

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Health Equity Domains

CMS' Hospital Commitment to Health Equity measure will require hospitals to attest to whether they are reviewing and prioritizing equitable care. On the same note, CMS introduced two equity-focused process measures in 2023: Screening for Social Drivers of Health (SDOH-01) and Screen Positive Rate for Social Drivers of Health (SDOH-02). Although these measures will not be required until 2024, it is highly recommended that hospitals begin tracking them in 2023.

Domain 1: Equity as a Strategic Priority

The hospital has a strategic plan for advancing health care equity that accomplishes the following.

- identifies priority populations who currently experience health disparities
- establishes health care equity goals and discrete action steps to achieve them
- outlines specific resources that are dedicated to achieving equity goals
- describes an approach for engaging key stakeholders, such as community partners

Domain 2: Data Collection

The hospital is actively engaging in the following three key data collection activities.

- collecting demographic information, including self-reported race and ethnicity, and SDOH information, on a majority of patients
- training staff in the culturally sensitive collection of demographic and SDOH information
- inputting patient demographic and/or SDOH information into structured interoperable data elements using a certified electronic health record technology

Domain 3: Data Analysis

The hospital stratifies key performance indicators by demographic and/or SDOH variables to identify equity gaps and includes this information on hospital performance dashboards.

Domain 4: Quality Improvement

The hospital participates in local, regional or national quality improvement activities that are focused on reducing health disparities.

Domain 5: Leadership Engagement

The hospital's senior leadership, including the chief executives and the entire hospital board of trustees, demonstrates a commitment to equity through the following two activities.

- annual reviews of the hospital's strategic plan for achieving health equity
- annual reviews of key performance indicators stratified by demographic and/or social factors

The Joint Commission Elements of Performance

New and revised TJC requirements to reduce health care disparities went into effect Jan. 1, 2023. Below are the six elements of performance.

Element of Performance 1:

The organization designates an individual to lead activities aimed at reducing health care disparities.

Element of Performance 2:

The organization assesses the patient's health-related social needs and provides information about community resources and support services.

Examples of health-related social needs may include the following.

- access to transportation
- difficulty paying for prescriptions or medical bills
- education and literacy
- food insecurity
- housing insecurity

Element of Performance 3:

The organization identifies health care disparities in its patient population by stratifying quality and safety data. Examples of sociodemographic characteristics may include but are not limited to the following:

- age
- gender
- preferred language
- race and ethnicity

Element of Performance 4:

The organization develops a written action plan that describes how it will address at least one of the health care disparities identified.

Element of Performance 5:

The organization acts when it does not achieve or sustain the goal(s) in its action plan to reduce health care disparities.

Element of Performance 6:

At least annually, the organization informs key stakeholders, including leaders, licensed practitioners and staff, about its progress to reduce identified health care disparities.

Sources:

The Joint Commission. (2022, June 20). R³ Report: New Requirements to Reduce Health Care Disparities. Retrieved from https://www.jointcommission.org/-/media/tjc/documents/standards/r3-reports/r3_disparities_july2022-6-20-2022.pdf

Health Quality Innovation Network. (2022, August 29). Quick Start Guide: Hospital Commitment to Health Equity Measure. Retrieved from <https://hqin.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Quick-Start-Guide-Hospital-Commitment-to-Health-Equity-Measure.pdf>