

What's Available for the CAHPS® Health Plan Survey 5.0

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Documents Available for the CAHPS Health Plan Surveys

This document is part of a comprehensive set of instructional materials that address implementing the Health Plan Survey, analyzing the data, and reporting the results. All documents are available on the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's Web site: www.ahrq.gov/cahps. For assistance in accessing these documents, please contact the CAHPS Help Line at 800-492-9261 or cahps1@westat.com.

For descriptions of these documents, refer to: *What's Available for the CAHPS Health Plan Survey 5.0*.

Questionnaires

- *CAHPS Health Plan Survey: Overview of the Questionnaires*
- *Health Plan Survey 5.0* (Adult and Child, English and Spanish)
 - *Medicaid Survey 5.0*
 - *Commercial Survey 5.0*

Supplemental Items

The CAHPS team is currently reviewing all supplemental items for the 5.0 version of the Health Plan Survey. As the supplemental items are finalized, they are published on the Web site at <http://ahrq.gov/cahps/surveys-guidance/item-sets/index.html>.

- *About the Item Set for People with Mobility Impairments*
- *About the Item Set for Children with Chronic Conditions*

Survey Administration Guidelines

- *Preparing a Questionnaire Using the CAHPS Health Plan Survey*
- *Fielding the CAHPS Health Plan Survey*
- *Sample Notification Letters and Emails for the CAHPS Health Plan Survey*
- *Sample Telephone Script for the CAHPS Health Plan Survey*
- *Translating CAHPS Surveys*

Data Analysis Program and Guidelines

- *CAHPS Analysis Program (SAS)*
- *Instructions for Analyzing Data from CAHPS Surveys*

Reporting Measures and Guidelines

- *Patient Experience Measures from the CAHPS Health Plan Survey*

What Materials Are Available?

The following materials are available to support users in implementing the 5.0 version of the CAHPS Health Plan Survey:

- The surveys for adults and children enrolled in commercial and Medicaid plans
- Supplemental items that you can add to your survey
- Guidance on preparing a survey that meets your needs
- Guidance on administering the survey
- Guidance on preparing the survey data for analysis
- SAS®-based analysis programs
- Instructions for analyzing survey results
- Guidance on reporting survey results

Questionnaires

The CAHPS Health Plan Survey asks adult enrollees and parents of children enrolled in commercial and Medicaid plans to report on and rate their experiences with the health plan. Several versions of the survey are currently available in both English and Spanish:

- Adult Medicaid Survey 5.0 and 4.0
- Child Medicaid Survey 5.0 and 4.0
- Adult Commercial Survey 5.0 and 4.0
- Child Commercial Survey 5.0 and 4.0

The Adult Survey is designed for enrollees who are 18 or older. The Child Survey is meant for parents or guardians of enrollees who are 17 or younger. Both are available in English and Spanish.

Each questionnaire consists of a standard set of core items that must be administered. Survey users can also incorporate optional supplemental items to capture information about enrollees' experiences in specific areas.

The document called *CAHPS Health Plan Survey: Overview of the Questionnaires* reviews the topics covered by the survey and explains differences between the 5.0 and 4.0 versions of the survey.

Selecting a version: If you will be submitting the results of a Medicaid Survey to the CAHPS Database, which calculates benchmarks to facilitate comparisons of survey results across survey users, you must administer version 5.0. Learn about the CAHPS Database at <https://cahpsdatabase.ahrq.gov/default.aspx?ab=1>. If you are planning to submit survey results to the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), please contact NCQA to determine which version(s) they will accept.

Supplemental Items

Supplemental items that survey users may add to the questionnaires for adults and children are also available in both English and Spanish. These items cover a variety of topics, such as experiences with prescription medicines and claims processing.

The CAHPS team is in the process of reviewing all supplemental items. As subsets of items for the 5.0 version of the Health Plan Survey are reviewed and finalized, they are posted to the CAHPS Web site. You can look at and download the available supplemental items by topic at www.ahrq.gov/cahps/surveys-guidance/index.html.

