

Approach Rate Interpretation Guidance

For Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) Performance Measurement
Version August 2026

Approach Rate Interpretation Guidance as of August 2026

Reporting Frequency

The Approach Rate is intended to be measured quarterly and annually.

Directionality

The Approach Rate represents the number of approaches made compared to referrals an organ procurement organization (OPO) receives during the time period of interest. OPOs should seek to increase their Approach Rates.

Performance Thresholds

There is not enough information at this time to set a threshold. However, it is expected from pilot studies that OPOs will approach approximately 25 to 40 potential donors per 100 referrals. The Approach Rate may vary across OPOs depending on a number of factors, such as timeliness of referral, health of the population, causes of death, and type of potential donor (Donation After Circulatory Death vs. Donation After Brain Death).

Application of the Measure Results

Approach Rate is intended to be used *internally* by an OPO for performance improvement, process improvement, and training of personnel. Because every OPO operates in a unique environment and limited data have been collected across all OPOs at this time, these data are intended for internal use only and should not be used to compare OPOs.

Exclusions

Exclusions introduce biases. If it is necessary to exclude a case from the calculation, please consult the measure developer.

Cautions and Limitations

- + Lag Time:** There is little to no lag for counts of approaches (the numerator) because they are generated from the OPO Electronic Donor Record, and these data are available in real time, as are the referral data (the denominator).
- + Limited Value of Cross-OPO Comparisons for Ranking Purposes:** Because each OPO's experience and operating environment is different, comparisons across OPOs should be limited to discussing reasons for differences and exploring whether best practices contribute to desired changes in performance. Comparisons should not be used for value-based payment or used alone to make regulatory decisions.
- + Managing High Variability:** Because donation is a rare event and some OPOs have relatively small Donation Service Areas, there may appear to be differences in performance that are not meaningful. If it is necessary to compare OPOs, a test of statistical significance—rather than a direct comparison of percentages or rates—should be used.
- + Combining Measure with Other Measures to Create a Scorecard:** No single measure can fully capture OPO performance. This principle was a key driver behind the development of the OPO measurement framework. However, composite scoring across multiple measures, rankings, and comparisons to the mean and median can obscure important details in performance and limit opportunities to identify, share, and adopt best practices. We therefore recommend evaluating process and outcome measures individually as part of a comprehensive oversight approach that also includes site surveys, quality improvement activities, and other tools that support patient safety, accountability, and continuous improvement.