

# Concurrent Use of Opioids and Benzodiazepines (COB)

Displayed as: Concurrent Use of Opioids and BZDs

This measure was developed by the Pharmacy Quality Alliance to monitor performance on the percentage of adults  $\geq 18$  years old with concurrent use of both opioids and benzodiazepines for 30 or more days during the measurement period.

- Pharmacists should consider patient and prescriber outreach to address patients using this combination of medications.
- This measure was added as a Medicare Star Rating Measure with weight of 1 beginning in the 2025 measurement year.\*

## Did You Know?



Concurrent use of benzodiazepines with an opioid can place an individual at risk for severe respiratory depression and can lead to death.



On average, 217 people died each day from an opioid overdose in 2023.<sup>1</sup>



## Calculation

**NUMERATOR =**

Patients who receive  $\geq 2$  prescription claims of a benzodiazepine with unique dates of service overlapping with concurrent opioid claims during the measurement period.

**DENOMINATOR =**

Patients who receive  $\geq 2$  prescription claims of an opioid with unique dates of service and at least 15 cumulative days'



Public awareness, improved access to naloxone, reduced prescription opioid use, and expanded Medication-Assisted Treatment options have been integral to saving lives and generating the first significant decreases in the rate of opioid overdose fatalities.



Pharmacies serve as a critical last line of defense in the opioid epidemic by intercepting inappropriate prescriptions, ensuring safe dispensing, providing essential patient education, and increasing access to life-saving naloxone and addiction treatments.

## Exclusions

- Patients receiving hospice or palliative care services
- Patients with a cancer diagnosis
- Patients with sickle cell disease diagnosis

\* For more information about Medicare Star Ratings, please visit the [EQUIPP Academy website](#)

<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Understanding the opioid overdose epidemic. Overdose Prevention. Published June 9, 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/about/understanding-the-opioid-overdose-epidemic.html>

<sup>2</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Provisional Drug Overdose Data. CDC. Published August 14, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm>