



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

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May 2017

IMPORTANT: DIABETES PATIENTS NOT ON STATIN THERAPY

Dear Physician:

We're writing to advise you of a research letter that was recently published in the Journal of American College of Cardiology. This research reports that nearly 2 out of 5 people with diabetes who could benefit from statin therapy to lower the risk of heart attack and stroke were not prescribed one, despite the known cardio-protective effects.¹

Our records show that the patient listed below has a diagnosis of diabetes but is not currently on statin therapy. We urge you to consider adding the clinically appropriate intensity of statin therapy to optimize clinical outcomes for your patient.

<patient first name, last name and date of birth>

Despite guideline recommendations from the American College of Cardiology, the American Heart Association, and the American Diabetes Association for cardiovascular risk management, the prescribing patterns of statin therapy in patients with diabetes is relatively low. To improve health outcomes associated with diabetes, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have adapted this guideline recommendation as part of their Standards of Medical Care, which is now reflected as a new STAR measure for 2017.³

Recent cholesterol guidelines have updated recommendations for treatment of blood cholesterol to reduce atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) risk in adults, using high, moderate, and low statin intensities. The recommendations for primary prevention in individuals with diabetes and LDL-C 70-189 mg/dL include addition of moderate-intensity statin therapy for adults 40-75 years of age. High-intensity statin therapy is recommended for the same group, with a $\geq 7.5\%$ estimated 10-year ASCVD risk, unless contraindicated. Statin use should also be evaluated for individuals outside the age-range and cholesterol levels noted above, based on overall ASCVD benefits compared to adverse effects and drug interactions.

Statin Therapy Classification by Level of Intensity²

High-Intensity	Moderate-Intensity	Low-Intensity
Daily dose lowers LDL-C \geq50%	Daily dose lowers LDL-C 30% - <50%	Daily dose lowers LDL-C <30%
Atorvastatin (40)-80 mg Rosuvastatin 20 (40) mg	Atorvastatin 10 (20)mg Rosuvastatin (5) 10 mg Simvastatin 20-40 mg Pravastatin 40 (80) mg Lovastatin 40mg <i>Fluvastatin XL 80 mg</i> Fluvastatin 40 mg BID Pitavastatin 2-4 mg	<i>Simvastatin 10 mg</i> Pravastatin 10-20mg Lovastatin 20mg <i>Fluvastatin 20-40 mg</i> <i>Pitavastatin 1mg</i>

LDL-C lowering capacity is an approximate and average estimated value based on randomized control trial data. Individual responses to statin therapy may vary. Bolded values represent statins and respective strengths that were evaluated in randomized control trials which showed reduction in major cardiovascular events.

It's possible this patient is obtaining medications through a pharmacy discount program. If so (Over, please) patient's insurance claims will not be generated; and, according to CMS' records, the patient will not be compliant with this measure.

To show that the appropriate therapy is being utilized, please encourage the patient to use his/her Highmark ID when obtaining prescription drugs. This allows Highmark to identify member-specific care coordination opportunities that will help to improve the quality of care that is delivered.

Thank you for taking the necessary steps to promote health and wellness for your patients and our members.

Sincerely,



Thomas James, MD
 Senior Medical Director
 Medical Management & Policy

References

1. Yashashwi P et al. Practice Level variation in statin use among patients with diabetes: Insights from the Pinnacle Registry. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. September 2016.
2. Stone NJ et al. 2013 ACC/AHA guideline on the treatment of blood cholesterol to reduce atherosclerotic cardiovascular risk in adults: A report of the American College of Cardiology/ American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines. *Circulation*.2014; 129 (25 suppl. 2):S13
3. Pharmacy Quality Alliance. Statin use in persons with diabetes. Springfield (VA): Pharmacy Quality Alliance (PQA); 2015.