



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

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# 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.<sup>1,2</sup>

**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).<sup>1,2</sup>

**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).<sup>3</sup>

### Star Thresholds<sup>1-3</sup>

- **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:<sup>2</sup>

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)<sup>3-6</sup>

- National Numeric and Star Averages: MA-PD 89% 3.2 and Prescription Drug Plans (PDP) 88% 2.7<sup>2</sup>
- **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 ≥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**<sup>2,5,6</sup>

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

Success Threshold: ≥ 80% PDC

Calculation Rules (Non-Negotiable)<sup>2,1</sup>

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