

Boosting Star Ratings performance with actionable tips for the Health Outcomes Survey



● Higher weights mean higher stakes for HOS

Higher weights are coming for the Health Outcomes Survey (HOS), meaning functional health and quality of life are gaining greater influence on Star Ratings, bonus payments, and member retention. In the past five years, HOS has [more than doubled in value](#): in Star-Year 2027, measures derived from the HOS will contribute close to 15% of Part C ratings, up from about 6% in 2022.

And if recent years' Stars performance is any indication – with HOS outcomes continuing to underperform the rest of Part C year-after-year – plans need to act fast to implement best-in-class solutions to turn around HOS performance.

Across leading Medicare Advantage plans, the question is shifting from 'should we invest in strategies to address the HOS' to 'how do we invest smarter in strategies that address the HOS with limited data about what truly works'? Consider this **HOS Tip Sheet** your starting point, complete with actionable strategies to begin to move the needle on your HOS performance based on best practices and learnings from Bold plan partners.



● Measure-by-measure: HOS Tip Sheet

1. C04: Improving or Maintaining Physical Health
2. C05: Improving or Maintaining Mental Health
3. C06: Monitoring Physical Activity
4. C15: Reducing the Risk of Falling
5. C16: Improving Bladder Control

C04: Improving or Maintaining Physical Health

2026 STAR AVERAGE: 3.2

Triple-Weighted in 2027

Made up of questions that attempt to understand a member's ability to accomplish daily activities – like household chores, climbing stairs, or playing golf – without pain or limited mobility.

TIP

Addressing this measure requires a sustained focus on functionality and agency: giving members the tools to know which activities are safe for them, and promoting personalized programs and interventions that enable them to live life unencumbered.

80%

**of Bold members
report improved
strength, heart
health, and mobility¹**



HOW BOLD HELPS

Based on how the HOS is designed, Bold brings together personalized engagement, habit formation, exercise, and education to boost self-efficacy and drive behavior change that transforms how members perceive their overall health.

Bold's personalization engine adapts based on how members are engaging, their self-reported pain levels after exercises, and regular assessments to ensure members are paired with [evidence-based programs that improve their strength and mobility](#). Members are guided by experts through modifications and programs tailored to their specific needs – like managing a chronic condition, or for support with day-to-day pain – and provided with actionable support to help them improve their day-to-day lives.

1. Bold book of business, 2024.

C05: Improving or Maintaining Mental Health

2026 STAR AVERAGE: 3.2

Triple-Weighted in 2027

Based on members reporting feelings of depression, anxiety, loneliness, and fatigue with questions on energy levels, if “emotional problems” have impacted work or social activities in the past four weeks, and how members would rate their mental health today compared to one year ago.

TIP

Emphasize the mind-body connection in member campaigns. Ensure education around mental health is rooted in similar language to the HOS, helping members to feel less alone in how their mental health impacts their daily lives and providing easy-to-use tools to support their overall emotional well-being.

8 in 10

Bold members report improved mental health²

HOW BOLD HELPS

Many Bold members report how surprised they are at the improvement in their mood and emotional well-being only a few weeks into their programs – a result of regular engagement, new healthy habits, and taking control of their overall health and quality of life. Bold embeds regular member reflection on their mental health to help keep their emotional state top-of-mind, and encourages increased engagement or action if their mental health is worsening. Bold also shares milestones, progress trackers, and badges tied to different accomplishments to celebrate wins with members throughout their programs, which members often cite as a key motivator in feedback.

“Since I have been exercising with Bold, my balance, my muscles, and my mental health have been better. A few years ago I was told I had muscle wasting and I realized I better start moving. I have myalgia and arthritis, and have less joint stiffness.”

– Bold Member

2. Bold book of business, 2024.

C06: Monitoring Physical Activity

2026 STAR AVERAGE: 3.1

Provider interaction on physical activity is the basis of this measure, focused on questions that ask members if they've talked with a doctor about their level of activity in the past year and if they received guidance from a health care provider to "start, increase, or maintain" their level of exercise.

TIP

Most exercise solutions focus on those who already have a consistent routine, despite the fact that the 65+ cohort is the least likely age demographic to hold a gym membership.³ When assessing vendor options, focus on those that offer age- and ability-appropriate exercise for a broad swath of your population by leveraging technology and personalization.

70%

of members report talking to their provider about their level of physical activity one month into Bold, compared with 51% at onboarding⁴

HOW BOLD HELPS

Bold encourages provider engagement as members reach milestones and build new exercise routines. What's more, repeated engagement in Bold's programs means members are advancing in difficulty levels or starting to increase the amount of time they're dedicating to movement each week – powerful tools driving recall so that physical activity is top-of-mind for them more often, like when they answer the HOS questions or when they go to their Annual Wellness Visit.



