement, and Recommendations

For the MCOs statewide, the following strengths were identified:

- For the Consumer Satisfaction composite, three of the four MCOs with sufficient data (ACLA, HBL, and UHC) received 4.0 points, demonstrating that most MCO members are satisfied with their health plan, providers, and the care they receive. Of note, the Satisfaction with Plan Physicians subcomposite was the only subcomposite in the QRS analysis for which an MCO (ABH) received 5.0 points. Further, UHC received above 4.0 points for all three subcomposites (Getting Care, Satisfaction with Plan Physicians, and Satisfaction with Plan Services), demonstrating strength for this MCO. **[Quality]**
- For the Prevention composite, three MCOs (ACLA, LHCC, and UHC) received at least 3.5 points for the Cancer Screening subcomposite, demonstrating strength for ensuring women receive breast and cervical cancer screenings. Additionally, ACLA received 3.5 points for the Other Preventive Services subcomposite, demonstrating strength for ACLA related to providing chlamydia screenings for women, tobacco cessation counseling, and flu vaccinations in adults. **[Quality and Access]**
- For the Treatment composite, three MCOs (ABH, HBL, and UHC) received at least 3.5 points for the Behavioral Health—Access, Monitoring, and Safety subcomposite, demonstrating strengths for these MCOs in providing care for adults and children using antipsychotics, and children using ADHD medication. The same three MCOs (ABH, HBL, and UHC) also received at least 3.5 points for the Diabetes subcomposite, demonstrating strength for these MCOs related to diabetes care. **[Quality, Access, and Timeliness]**

For the MCOs statewide, the following opportunities for improvement were identified:

- For the Consumer Satisfaction composite, LHCC was the lowest performing MCO and received 2.5 points for the Getting Care subcomposite, demonstrating opportunities for LHCC to ensure members receive the care they need when they need it. **[Quality]**
- For the Prevention composite, ABH and LHCC were the lowest performing MCOs, receiving 2.0 points and 2.5 points, respectively. None of the five MCOs received more than 2.5 points for the Children and Adolescent Well-Care subcomposite, demonstrating opportunities for improvement for

the MCOs related to ensuring children and adolescents receive important immunizations as well as ensuring BMI percentiles are documented for children and adolescents. **[Quality and Access]**

- For the Treatment composite, ACLA and LHCC were the lowest performing MCOs, with both MCOs receiving 2.5 points. Overall, the MCOs scored the lowest on the Behavioral Health—Care Coordination subcomposite, with ABH receiving 1.0 point and the remainder of the MCOs receiving 1.5 points, demonstrating opportunities for improvement for the MCOs to ensure timely follow-up after hospitalizations and ED visits for mental illness. Three MCOs (ACLA, HBL, and LHCC) also demonstrated opportunities for improvement for the Respiratory subcomposite, with ABH and ACLA both receiving 2.0 points and UHC receiving 1.5 points; these MCOs should ensure appropriate treatment of upper respiratory infections and acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis. **[Quality, Access, and Timeliness]**

The MCOs should reference the recommendations made in Section 3—Validation of Performance Measures and Section 6—Consumer Surveys: CAHPS-A and CAHPS-C as the 2023 Health Plan Report Card reflects HEDIS and CAHPS results.

Methodology

Objectives

HSAG was tasked with developing a QRS to evaluate the performance of the five Healthy Louisiana Medicaid MCOs (i.e., ABH, ACLA, HBL, LHCC, and UHC) relative to national benchmarks and assign ratings to each MCO in key areas.[9-1] The 2023 Health Plan Report Card is targeted toward a consumer audience; therefore, it is user friendly, easy to read, and addresses areas of interest for consumers.

Technical Methods of Data Collection

HSAG received MY 2022 CAHPS member-level data files and HEDIS IDSS data files from LDH and the five MCOs. The *HEDIS MY 2022 Specifications for Survey Measures, Volume 3* was used to collect and report on the CAHPS measures. The *HEDIS MY 2022 Technical Specifications for Health Plans, Volume 2* was used to collect and report on the HEDIS measures.

