

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION	
Name:	Consistent use of the same family doctor (doctor continuity)
Short/Other Names:	n/a
BACKGROUND, INTERPRETATION AND BENCHMARKS	
Description:	The percentage of all visits to family doctors that are to the same family doctor.
Rationale:	<p>This measure provides an opportunity to assess the impact of relational continuity on different outcomes and more specifically chronic disease management, and preventive service delivery. Hence, this measure provides a means to understand how patients' continuity to a family doctor may be associated with health service utilization and other measures.</p> <p>Continuity to a family doctor substantially impacts healthcare services utilization, patient outcomes, patient experience with care, and cost. In general, the greater the continuity, the more positive the outcomes.</p>
Interpretation:	A lower value indicates that patients see other family doctors who are not their primary family doctor. A higher value is desirable.
Target/Benchmark:	No benchmarks have been identified.
INDICATOR CALCULATION	
Calculation:	<p>Description</p> <p>Sum of all individual patients' continuity to a family doctor, divided by the total number of patients across a zone or PCN.</p> <p>Average Continuity =</p> $\frac{\text{Sum of all individual patients' family doctor continuity}}{\text{Total number of patients in zone or PCN}}$ <p>Type of Measure: Average Adjustment Applied: None</p>
Denominator:	<p>Description</p> <p>The number of patients in a given zone or PCN. Patients are assigned based on attachment to a family physician.</p> <p>Inclusion Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Patient list specifically submitted by physician.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Patients assigned to a physician based on the HQA algorithm (Proxy panel). <p>Exclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Duplicate family physician visits based on Patient Health Number (PHN), date, procedure and diagnostic codes, and physician identification are removed. ▪ Patients who were seen by the physician but not assigned to them. <p>Limitations & Technical Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Panel prediction is most accurate for practices in a single stable location over the past 3 fiscal years and for regular full-time work schedule. ▪ Family physician visits include visits within a 3 fiscal year period.
Numerator:	<p>Description</p> <p>Sum of individual patients’ physician continuity in a zone or PCN. Individual patients’ physician continuity is the percentage of time(s) a patient sees their primary physician compared to other family physician visits.</p> <p>Inclusion Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Patient list specifically submitted by physician. ▪ Patients assigned to a physician based on the HQA algorithm (Proxy panel). <p>Exclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None <p>Limitations & Technical Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physician continuity is most accurate for practices in a single stable location over the past 3 fiscal years and for regular full-time work schedule. ▪ Family physician visits include visits within a 3 fiscal year period.
DATA DETAILS	
Data Sources:	Alberta Health Physician Claims.
Available Data Years:	<p>Type of Year: Fiscal year [starts April 1, ends March 31]</p> <p>First Available Year: 2018/19</p> <p>Last Available Year: 2022/23</p>
Geographic Coverage:	The province of Alberta excluding the military and prisoners.
Reporting Levels:	Zone, PCN

Quality Statement

Limitations:

- About 18% of Albertans do not visit a General Practitioner in a year.
- Patients are excluded in the physician panel assignment if they do not visit a physician in 3 years (the current fiscal year, plus the 2 preceding fiscal years).
- The physician claims dataset consists of Fee-for-service and shadow billing. The data submitted based on shadow billing may not be entirely accurate. As a result, this might affect the accuracy of the results of this measure.
- Only Alberta data is available. As such, any visits by Alberta patients outside of the province are not included.