3. [IHRSA Media Report, 2021](#).

4. Bold plan partner results, 2025.

C15: Reducing the Risk of Falling

2026 STAR AVERAGE: 2.7

Lowest Star Rating of any Part C measure in 2025, and one of three measures in 2026 to receive the lowest average score of 2.7

This measure captures the percentage of members with problems falling, walking, or balancing who discussed these topics with a provider and received a treatment plan or recommendations.

TIP

Plans should identify emerging risk for falls by tracking [related risk factors](#) like diabetes or heart disease, thyroid issues, or taking certain medications. Give members who are at risk of falling a clear action plan with at-home programs that build balance and stability, along with support that builds confidence and celebrates action – as falls are among many seniors' biggest fears related to aging.

>40%
**reduction in falls
and fall-related
hospitalizations
with Bold⁵**

HOW BOLD HELPS

Plans trying to reduce total cost of care, improve all HOS scores, and unlock bonus payments are turning to Bold to connect the dots on their falls strategy. Bold makes the most of data, analytics, and year-round engagement to activate members of all activity levels to improve balance and strength, reduce pain, manage medications, and capture recent falls or issues in near-real-time.

Falls can happen at any time, and issues with balance or slipping can be forgotten (or feel less important than other health issues) by the time a member talks to their provider. But Bold is there for members between provider visits to help them get back to safe movement after a recent fall or slip, remind them to discuss falls with their provider, and deliver expert recommendations and education as part of [a clinically-rigorous falls program](#) that they see as an extension of their plan. This augmented support from Bold translates to more members saying they've received an action plan and recommendations for falls in the HOS.

5. Bold book of business, 2024.

C16: Improving Bladder Control

2026 STAR AVERAGE: 2.7

Trending down over last four Star Years

This measure is based on the percentage of members who discussed treatment options for issues like urine leakage with a provider, based on those who reported having any urine leakage in the past six months.

TIP

Despite the prevalence of bladder control issues among older adults, shame and stigma keep members from raising these issues with their providers. Plans should train providers on the importance of checking in on urinary incontinence at each visit, while focusing on year-round campaigns that normalize bladder issues and attempt to reduce stigma.

9 in 10

members say Bold has helped in their day-to-day life⁶

HOW BOLD HELPS

Since members can be reluctant to talk to their providers about bladder control, Bold's asynchronous solution helps to create a virtual safe space for members where they can more comfortably open up about bladder issues and get [personalized, expert education and plans](#) to begin to address their needs. Member data shows that members see Bold as an extension of their health plan, and that's by design: we want members to feel extra support and expert guidance for how to improve their pelvic health so that it not only changes how they respond to the HOS, but – more importantly – makes a lasting impact on their overall health and quality of life.



6. Bold book of business, 2024.

● Top 3 takeaways for HOS success

With the two-year timeframe the HOS is administered on, along with the focus on self-reported outcomes and perceptions of health, plans have long struggled to identify – and measure – [what actually works to educate and engage members to move the needle on the HOS](#). At Bold, we've been partnering with leading plans to solve this, gathering insights, learnings, and rich data about how to effectively address the HOS – all of which lays the foundation for the tips covered here.

Most important is the criticality of a year-round approach to understanding, engaging, and supporting members – not just for the HOS, but for all Star Ratings and total cost of care. Here are three top takeaways to keep in mind as you design your HOS action plan:

1. HOS is year-round.

HOS season starts the moment fielding for the most recent survey is complete. Sustained member engagement must go beyond single touchpoints and cut across channels to drive behavior change, improve recall of HOS topics, and boost overall physical and mental health.

2. Measures are interconnected; your solutions must be, too.

HOS measures are interconnected. Take bladder control, for instance: urinary incontinence and bladder control issues are [linked to](#) depression and decreased independence, and are a leading cause of falls. Single solutions to individual HOS measures and one-off interventions largely miss the point: addressing HOS effectively means improving members' health outcomes and overall quality of life, and requires a holistic solution.

