QUALITY OF WOMEN’S HEALTH CARE

Health care quality indicators can provide important information about the effectiveness, safety, timeliness, patient-centeredness, and efficiency of health services. Some common indicators used to monitor women's health care in managed care plans include screening for chlamydia and cervical cancer, and the receipt of timely prenatal and postpartum care.

Often referred to as a "silent" disease because most infected individuals do not experience symptoms, chlamydia is the most commonly reported bacterial STD in the United States. In 2010, women aged 21–24 years enrolled in Medicaid were more likely than those enrolled in commercial plans to have been screened for chlamydia (62.3 versus 45.7 percent, respectively).

In comparison, cervical cancer screenings appear to be more accessible to women with commercial coverage than to those covered by Medicaid. Among women aged 21–64 years, cervical cancer screenings were received at least once during the previous 3 years by 77.0 percent of commercially-insured women and 67.2 percent of those covered by Medicaid. Cervical cancer is almost entirely preventable with appropriate screening, evaluation, and treatment. [See pages on Cancer and Preventive Care.]

In 2010, women with commercial insurance coverage were more likely than those with Medicaid to have received timely prenatal and postpartum care. More than 90 percent of commercially-insured women received prenatal care in either their first trimester or within 42 days of enrollment, compared to 83.7 percent of those covered by Medicaid. Similarly, 80.7 percent of women with commercial coverage had a postpartum visit between 21 and 56 days after delivery, compared to 64.4 percent of women participating in Medicaid. Although Medicaid-insured women are less likely to have received timely prenatal and postpartum care than commercially-insured women, they have made greater improvements since 2001. For example, the proportion of women receiving timely postpartum care increased 21.5 percent among Medicaid participants compared to 4.8 percent among commercially-insured postpartum women.

HEDIS*: Screening for Chlamydia** and Cervical Cancer,† by Payer, 2010

HEDIS*: Timeliness of Prenatal** and Postpartum Care,† by Payer, 2001–2010

*Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set is a registered trademark of NCQA. **The percentage of sexually active women aged 21–24 years who had at least one test for Chlamydia in the past year. †The percentage of women aged 21–64 years who had at least one Pap test in the past 3 years.