CAHPS® - Patient Satisfaction Survey

What is a CAHPS® survey?

The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) surveys are given to patients by mail or phone to collect information about their experiences with their providers. By revealing various aspects of care from doctors, nurses and staff in hospitals, physician practices and other healthcare facilities, CAHPS® is an important tool to advance scientific understanding of patients’ experiences.

How can the CAHPS® survey help to improve patient experience?

The results of the CAHPS® survey can be used to improve the delivery of services, identify key areas to provide better clinical care and elevate the standards of patient-provider relationships.

Who administers the CAHPS® surveys?

The CAHPS® surveys are administered annually by the New York State Department of Health and by NCQA certified CAHPS® vendors to ensure neutral and credible results.

Which product lines are surveyed?

At Affinity Health Plan, members enrolled in Medicaid and Essential Plan products participate in the CAHPS® surveys.

When is the CAHPS® survey conducted?

The CAHPS® survey is conducted during different times of the year. The CAHPS® survey for Medicaid begins in September and ends in January, while the CAHPS® survey for Essential Plan is conducted from March through May.

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*Adult and Child population is alternated on a yearly basis

What is the CAHPS® survey process?

1. The initial CAHPS® questionnaire packet is mailed to participants.
2. If the participant does not return the completed survey, a reminder postcard and/or second questionnaire packet is sent to the participant.
3. Non-respondents will be called on the phone for a final follow-up.
**Getting Needed Care**

This category measures the patient’s experience with:
- Ease of receiving the necessary tests and/or treatments at your office or clinic.
- Getting an appointment to see a specialist when needed.

Sample questions that may be in the CAHPS® survey:
- How often was it easy to get the care, tests, or treatment you needed?
- How often did you get an appointment to see a specialist as soon as you needed?

Helpful tips and recommendations:
- Offer open access scheduling (e.g., same day scheduling or extended hours) and educate your patients on the various methods of booking an appointment with your office or clinic. Assist your patients in coordinating their care to a specialist, if necessary.

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**Getting Care Quickly**

This category measures the patient’s experience with:
- Getting the necessary care when needed at your office or clinic.
- How soon the patient received care at your office or clinic.

Sample questions that may be found in the CAHPS® survey:
- 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 a check-up or routine care at a doctor’s office or clinic as soon as you needed?

Helpful tips and recommendations:
- Ensure your patients are seen within 15 minutes of arrival to your office or clinic.
- Provide frequent updates to your patients regarding long wait times.
- Provide a timeframe for when your patients can expect their test results.
Shared Decision-Making

This category measures whether the patient had a discussion with the provider regarding:

- The reasons for taking or not taking a medication.
- Starting or stopping a prescription and what was best for the patient.

Sample questions that may be found in the CAHPS® survey:

- Did you and a doctor or other health provider talk about the reasons you might want to take a medication?
- When you talked about starting or stopping a prescription medicine, did a doctor or other health provider ask you what was best for you?

Helpful tips and recommendations:

- Actively listen to your patients.
- Be transparent when discussing your patient’s test results and the available treatment options.
- Allow your patients to provide their input in the decision-making process.

Communication

This category measures the patient’s satisfaction with:

- Providers communicating with the patient that was easily understandable.
- Providers listening to the patient.
- Providers showing respect to the patient’s input and spending enough time with the patient.

Sample questions that may be found in the CAHPS® survey:

- How often did your personal doctor explain things in a way that was easy to understand?
- How often did your personal doctor listen carefully to you?
- How often did your personal doctor show respect for what you had to say?
- How often did your personal doctor spend enough time with you?

Helpful tips and recommendations:

- Reduce the use of medical jargon when communicating with your patients. Some patients may not understand complex medical terminologies.
- Be respectful toward your patients and allow them enough time to express their concerns.
Health Promotion & Education

This category measures whether the patient had a discussion with the provider regarding:

- Quitting smoking or using tobacco and the need for medication to assist with quitting smoking or using tobacco.
- Healthy eating habits and physical activity as a method of disease prevention.

Sample questions that may be found in the CAHPS® survey:

- How often were you advised to quit smoking or using tobacco by a doctor or other health provider in your plan?
- How often was medication recommended or discussed by a doctor or health provider to assist you with quitting smoking or using tobacco?
- How often did your doctor or health provider discuss or provide methods and strategies other than medication to assist you with quitting smoking or using tobacco?

Helpful tips and recommendations:

- Remind your patients of preventative screenings, which may be covered under their health plan.
- Provide any necessary health educational materials.