Description of Data Obtained

HSAG received the final, auditor-locked HEDIS IDSS data files from each of the MCOs, as well as the CAHPS member-level data files and summary reports. HSAG also downloaded the 2022 (MY 2021) Quality Compass national Medicaid all lines of business (ALOB) benchmarks for this analysis.[9-2]

How Data Were Aggregated and Analyzed

Using the HEDIS and CAHPS measure results for each MCO, HSAG calculated MCO ratings in alignment with NCQA's 2023 Health Plan Ratings Methodology, where possible, for the following composites and subcomposites:[9-3]

- Overall
- Consumer Satisfaction
  - Getting Care
  - Satisfaction with Plan Physicians
  - Satisfaction with Plan Services

[9-1] Due to HUM being a new MCO in 2023, there were no data available for this year's QRS activity. It will be included in future Health Plan Report Card.

[9-2] 2022 (MY 2021) Quality Compass national Medicaid ALOB benchmarks were used since LDH requested a finalized report card by October 1, 2023, and 2023 (MY 2022) Quality Compass national Medicaid ALOB benchmarks were not available until September 29, 2023

[9-3] National Committee for Quality Assurance. 2023 Health Plan Ratings Methodology. Available at: https://www.ncqa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2023-HPR-Methodology_12.14.2022.pdf. Accessed on: Dec 19, 2023.

- Prevention
  - Children and Adolescent Well-Care
  - Women's Reproductive Health
  - Cancer Screening
  - Other Preventive Services
- Treatment
  - Respiratory
  - Diabetes
  - Heart Disease
  - Behavioral Health—Care Coordination
  - Behavioral Health—Medication Adherence
  - Behavioral Health—Access, Monitoring, and Safety
  - Risk-Adjusted Utilization

For each measure included in the 2023 Health Plan Report Card, HSAG compared the raw, unweighted measure rates to the 2022 (MY 2021) Quality Compass national Medicaid ALOB percentiles and scored each measure as outlined in Table 9-2. For the *Plan All-Cause Readmissions* measure, HSAG followed NCQA's methodology for scoring risk-adjusted utilization measures.

Table 9-2—Measure Rate Scoring Descriptions

Score	MCO Measure Rate Performance Compared to National Benchmarks
5	The MCO's measure rate was at or above the national Medicaid ALOB 90th percentile.
4	The MCO's measure rate was at or between the national Medicaid ALOB 66.67th and 89.99th percentiles.
3	The MCO's measure rate was at or between the national Medicaid ALOB 33.33rd and 66.66th percentiles.
2	The MCO's measure rate was at or between the national Medicaid ALOB 10th and 33.32nd percentiles.
1	The MCO's measure rate was below the national Medicaid ALOB 10th percentile.

HSAG then multiplied the scores for each measure by the weights that align with NCQA's 2023 Health Plan Ratings. For each composite and subcomposite, HSAG calculated scores using the following equation:

$$Composite\ or\ Subcomposite\ Rating = \frac{\sum(Measure\ Rating * Measure\ Weight)}{\sum(Measure\ Weights)}$$

To calculate the Overall Rating, HSAG calculated a weighted average using the weighted measure-level scores previously calculated. HSAG also added 0.5 bonus points to scores for MCOs that were Accredited or had Provisional status, and 0.15 bonus points for MCOs that had Interim status. These bonus points were added to the Overall Rating before rounding to the nearest half-point.

For the Overall Rating and each composite/subcomposite rating, HSAG aligned with NCQA's rounding rules and awarded scores as outlined in Table 9-3.

