

NCQA's Specialized Accreditations of Medicaid MCOs

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Overview

- The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) offers several specialized accreditation programs for health plans to acknowledge strong processes in targeted areas:
 - Long-Term Services and Supports Distinction
 - Health Equity Accreditation Programs (Health Equity Accreditation and Health Equity Accreditation Plus, launched in 2022)
 - Multicultural Health Care (transitioned to Health Equity Accreditation)
 - Electronic Clinical Data
- The ensuing slides convey the distribution of Medicaid MCOs by each of the above accreditations.
- We also assessed the relationship between MCOs receiving the above accreditations and their current overall quality score (on the 0-5 scale used by NCQA). We did not find any meaningful correlation – plans achieving the specialized accreditations did not generally have a higher (or lower) overall quality score than other Medicaid MCOs.

Health Equity Accreditation

The goal of the Health Equity Accreditation and Health Equity Accreditation Plus programs are to support health care organizations in evaluating and elevating the health of the populations they serve. NCQA defines these accreditations as:

- **Health Equity Accreditation** focuses on the foundation of health equity work: building an internal culture that supports the organization's external health equity work; collecting data that help the organization create and offer language services and provider networks mindful of individuals' cultural and linguistic needs; identifying opportunities to reduce health inequities and improve care.
- **Health Equity Accreditation Plus** is for organizations further along on their health equity journey. It focuses on collecting data on community social risk factors and patients' social needs, to help the organization offer social resources that can have the most impact; establishing mutually beneficial partnerships that support community-based organizations; building meaningful opportunities for patient and consumer engagement; identifying opportunities to improve social need referral processes and the partnerships that make them possible.

Distribution of Health Plans with Additional NCQA Health Plan Accreditation

Additional Programs	Number of Health Plans	Percent of Health Plans
Electronic Clinical Data	100	34.3%
Health Equity Accreditation	128	43.8%
Health Equity Accreditation Plus	28	9.6%
Long Term Services and Supports	51	17.5%
Multicultural Healthcare	23	7.9%
No Additional Accreditation	114	39.0%
Total MCOs	292	

NCQA evaluated 292 MCOs in Rating Year 2022-2023.

- 178 MCOs (61%) have attained at least one specialized NCQA accreditation.
- 109 MCOs (37%) have attained two or more specialized NCQA accreditations.
- 114 Medicaid MCOs (39%) had not yet attained accreditation in any of the specialized programs.

Distribution of Scoring for MCOs with Health Equity Plus Accreditation

Health Plan Rating	Number of Health Plans	Percent of Health Plans
5.0	0	0.0%
4.5	1	3.8%
4.0	4	15.4%
3.5	16	61.5%
3.0	5	19.2%
2.5	0	0.0%
2.0	0	0.0%
1.5	0	0.0%
Total	26	13.8%

26 Medicaid MCOs – 13.8% of all Medicaid MCOs with an NCQA rating— have attained both Health Equity and Health Equity Accreditation Plus.

These 26 MCOs’ overall health plan rating averaged 3.52, closely in line with the average of all reporting Medicaid MCOs (3.50).

Distribution of Scoring for Evaluated MCOs with No Specialized NCQA Accreditations

Health Plan Rating	Number of Health Plans	Percent of Health Plans
5.0	0	0.0%
4.5	2	4.9%
4.0	11	26.8%
3.5	16	39.0%
3.0	8	19.5%
2.5	3	7.3%
2.0	1	2.4%
1.5	0	0.0%
Total	41	21.7%

In Rating Year 2022-2023, 41 MCOs received a health plan rating but were had not attained any specialized accreditation from NCQA. These MCOs’ average rating of 3.47 was almost equal to the 3.50 average rating across all Medicaid MCOs.

5 Slide Series Overview

Our 5 Slide Series is typically a monthly publication whereby we briefly discuss a selected topic outside the confines of our client engagements. The Menges Group has developed a variety of datasets that we use to support our 5 Slide Series and client projects.

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