



Treating Patients with Major Depressive Disorder

We have adopted the *American Psychiatric Association's Practice Guideline for the Treatment of Patients with Major Depressive Disorder, Third Edition*. You can find the text of this guideline online at www.psych.org/guidelines/mdd2010.

As an addendum to the American Psychiatric Association's *Practice Guideline for the Treatment of Patients with Major Depressive Disorder, Third Edition*, the following guidelines for effective antidepressant management have been adopted based on the *Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set (HEDIS) 2008*:

- **Optimal Practitioner Contacts for Medication Management**
Patients 18 year of age and older diagnosed with a new episode of depression and treated with antidepressant medication will have at least 3 follow-up contacts with a non-mental health practitioner or a mental health practitioner (coded with a mental health diagnosis) during the 84-day (12 weeks) Acute Treatment Phase. At least one of the visits must be with the prescribing practitioner.
- **Effective Acute Phase Treatment**
Patients 18 years of age and older diagnosed with a new episode of depression and treated with antidepressant medication should remain on an antidepressant drug during the entire 84-day (12 weeks) Acute Treatment Phase.
- **Effective Continuation Phase Treatment**
Patients 18 years of age and older diagnosed with a new episode of depression and treated with antidepressant medication should remain on an antidepressant drug for 180 days (6 months).

No guideline should be considered the sole source of guidance for the treatment of a particular disorder. They are designed to provide a framework for treatment decisions. They are not intended as a protocol of treatment measures or to replace the clinical judgment of the provider.

Missouri Care, an Aetna Health Plan

For additional information, please contact Ronald L Lacey, MD, Medical Director of Behavioral Health at ron.lacey@aetna.com or at 1-800-889-4073.