3. Engage members of all activity and risk levels regularly.

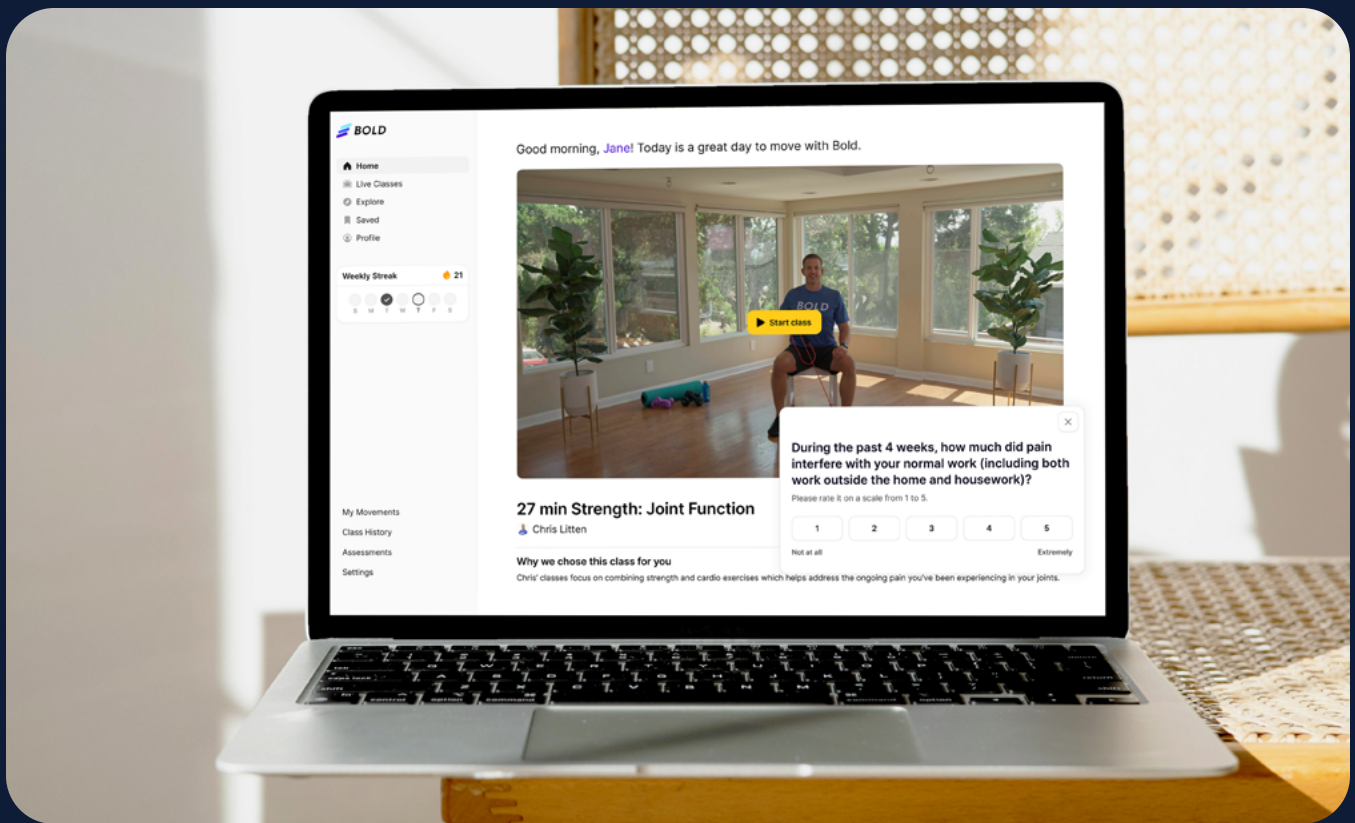
Segmentation of members is a critical component of any effective quality strategy, and rightly so: engaging the right members at the right times with interventions and solutions that they need to manage and improve their health is critical. In order to move the needle on the HOS, plans must marry plans for data-driven cohorts to segment outreach and campaigns with strategies for more robust and effective engagement of members across all activity and risk levels regularly.

● Next steps for implementing a gold-standard HOS strategy

Looming Stars changes and triple-weighted measures bring greater urgency than ever before to turn the HOS into a positive driver for overall Stars performance, member retention, clinical outcomes, and overall cost of care.

With the Health Outcomes Survey doubling in value for overall Star Ratings, plans need to reverse the tide on these historically-overlooked measures with a trusted partner like Bold. A single, end-to-end partner that can own your approach across all five measures, connect the dots across quality, clinical, and financial outcomes, and implement a best-in-class action plan can make the difference in getting across the 4-star threshold to unlock bonus payments, boost member retention, and lower total cost of care.





● Your partner in unlocking long-term HOS success

Bold partners with leading Medicare Advantage plans to deliver personalized prevention programs that reduce care costs and improve HOS. Bold augments the work of Stars and Quality teams with a single, end-to-end HOS solution proven to address all five HOS-derived measures through advanced data analytics, advisory support, and deep member engagement.

Learn more at
AGEBOLD.COM/PARTNERSHIPS

