



HCAHPS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) Survey, which is also known as the CAHPS® Hospital Survey, offers consumers an easy way to compare the performance of one hospital with the performance of another when deciding where to receive care. When hospitals choose PRC as their research partner, they commit to enhancing patient perceptions, driving greater loyalty, and improving institutional performance. PRC clients choose to pursue excellence.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE HCAHPS SURVEY?

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) requires acute care hospitals to complete 300 HCAHPS interviews per year to ensure statistical reliability and data integrity. These scores are publicly reported and play a key role in the Value-Based Purchasing program formula, which impacts each hospital's annual Medicare reimbursement.

Critical Access Hospitals and some specialty hospitals have the option of submitting HCAHPS data to CMS. These hospitals generally have smaller populations and are not held to the strict standard of 300 completions per year, although that is still the goal. They also do not participate in Value-Based Purchasing because they're not funded in the same way as acute care hospitals.

Approved vendors, working in partnership with client hospitals, administer the HCAHPS survey only to patients who meet the following eligibility criteria. They must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Be treated as an inpatient with at least one overnight stay in the hospital
- Have a non-psychiatric principal diagnosis at discharge
- **Not** be discharged to a court or law enforcement official, hospice, nursing home, skilled nursing facility, or foreign home address



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IS PRC A CMS-APPROVED HCAHPS SURVEY VENDOR?

Yes, CMS has listed PRC as an HCAHPS survey vendor since the program's introduction in 2006. Over the past 19 years, PRC has served over 500 unique HCAHPS clients.

HOW IS THE HCAHPS SURVEY ADMINISTERED?

1. Every week, clients send files to PRC that contain the records of patients who were discharged during a specific seven-day range.
2. PRC's sample managers filter out ineligible patients and select a random sample of patient records to be prepared for the interviewing department.
3. Specific patient information is automatically inserted into interviewers' scripts when they dial the telephone numbers of patients selected for the study.
 - Selected patients will be called up to five times over a seven-week window.
 - Call attempts occur on different days of the week, at different times of day.
4. Starting with Jan 2025 discharges, PRC now offers a mixed mode survey with initial outreach by email followed with phone calls for non-respondents.
 - Selected patients will receive up to 3 emailed survey invitations prior to phone calls.
5. PRC compiles all of the results and submits the data to QualityNet, in accordance with the prescribed deadline schedule. Hospital contacts are notified when the files have been accepted.

CAN WE CUSTOMIZE THE STANDARD SURVEY TOOL TO ENCOURAGE EXCELLENCE?

Core HCAHPS survey questions do not measure excellence, but hospitals can combine the required core items with customized, hospital-specific questions to more effectively analyze where to invest resources to improve performance. PRC is the only research firm measuring excellence on its five-point scale.

Excellence sets a higher standard than the top box terms used by traditional service vendors (Very Good, Very Satisfied) and is a greater predictor of patient loyalty. The PRC scale is a more effective tool for determining how to allocate resources where they will have the greatest impact.

HOW WILL WE RECEIVE THE SURVEY RESULTS?

PRC client hospitals have real-time access to research results through PRCEasyView.com®, our award-winning online data management tool. EasyView® allows organizations to monitor results as surveys are completed, listen to patient Voices® for immediate feedback, and create custom reports that can be scheduled and sent anywhere within the organization. There's no waiting—as soon as PRC receives a completed survey, the data is available for reporting, empowering hospitals with the insights they need to take action quickly..

CMS will generate Preview Reports of publicly reported and Value-Based Purchasing information through its QualityNet website, where administrative users can retrieve reports showing HCAHPS and clinical scores for their hospitals to gauge their performance before it becomes publicly available.

WHAT DOES THE HCAHPS SURVEY MEASURE?

The HCAHPS survey consists of 32 core questions that capture patients' perceptions of the care they received in the hospital and gather general demographic information about the patients themselves. Patient responses are reported across the 9 dimensions listed to the right. Please note that due to survey changes HCAHPS dimensions are in a period of transition and this image shows the dimensions after the transition is completed, starting with calendar year 2028 discharges.

HCAHPS Dimensions

Communication with Nurses	3 questions (Always – Never)
Communication with Doctors	3 questions (Always – Never)
Responsiveness of Hospital Staff	2 questions (Always – Never)
Communication about Medicines	2 questions (Always – Never)
Discharge Information	2 questions (Yes - No)
Overall Rating of Hospital	1 Question (0 - 10)
Care Coordination	3 questions (Always – Never)
Restfulness of Hospital Environment	3 questions (Always – Never)
Cleanliness and Information about Symptoms	2 questions (Always – Never)



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PRC Product Lines



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& CAHPS**



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WILL THE RESULTS BE PUBLICLY REPORTED?

The HCAHPS dimensions are published on the CMS Care Compare website, (www.medicare.gov/care-compare/) every quarter and are displayed as four rolling quarters of patient data. Consumers may use this website to select neighboring hospitals and evaluate the elements of care most important to them before selecting a hospital. By default, the website shows the percentage of patients who provided the top-box response for each composite and an HCAHPS Summary Star Rating for the hospital. Digging further, users can see the percentage of all response options and the Star Ratings for each HCAHPS dimension.

ABOUT PRC

Since 1980, PRC has helped more than 2,800 healthcare organizations achieve their research objectives by collecting and analyzing timely, accurate, and reliable feedback from patients, employees, physicians, and the community at large.

PRC's high-quality survey research, analytics tools, and coaching give voice to healthcare organizations, patients, and the community as a whole. Leading the standards for healthcare market research, PRC partners with organizations to support their efforts in becoming better places for patients to be treated, physicians to practice medicine, and employees to work.

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