

National Patient Safety Goals®

Effective January 2021 for the Behavioral Health Care and Human Services Program

Goal 1

Improve the accuracy of the identification of individuals served.

NPSG.01.01.01

Use at least two identifiers when providing care, treatment, or services.

Note: Treatments covered by this goal include high-risk interventions and certain high-risk medications (for example, methadone). In some settings, use of visual recognition as an identifier is acceptable. Such settings include those that regularly serve an individual (for example, therapy) or serve only a few individuals (for example, a group home). These are settings in which the individual stays for an extended period of time, staff and populations served are stable, and individuals receiving care are well-known to staff.

--Rationale for NPSG.01.01.01--

Errors involved in misidentification of the individual served can occur in virtually all stages of diagnosis and treatment. The intent for this goal is two-fold: first, to reliably identify the individual as the person for whom the service or treatment is intended; second, to match the service or treatment to that individual. Acceptable identifiers may be the individual's name, an assigned identification number, telephone number, or other person-specific identifier.

Element(s) of Performance for NPSG.01.01.01

1. Use at least two identifiers of the individual served when administering medications or collecting specimens for clinical testing. The room number or physical location of the individual served is not used as an identifier. (See also MM.05.01.09, EPs 7 and 10)
2. Label containers used for specimens in the presence of the individual served.

Goal 3

Improve the safety of using medications.

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Introduction to Reconciling Medication Information

The large number of people receiving care, treatment, or services who take multiple medications and the complexity of managing those medications make medication reconciliation an important safety issue. In medication reconciliation, a clinician compares the medications the individual served should be using (and is actually using) to the new medications that are ordered for the individual and resolves any discrepancies.

The Joint Commission recognizes that organizations face challenges with medication reconciliation. The best medication reconciliation requires a complete understanding of what the individual served was prescribed and what medications he or she is actually taking. It can be difficult to obtain a complete list from every individual in an encounter, and accuracy is dependent on the ability and willingness of the individual served to provide this information. A good faith effort to collect this information is recognized as meeting the intent of the requirement. As more sophisticated systems evolve (such as centralized databases for prescribing and collecting medication information), the effectiveness of these processes will grow.

This National Patient Safety Goal (NPSG) focuses on the risk points of medication reconciliation. The elements of performance in this NPSG are designed to help organizations reduce negative outcomes associated with medication discrepancies. Some aspects of the care, treatment, or services that involve the management of medications are addressed in the standards rather than in this goal. These include coordinating information during transitions in care both within and outside of the organization (CTS.04.01.01), education of the individual on safe medication use (CTS.04.01.03), and communications with other providers (CTS.06.02.05).

In settings where medications are not routinely prescribed or administered, this NPSG provides organizations with the flexibility to decide what medication information they need to collect based on the services they provide. It is often important for clinicians to know what medications the individual is taking when planning care, treatment, or services, even in situations where medications are not used.


NPSG.03.06.01

Maintain and communicate accurate medication information for the individual served.

--Rationale for NPSG.03.06.01--

There is evidence that medication discrepancies can affect outcomes. Medication reconciliation is intended to identify and resolve discrepancies—it is a process of comparing the medications an individual is taking (or should be taking) with newly ordered medications. The comparison addresses duplications, omissions, and interactions, and the need to continue current medications. The types of information that clinicians use to reconcile medications include (among others) medication name, dose, frequency, route, and purpose. Organizations should identify the information that needs to be collected in order to reconcile current and newly ordered medications and to safely prescribe medications in the future.

Element(s) of Performance for NPSG.03.06.01

1. Obtain and/or update information on the medications the individual served is currently taking. This information is documented in a list or other format that is useful to those who manage medications. 
Note 1: The organization obtains the individual's medication information during the first contact. The information is updated when the individual's medications change.
Note 2: Current medications include those taken at scheduled times and those taken on an as-needed basis. See the Glossary for a definition of medications.
Note 3: It is often difficult to obtain complete information on current medications from the individual served. A good faith effort to obtain this information from the individual and/or other sources will be considered as meeting the intent of the EP.

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2. Define the types of medication information (for example, name, dose, route, frequency, purpose) to be collected in non-24-hour settings based on situations of individuals served and characteristics of different settings. **R**

3. For organizations that prescribe medications: Compare the medication information the individual served brought to the organization with the medications ordered for the individual by the organization in order to identify and resolve discrepancies.
Note: Discrepancies include omissions, duplications, contraindications, unclear information, and changes. A qualified staff member, identified by the organization, does the comparison. (See also HRM.01.06.01, EP 1) **R**

4. For organizations that prescribe medications: Provide the individual served (or family as needed) with written information on the medications the individual should be taking at the end of the encounter (for example, name, dose, route, frequency, purpose). **R**

5. For organizations that prescribe medications: Explain the importance of managing medication information to the individual served.
Note: Examples include instructing the individual served to give a list to his or her primary care physician; to update the information when medications are discontinued, doses are changed, or new medications (including over-the-counter products) are added; and to carry medication information at all times in the event of emergency situations. (For information on education of the individual served, refer to Standard CTS.04.01.03.) **R**

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Goal 7

Reduce the risk of health care–associated infections.