Table 9-3—Scoring Rounding Rules

Rounded Score	5	4.5	4.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	0.5	0.0
Score Range	≥4.750	4.250–4.749	3.750–4.249	3.250–3.749	2.750–3.249	2.250–2.749	1.750–2.249	1.250–1.749	0.750–1.249	0.250–0.749	0.000–0.249

How Conclusions Were Drawn

For the 2023 Health Plan Report Card, HSAG displayed star ratings based on the final scores for each rating. Stars were partially shaded if the MCO received a half rating (e.g., a score of 3.5 was displayed as 3.5 stars).

10. MCO Aggregate Strengths, Opportunities for Improvement, and Recommendations

HSAG used its analyses and evaluations of EQR activity findings from SFY 2023 to comprehensively assess the MCOs' performance in providing quality, timely, and accessible healthcare services to Louisiana's Medicaid and CHIP members. HSAG provides the MCOs' aggregate strengths, opportunities for improvement, and recommendations in Table 10-1 through Table 10-3.

Table 10-1—Strengths Related to Quality, Timeliness, and Access

Overall MCO Strengths	
Quality	• All MCOs and the SWA ranked above the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark for three measures related to quality (*Diabetes Screening for People With Schizophrenia or Bipolar Disorder Who Are Using Antipsychotic Medications*, *Chlamydia Screening in Women*, and *Breast Cancer Screening*). • CAHPS surveys demonstrated that HBL adult members rated their health plan higher than the SWA and that parents/caretakers of UHC child members perceived better communication from their child's doctor than perceived by members of other MCOs. • QRS results indicated that most MCO members were satisfied with their health plan, providers, and the care they receive.
Quality, Timeliness, and Access	• All MCOs and the SWA ranked above the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark for both *Initiation and Engagement of Substance Use Disorder Treatment* measure indicators.
Quality and Access	• The overall response rate for the PDV was 88.8 percent. A higher response rate correlates to correct provider data (i.e., telephone number accuracy) and improves a member's ability to contact provider locations when seeking care. • CR results demonstrated that the MCOs did not request member disenrollment for prohibited reasons and implemented processes to ensure members were not disenrolled for any reason other than those stated in the LDH contract. • The GeoAccess results indicated that for the entire SFY 2023: – All MCOs achieved above 99 percent for both urban and rural areas for six physical health specialty provider types. – All MCOs achieved above 99 percent in rural areas for adult and pediatric primary care, FQHCs, RHCs, and ancillary care—pharmacy. • All MCOs met urban and rural standards for pediatric PRTF and inpatient psychiatric provider types.

Table 10-2—Opportunities for Improvement Related to Quality, Timeliness, and Access

Overall MCO Opportunities for Improvement	
Quality	• HEDIS results indicated that the health plans can improve monitoring of members with schizophrenia. Members with diabetes and schizophrenia did not receive recommended blood tests that are important for screening and monitoring, and members with schizophrenia did not remain on antipsychotic medications for the recommended period. • All MCOs and the SWA ranked below the NCQA national 50th percentile benchmark for *Appropriate Treatment for Children With Upper Respiratory Infection* and *Avoidance of Antibiotic Treatment in Adults for Acute Bronchitis/Bronchiolitis* (both indicators). • All MCOs can improve in not conducting unnecessary imaging and screenings, as evidenced by poor rates for *Use of Imaging Studies for Low Back Pain* and *Non-Recommended Cervical Screening in Adolescent Females*.
Quality, Timeliness, and Access	• Members who were hospitalized for mental illness or visited the ED for mental illness or substance use were not accessing or receiving timely follow-up care, as indicated by low performance across all MCOs for several measures. • Response rates to the behavioral health member satisfaction survey for both populations were low, with less than 100 respondents for each measure.
Quality and Access	• The MCOs did not consistently include all member for cause and without cause reasons to disenroll in MCO policies, procedures, manuals, or handbooks. • PDV results demonstrated several opportunities for improvement: – Acceptance of Louisiana Medicaid was inaccurate – Acceptance of the MCO was inaccurate – Listing of specialists in the online provider directory was inaccurate – Acceptance of new patients was relatively low – Affiliation with the sampled provider was low – The overall compliance score was 47.8 percent • The MCOs performed poorly on GeoAccess standards for all ASAM or MAT provider types, and no MCO met all GeoAccess standards. • The MCOs' GeoAccess performance was lower in urban areas than rural areas.