Survey users may also consider the supplemental items developed for the 4.0 version of the survey. For help in adapting and inserting those items into the 5.0 version of the survey, please contact the CAHPS Help Line at cahps1@westat.com or 800-492-9261.

The extensive list of supplemental items includes two sets of items that were designed to be fielded together to address specific aspects of enrollees' experiences with care. You can download documents that describe the development, content, and use of the item sets; these documents will also be updated as the item sets are refined:

- *About the Item Set for People with Mobility Impairments*
- *About the Item Set for Children with Chronic Conditions*

Survey Administration Guidelines

A number of documents are available to help guide survey users through the process of administering the survey:

- *Preparing a Questionnaire Using the CAHPS Health Plan Survey* explains how to prepare a questionnaire that meets your needs by adding supplemental items to the core items. It also provides guidance on translating and formatting the questionnaire.
- *Fielding the CAHPS Health Plan Survey* provides guidelines and protocols for constructing a sample frame, selecting the sample, administering the survey, collecting data, calculating response rates, and determining whether a survey is complete.
- *Translating CAHPS Surveys* provides recommendations for translating CAHPS instruments and selecting translators. The recommendations aim to standardize the translation approach and ensure the quality of translations.
- *Sample Notification Letters and Emails for the CAHPS Health Plan Survey* provides instructions for preparing and sending letters and emails about the survey to respondents. It also offers sample letters and emails in English and Spanish that can be adapted as needed.

- *Sample Telephone Script for the CAHPS Health Plan Survey* offers a template for administering the survey over the phone in English or Spanish.

The usefulness of a CAHPS Health Plan Survey as a tool for comparing and assessing health plan products depends on your fidelity to the guidelines presented in these documents. In order to compare your results to those of other survey users and to report comparative information based on the data from the survey, it is critical that you follow the guidelines as closely as possible. If you must deviate from these guidelines, please first consult with the CAHPS Help Line (cahps1@westat.com or 1-800-492-9261).

Data Analysis Programs and Guidelines

To support consistent analyses across CAHPS surveys, all users have access to a set of 10 SAS files that comprise the CAHPS Analysis Program, also known as the CAHPS macro. This macro allows you to analyze and statistically adjust the survey data in order to make valid comparisons among health plans.

The CAHPS Consortium updates the macro occasionally to address issues raised by users. Before you use the macro to analyze survey results, please contact the CAHPS Help Line (cahps1@westat.com or 1-800-492-9261) to confirm that you have the most recent version.

Instructions for Analyzing Data from the CAHPS Survey explains how to use the CAHPS macro to analyze the survey data for reporting purposes. It discusses how the analysis programs work and how CAHPS survey sponsors and vendors can use the programs to interpret the results of their survey.

Submitting Results to the CAHPS Health Plan Survey Database

Users of the CAHPS Health Plan Survey can submit their results without charge to the CAHPS Database to get comparisons of their scores to State, regional, and national benchmarks. It is especially important for those wishing to participate in the CAHPS Database to follow the technical guidelines provided in these documents; the CAHPS Database will accept submissions only from users that followed official CAHPS administration protocols.

- For information about the CAHPS Database, visit <https://cahpsdatabase.ahrq.gov>.
- For information about submitting your results to the CAHPS Health Plan Survey Database, visit <https://cahpsdatabase.ahrq.gov/HPDSS/login.aspx>.

Reporting Measures and Guidelines

Patient Experience Measures from the CAHPS Health Plan Survey lists the measures for analysis and reporting purpose. Like other CAHPS surveys, the CAHPS Health Plan Survey uses two types of measures:

- Composite measures, which summarize performance on two or more related survey items
- Global ratings, which ask respondents to rate some aspect of their care on a scale of 0 to 10

Tables in the appendix show which items are included in each of the composite measures.

For More Information

The CAHPS Web site offers descriptive information on the history, development, status, and use of the CAHPS Health Plan Survey, including the supplemental item sets. Visitors also have access to –

- comparative data for this survey,
- frequently asked questions (FAQs),
- relevant presentations (such as Webcasts and podcasts), and
- guidance related to improving patients' experiences with care and reporting survey results to consumers.