



American Academy
of Value Based Care

Medicare Star Medication Adherence for Cholesterol (Statins)

Quick Reference Guide

2026

Medicare Stars Medication Adherence for Cholesterol (Statins) — Quick Reference Guide

1. MEASURE SNAPSHOT

CMS Part D Star Measure: D10 - Medication Adherence for Cholesterol (Statins)

CMS Definition: The percentage of Medicare Part D beneficiaries, 18 years and older, who adhere to their prescribed statin cholesterol medication therapy. Adherence is defined as a Proportion of Days Covered (PDC) of 80% or higher during the treatment period.^{1,2}

Measure Weight: Triple-weighted (3x) under the Medicare Part D Star Ratings program; Medication adherence (MA) **≈30% of total Part D rating**

Exclusions: Members in hospice, palliative care, ESRD, advanced illness/frailty programs, or long-term care facilities; Contracts with 30 or fewer enrolled member-years (in the denominator of PDC calculation).^{1,2}

2025 Financial Impact: \$12.7 billion in total Quality Bonus Payments (QPBs) across all Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug (MA-PD) contracts; **\$372–\$438 per enrollee annually** (depending on plan performance tier).³

Star Thresholds¹⁻³

- **Adherent Patient:** Proportion of days covered (PDC) ≥80%
- **4-Star Plan:** Historically **>80–89%** of eligible members adherent
- **5-Star Plan:** Historically **≥88–90%**, with recent years requiring substantially higher performance
- Achieving 5 stars requires very high medical adherence (MA), typically requiring that over 90% of its members achieve the ≥80% PDC threshold

CMS Cut Points 2026: ²

Plan Type	1 Star	2 Star	3 Star	4 Star	5 Star
MA-PD	<84%	≥84% – <88%	≥88% – <90%	≥90% – <93%	≥93%
PDP	<87%	≥87% – <89%	≥89% – <90%	≥90% – <92%	≥92%

Current Industry Performance (2025 → 2026 Trend)³⁻⁶

- National Numeric and Star Averages: MA-PD 89% 3.2 and Prescription Drug Plans (PDP) 88% 2.7²

- **4+ Star Contracts:** Approximately **64%** of MA-PD enrollees are in contracts with 4 or more stars for 2026, a slight increase from **62%** in 2025
- **5-Star Contracts:** Enrollment remains highly restricted; approximately **2.3%** of members are in 5-star contracts for 2026, up marginally from **1.98%** in 2025. Only **18 MA-PD contracts** nationwide earned the 5-star rating for 2026
- Medication Adherence measures, including statins, experienced **some of the steepest year-over-year declines**, driven by:
 - **Rising cut points** (up to $\geq 92\%$ for 5 Stars)
 - **Increased medication cost pressure**
 - Greater impact of **social risk adjustment through the Health Equity Index (HEI)**

Rating Impact & Revenue

Star Rating	Benchmark Bonus	Rebate	Marketing Rights
5 stars	5% increase + QBP	70%	Year-round enrollment
4.5 stars	5% increase + QBP	70%	Standard windows
4 stars	5% increase + eligible for QBP	65%	Standard windows
<4 stars	None	50-65%	Limited

2. PDC CALCULATION

Formula^{2,5,6}

$$PDC = \frac{\text{Total days with medication available}}{\text{Days in measurement period}} \times 100$$

Success Threshold: $\geq 80\%$ PDC

Calculation Rules (Non-Negotiable)^{2,3}

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