

Analyzing CMS ODAG data for disparities is crucial for health plans to ensure equitable access to healthcare services, as mandated by the 2025 CMS final rule. This rule emphasizes the importance of identifying and addressing inequities in healthcare utilization and outcomes among different racial and ethnic groups. By scrutinizing ODAG data, health plans can uncover patterns of disparity in service approvals, denials, and grievances, enabling them to implement targeted interventions to improve health equity. This proactive approach not only aligns with regulatory requirements but also enhances the quality of care and patient satisfaction across diverse populations.

Definitions:

ODAG stands for Organization Determinations, Appeals, and Grievances. It's a system used by Medicare to track:

1. Organization Determinations: Decisions about whether a requested medical service or item is covered and necessary.
2. Appeals: When a request is denied, patients can challenge the decision, and the system tracks these appeals.
3. Grievances: Complaints from patients about the quality of care or services they received.

ODAG helps Medicare keep track of how they handle requests, appeals, and complaints to ensure fair and effective healthcare for everyone.

Race: Self reported Race by MA members to Sharp Health Plan.

Based on the ODAG data table provided, we can analyze the denial rates for lack of medical necessity across different racial and ethnic groups. The overall denial rate for lack of medical necessity is 1.18% of the total ODAG requests.

When examining specific groups, the highest denial rate for lack of medical necessity is observed among American Indian or Alaska Native individuals at 6.67%. This is significantly higher than other groups, indicating potential disparities in medical necessity determinations for this population. Due to the low number of requests, comprising only .03% of total requests, and the single denial for lack of medical necessity, it's not possible to draw meaningful conclusions based on these low numbers. Conversely, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander individuals have a 0% denial rate for lack of medical necessity, suggesting that requests from this group are either approved or denied for other reasons.

The majority of requests come from White individuals, who represent 77.77% of the total ODAG requests. Their denial rate for lack of medical necessity is 1.19%, which is close to the overall average. Other groups, such as Asian (1.11%), Black (1.29%), Hispanic (0.87%), and Two or More Races (1.01%), have denial rates that are relatively low and close to the overall average.

The data also shows that the percentage of the Sharp Medicare population varies significantly across groups, with White individuals comprising 65.18% of the population, while American Indian or Alaska Native individuals make up only 0.06%. This disparity in population percentages may influence the overall denial rates observed.

In summary, while the overall denial rate for lack of medical necessity is relatively low, there are notable differences among racial and ethnic groups. The American Indian or Alaska Native population is small portion of the overall Sharp Medicare population, the number of total requests is an even smaller portion of the overall requests. The single denial for lack of medical necessity caused an disproportionate impact in the overall denial rate.

Was the request denied for lack of medical necessity?	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Other	Two or More Races	Unknown	White	No Reported Race	Grand Total
Denied – Not a covered benefit		18	9	15		25	31	4	270	2	374
Approved	14	1410	1363	1588	54	2525	2220	411	36492	821	46898
Denied – Lack of medical necessity	1	16	18	14		44	23	1	443	5	565
Total Requests	15	1444	1390	1617	54	2594	2274	416	37205	828	47837
Denied for lack of medical necessity divided by total number of requests	6.67%	1.11%	1.29%	0.87%	0.00%	1.70%	1.01%	0.24%	1.19%	0.60%	1.18%

Number of requests divided by total requests	0.03%	3.02%	2.91%	3.38%	0.11%	5.42%	4.75%	0.87%	77.77%	1.73%	100.00%
Percentage of Sharp Medicare Population	0.06%	3.20%	2.53%	6.18%	0.05%	7.69%	10.00%	1.11%	65.18%	4.00%	

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