

2023 Star Measure Tips



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One in a series of tip sheets about HEDIS® and other measures that contribute to star ratings of Medicare Advantage plans.

Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) survey

Member Perception Star Measure

Why is the CAHPS survey important?

Research shows that a positive health care experience for patients is associated with positive clinical outcomes and better business outcomes, including lower medical malpractice risk and less employee turnover.

CAHPS survey questions and provider impact

Practitioners can significantly impact patient responses to CAHPS survey questions. The table below lists some key CAHPS survey questions with tips to ensure patients have a positive experience.

| Measure | Sample survey questions to patient |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Annual flu vaccine | Have you had a flu shot since July 1? |

Tips for success

- Administer flu shot as soon as it's available each fall.
- Eliminate barriers to accessing flu shots and offer multiple options for patients to get their shot (walk-in appointments, flu shot clinics, flu shots at every appointment type if the patient's eligible).
- Promote flu shots through website, patient portal, and phone greeting.

continued

| Measure | Sample survey questions to patient |
|--|---|
| Getting appointments and care quickly | <p>In the last six months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often did you see the person you came to see within 15 minutes of your appointment time? • When you needed care right away, how often did you get care as soon as you needed? • How often did you get an appointment for routine care as soon as you needed? |

Tips for success

- Patients are more tolerant of appointment delays if they know the reasons for the delay. When the practitioner is behind schedule:
 - Front office staff should update patients often and explain the cause for the schedule delay. Offer reasonable expectations of when the patient will be seen.
 - Provide patients with options showing respect for their time (i.e., reschedule, run errands, wait in vehicle).
 - Staff members interacting with the patient should acknowledge the delay with the patient.
- Consider implementing advanced access scheduling (same-day scheduling) or consider:
 - Leaving a few appointment slots open each day for urgent visits, including post-inpatient discharge visits.
 - Offering appointments with a nurse practitioner or physician’s assistant to patients who want to be seen on short notice.
 - Offering virtual appointments, making it convenient for patients to connect with the practice.
 - Scheduling patients for follow-up appointments and annual wellness visits in advance.

| Measure | Sample survey questions to patient |
|--|--|
| Overall rating of health care quality | Using any number between zero and 10, where zero is the worst health care possible and 10 is the best health care possible, what number would you use to rate all your health care in the last six months? |

Tips for success

- Survey your patients, asking how you can improve their health care experience.
- Create a council of patient volunteers to obtain regular feedback on practice processes/procedures.
- Review patient feedback and implement changes for suggested improvements.

| Measure | Sample survey questions to patient |
|--------------------------|--|
| Care coordination | <p>In the last six months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you visited your personal doctor for a scheduled appointment, how often did he or she have your medical records or other information about your care? • When your personal doctor ordered a blood test, X-ray, or other test for you, how often did someone from your personal doctor’s office follow up to give you those results? • When your personal doctor ordered a blood test, X-ray, or other test for you, how often did you get those results as soon as you needed them? • How often did you and your personal doctor talk about all the prescription medicines you were taking? • Did you get the help you needed from your personal doctor’s office to manage your care among these different providers and services? • How often did your personal doctor seem informed and up to date about the care you got from specialists? |

Tips for success

- Before walking in the exam room, review the reason for the visit and determine if you need to follow up on any health issues or concerns from previous visits.
- Implement a system in your office to ensure timely notifications of test results, ask patients how they would prefer to receive test results and communicate clearly when they'll receive test results.
- Utilize or implement a patient portal to share test results and consider automatically releasing the results once they are reviewed by the practitioner.
- Ask your patients if they saw another practitioner since their last visit. If you know patients receive specialty care, discuss their visit and treatment plan, including new prescriptions. Contact specialty provider and request the medical records.
- Complete a medication reconciliation at every visit. Inform the patients when reviewing their medications and use standardized language, such as, "Let's review the medications you're currently taking."

| Measure | Sample survey questions to patient |
|----------------------------|--|
| Getting needed care | In the last six months: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How often did you get an appointment to see a specialist as soon as you needed?• How often was it easy to get the care, tests, or treatment you needed? |

Tips for success

- Set realistic expectations around how long it could take to schedule an appointment with the specialist if the appointment is not urgent.
- If applicable, advise your patient on how you can help secure an appointment sooner if your clinic has an established relationship with a specialist.
- Help the patient understand why you are recommending certain types of care, tests or treatments, especially if the patient requested or asked about other types.
- Review with patients what role they play in securing care, tests or treatment (e.g., scheduling timely appointments with specialists).

Resources

1. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). 2020. "The CAHPS Ambulatory Care Improvement Guide: Practical Strategies for Improving Patient Experience."
ahrq.gov/cahps/quality-improvement/improvement-guide/improvement-guide.html

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