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Primary care — the first step for
treatment of depression

Aetna Depression in Primary Care Program

www.aetna.com



The Aetna Depression in Primary Care Program is designed to support the screening for and treatment of depression at the primary care level.

Background — depression quick facts

- Depression often coexists with other serious medical illnesses, such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes and Parkinson's disease. Most people do not seek treatment due to the stigma associated with depression.
- A high percentage of those treated don't receive appropriate treatment or continue their treatment for a sufficient period of time.
- Medical associations are recognizing the critical role that practices like yours play in identifying and treating patients.

Challenges facing primary care physicians

- **No time** — Diagnosing and monitoring patients with depression is time intensive.
- **No tools** — Many primary care physicians have no evaluation/screening tools. Patients often come in complaining of physical symptoms. Because the symptoms of depression can mimic other illnesses, recognizing them may not be obvious for the patient and physician.
- **No support** — There is a lack of a well-organized mental health system for physician support and patient treatment in the primary care setting.

Program benefits

Our Aetna Depression in Primary Care Program offers your practice:

- A tool to screen for depression as well as monitor response to treatment
- Reimbursement for depression screening and follow-up monitoring
- Patient health questionnaire (PHQ-9) — specifically developed for use in primary care
 - Self-administered, quick and easy
 - Specific for depression
 - Available in English and Spanish
- PHQ-9 reimbursement
 - Submit claim with the following billing combination: CPT code 96127 (brief emotional/behavioral assessment) in conjunction with diagnosis code Z13.89 (screening for depression)

Getting started

Ready to join us in the Aetna Depression in Primary Care Program? To get started, you simply need to:

- Be a participating provider
- Use the PHQ-9 tool to screen/monitor your patients
- Submit your claims using the combination coding

Learn more [here](#).

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