Table 10-3—Recommendations

Overall MCO Recommendations	
Recommendation	**Associated Quality Strategy Goals to Target for Improvement**
Require the MCOs to conduct a root cause analysis for measures associated with members with schizophrenia and implement appropriate interventions to improve performance.	Goal 1: Ensure access to care to meet enrollee needs Goal 5: Improve chronic disease management and control
Require the MCOs to conduct a root cause analysis to determine why members are not receiving appropriate treatment of respiratory conditions and implement appropriate interventions to improve performance.	Goal 1: Ensure access to care to meet enrollee needs Goal 5: Improve chronic disease management and control

Overall MCO Recommendations	
Require the MCOs to focus efforts on decreasing unnecessary imaging and screenings. The MCOs should conduct a root cause analysis and implement appropriate interventions to decrease unnecessary imaging for low back pain and unnecessary screenings for cervical cancer among adolescent females.	Goal 1: Ensure access to care to meet enrollee needs Goal 4: Promote wellness and prevention Goal 8: Minimize wasteful spending
Require the MCOs to focus efforts on increasing timely follow-up care, following discharge, for members who access the hospital and ED for mental illness or substance abuse. The MCOs should conduct a root cause analysis and implement appropriate interventions to improve performance.	Goal 1: Ensure access to care to meet enrollee needs Goal 2: Improve coordination and transitions of care
Require the MCOs to implement strategies to increase response rates to the behavioral health member satisfaction survey.	Goal 1: Ensure access to care to meet enrollee needs Goal 3: Facilitate patient-centered, whole-person care
Require the MCOs to review and update, as appropriate, policies, procedures, manuals, and handbooks to consistently include all member for cause and without cause reasons for disenrollment.	Goal 1: Ensure access to care to meet enrollee needs
To increase accuracy of online provider directories: • Provide each MCO with the case-level PDV data files and a defined timeline by which each plan will address provider data deficiencies. • Require the MCOs to conduct a root cause analysis to identify the nature of the data mismatches for PDV study indicators that scored below 90 percent.	Goal 1: Ensure access to care to meet enrollee needs
To improve compliance with GeoAccess standards: • Require the MCOs to contract with additional providers, if available. • Encourage strategies for expanding the provider network such as enhanced reimbursement or expanding licensing to add additional ASAM LOCs. • Require the MCOs to conduct an in-depth review of provider types for which GeoAccess standards were not met to determine cause for failure and evaluate the extent to which the MCO has requested exemptions from LDH for provider types for which providers may not be available or willing to contract. • Require the MCOs to evaluate whether offering additional telehealth services could increase compliance with GeoAccess standards.	Goal 1: Ensure access to care to meet enrollee needs Goal 7: Pay for value and incentivize innovation

11. Follow-Up on Prior Year's Recommendations

Regulations at 42 CFR §438.364 require an assessment of the degree to which each MCO, PIHP, PAHP, or PCCM entity (described in 42 CFR §438.310[c][2]) has effectively addressed the recommendations for quality improvement made by the EQRO during the previous year's EQR. LDH required each MCO to document the follow-up actions per activity that the MCO completed in response to SFY 2020–2021 recommendations. Each MCO's response is included in the SFY 2023 EQR technical report produced for each MCO. Please reference the MCO-specific reports to review MCO responses to prior EQR recommendations and HSAG's assessment of their responses.

Appendix A. MCO Health Equity Plan Summaries

For the annual EQR technical report, LDH asked HSAG to summarize information from each MCO's health equity plan submissions from February 2023. Each MCO's response is included in the SFY 2023 EQR technical report produced for each MCO. Please reference the MCO-specific reports to review MCO responses.