NPSG.07.01.01

Comply with either the current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) hand hygiene guidelines and/or the current World Health Organization (WHO) hand hygiene guidelines.

Note: This standard applies only to organizations that provide physical care.

--Rationale for NPSG.07.01.01--

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each year, millions of people acquire an infection while receiving care, treatment, or services in a health care organization. Consequently, health care–associated infections (HAIs) are a safety issue affecting all types of health care organizations. One of the most important ways to address HAIs is by improving the hand hygiene of health care staff. Compliance with the World Health Organization (WHO) or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) hand hygiene guidelines will reduce the transmission of infectious agents by staff to individuals served, thereby decreasing the incidence of HAIs. To ensure compliance with this National Patient Safety Goal, an organization should assess its compliance with the CDC and/or WHO guidelines through a comprehensive program that provides a hand hygiene policy, fosters a culture of hand hygiene, monitors compliance, and provides feedback.

Following safe hand hygiene practices is important in all organizations; however, the risk to individuals served increases when there is physical contact. In these situations, it is more important to follow formal hand hygiene guidelines. This requirement, therefore, applies only to organizations that provide physical care.

Element(s) of Performance for NPSG.07.01.01

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| 1. | Implement a program that follows categories IA, IB, and IC of either the current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the current World Health Organization (WHO) hand hygiene guidelines. (See also IC.01.04.01, EP 1)
Note: This element of performance applies only to organizations that provide physical care. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">R</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: inline-block; margin-left: 5px;"></div> |
| 2. | Set goals for improving compliance with hand hygiene guidelines. (See also IC.03.01.01, EP 1)
Note: This element of performance applies only to organizations that provide physical care. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">R</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: inline-block; margin-left: 5px;"></div> |
| 3. | Improve compliance with hand hygiene guidelines based on established goals.
Note: This element of performance applies only to organizations that provide physical care. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">R</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: inline-block; margin-left: 5px;"></div> |

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Goal 15

The organization identifies safety risks inherent in the population of the individuals it serves.















NPSG.15.01.01

Reduce the risk for suicide.

--Rationale for NPSG.15.01.01--

Suicide of an individual served while in a staffed, round-the-clock care setting is a frequently reported type of sentinel event. Identification of individuals at risk for suicide while under the care of or following discharge from a health care organization is an important step in protecting these at-risk individuals.

Element(s) of Performance for NPSG.15.01.01

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| <p>1. The organization conducts an environmental risk assessment that identifies features in the physical environment that could be used to attempt suicide and takes necessary action to minimize the risk(s) (for example, removal of anchor points, door hinges, and hooks that can be used for hanging).
Note: Noninpatient behavioral health care and human services settings and unlocked inpatient units do not need to be ligature resistant. The expectation for these settings is to conduct a risk assessment to identify potential environmental hazards to individuals served, identify individuals who are at high risk for suicide, and take action to safeguard these individuals from the environmental risks (for example, continuous monitoring in a safe location while awaiting transfer to higher level of care and removing objects from the room that can be used for self-harm).</p> |   |
| <p>2. Screen all individuals served for suicidal ideation using a validated screening tool.
Note: The Joint Commission requires screening for suicidal ideation using a validated tool starting at age 12 and above.</p> |   |
| <p>3. Use an evidence-based process to conduct a suicide assessment of individuals served who have screened positive for suicidal ideation. The assessment directly asks about suicidal ideation, plan, intent, suicidal or self-harm behaviors, risk factors, and protective factors.
Note: EPs 2 and 3 can be satisfied through the use of a single process or instrument that simultaneously screens individuals served for suicidal ideation and assesses the severity of suicidal ideation.</p> |   |
| <p>4. Document individuals' overall level of risk for suicide and the plan to mitigate the risk for suicide.</p> |   |
| <p>5. Follow written policies and procedures addressing the care of individuals served identified as at risk for suicide. At a minimum, these should include the following:
- Training and competence assessment of staff who care for individuals served at risk for suicide
- Guidelines for reassessment
- Monitoring individuals served who are at high risk for suicide</p> |   |
| <p>6. Follow written policies and procedures for counseling and follow-up care at discharge for individuals served identified as at risk for suicide.</p> |   |
| <p>7. Monitor implementation and effectiveness of policies and procedures for screening, assessment, and management of individuals served at risk for suicide and take action as needed to improve compliance.</p> |   |