The National Committee for Quality Assurance introduced several new measures in HEDIS 1999, many focusing on management of chronic conditions. Results of these first-year measures, published in NCQA’s State of Managed Care Quality 2000, put a stake in the ground in terms of how well health plans care for members with costly chronic conditions — and established how much room exists for improvement. Unfortunately, there is a lot of room, as evidenced by the numbers. But annual reporting can have the effect of generating performance improvement; indeed, on some older process measures, health plans posted their best on-the-whole improvement since the first State of Managed Care Quality was published in 1997.

**First-year measures: the benchmarks**

Percentage of health plans whose members:

- 57.3% with asthma are prescribed appropriate medications
- 18.5% are sexually active females age 16–20 and are screened routinely for chlamydia
- 45.3% have their LDL cholesterol controlled to <130 mg/dl post-cardiac hospitalization
- 44.8% with diabetes have an HbA1c level exceeding 9.5 percent
- 39.0% with hypertension have blood pressure that is controlled to 140/90 or lower
- 56.6% are menopausal women who receive personalized health counseling

**Established measures: improvement over time**

Average health plan compliance, by percentage of members receiving service:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prenatal care, first trimester</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast cancer screening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beta blocker use after heart attack</td>
<td></td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female checkups after delivery</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood immunizations*†</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varicella vaccine*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Not measured in 1996.
† Specifications changed from 1998 to 1999.

**NCQA accreditation inspires HEDIS performance**

Not surprising, given that HEDIS counts toward NCQA accreditation score

- Average of accredited plans
- Average of nonaccredited plans

**Plans that keep people healthy also keep them happy**

Top HEDIS performers score higher on customer satisfaction

- Customer service
- Getting needed care
- Health plan rating
- Primary care physician rating

SOURCE: STATE OF MANAGED CARE QUALITY 2000, NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE, WASHINGTON