

Hepatitis C Medicaid Affinity Group

Identifying People Who Inject Drugs (PWID) in Medicaid Claims

People who inject drugs (PWID) are at higher risk of contracting hepatitis C virus (HCV) due to sharing of syringes and other equipment when injecting drugs. Therefore, state Medicaid programs may wish to target PWID for HCV screening and treatment interventions. However, identifying this population from Medicaid claims and encounter data is difficult due to the lack of comprehensive ICD-10 codes related to injection drug use. This document discusses the Hepatitis C Medicaid Affinity Group's approach to combat this issue.

A New Screening Measure for PWID

The current structure of substance abuse ICD-10 codes does not provide information on how a substance is consumed (e.g., injected or consumed orally) for most types of substance use. Therefore, a combination of ICD-10 codes must be used to identify the PWID population.

The Hepatitis C Medicaid Affinity Group developed a screening measure for PWID based on methodologies from recent studies and the reporting experiences of participating states.^{1,2} The approach uses a combination of ICD-9 or ICD-10 codes for substance use disorders and common infections related to injection drug use to estimate the population of PWID. Skin and soft tissue infections are among the most common causes for hospital admission for PWID and can be used to distinguish between PWID and individuals with other substance use disorders.³

ICD-9 and ICD-10 diagnosis codes related to substance abuse and infections are found in the "PWID Codes" sheet of the outcome measures reporting form. An individual must have at least one claim indicating substance use and at least one claim indicating an infection (see the Type column) at any time during the reporting period to be included in the denominator for this screening measure.

Hepatitis C Medicaid Affinity Group PWID Screening Measure	
Denominator	Individuals ages 18 or older who were enrolled in Medicaid for 3 consecutive months in the reporting period who had a claim with one or more substance use diagnosis AND one or more infection related to injection drug use in the reporting period (see Excel sheet for relevant ICD-9 and ICD-10 diagnosis codes).
Numerator	Enrollees in the denominator who also received an HCV antibody test or RNA test (or both) in the reporting period.

¹ Janjua, N. Z., Islam, N., Kuo, M., Yu, A., Wong, S., Butt, Z. A., ... & Chong, M. (2018). Identifying injection drug use and estimating population size of people who inject drugs using healthcare administrative datasets. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 55, 31-39.

² Tookes, H., Diaz, C., Li, H., Khalid, R., & Doblecki-Lewis, S. (2015). A cost analysis of hospitalizations for infections related to injection drug use at a county safety-net hospital in Miami, Florida. *PLoS one*, 10(6), e0129360.

³ Ebright, J. R., & Pieper, B. (2002). Skin and soft tissue infections in injection drug users. *Infectious Disease Clinics*, 16(3), 697-712.