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# **Website User and Data Submission Manual Version 12.0**

**Home Health Care CAHPS® Survey**

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**January 2024**

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# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Overview of This Manual**

This manual describes the functions of the Home Health Care CAHPS®<sup>1</sup> (HHCAHPS) Survey website and provides instructions and guidelines on the mechanics of submitting survey data to the HHCAHPS Data Center. Procedures for sampling and constructing HHCAHPS data files—including the variables that must be submitted for each sample month and the format of the monthly data files—are provided in the *HHCAHPS Survey Protocols and Guidelines Manual*. Users of the HHCAHPS website and approved survey vendors are strongly urged to review and be knowledgeable about the protocols and procedures described in the *Protocols and Guidelines Manual* before reviewing this manual.

Section 1 of this manual presents an overview of the manual's layout and content. Section 2 describes the public and private functions and links on the project website. System and security requirements are described in Section 3. Section 4 contains information about the template that survey vendors will prepare and use to submit HHCAHPS Survey data to the Data Center. Step-by-step instructions for submitting data files are provided in Section 5, along with a description of each of the reports available to users relating to data submission. Section 6 contains information specific to home health agencies (HHAs) on registering for user credentials, authorizing a vendor, viewing data submission reports, and managing their user account. It also contains a list of frequently asked questions and answers to be used as a resource by HHAs.


## **1.2 Overview of the HHCAHPS Survey**

The HHCAHPS Survey is designed to measure the experiences of people receiving home health care from Medicare-certified HHAs. The survey is conducted by multiple survey vendors working under contract with HHAs and involves ongoing data collection with monthly and quarterly data submissions. Survey vendors prepare and submit data files to the HHCAHPS Survey Data Center, which is operated and maintained by staff at RTI International, the organization assisting the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) with coordinating the national implementation of the HHCAHPS Survey. RTI project staff members are hereafter referred to as the "Coordination Team."

Survey vendors that wish to conduct the HHCAHPS Survey on behalf of an HHA must apply to become an approved HHCAHPS Survey vendor and meet specific business requirements, available on the HHCAHPS website under the "For Vendors" menu tab. Survey vendors must also complete the HHCAHPS Survey Introductory self-paced training and all Update training sessions provided by CMS and be certified after the introductory


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<sup>1</sup> CAHPS® is a registered trademark of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, a U.S. Government agency.

training. Approved survey vendors must follow all required protocols when they conduct the HHCAHPS Survey as described in the *HHCAHPS Survey Protocols and Guidelines Manual*, which is located on the project website at <https://homehealthcahps.org> .

### **1.3 Overview of the HHCAHPS Survey Website**

The HHCAHPS Survey website is a secure interactive website with public and private sections; it is the official website for the HHCAHPS Survey. In addition to housing the data submission tool, the website also serves as the main means of communicating information about the HHCAHPS Survey to survey vendors and to HHAs. It contains the *Protocols and Guidelines Manual*, the survey questionnaire (mail and telephone survey versions), and the HHCAHPS Survey supplemental questions. It also contains online forms, including the Exceptions Request Form, the Discrepancy Notification Report Form, and the Vendor Application Form, and is the means by which HHAs authorize survey vendors to conduct the HHCAHPS Survey on their behalf.

To ensure the security of interactions, the website has two levels of access: public and private. The public side of the website is located at <https://homehealthcahps.org/> . Approved HHCAHPS Survey vendors and HHAs use both the public and private sections of the website. On the public side, there is a login link that allows only authorized users to gain access to the private sections of the site. Once logged into the private side, survey vendor and HHA users can carry out administrative functions according to their assigned roles. Section 2 of this manual describes the functions and links on both the public and private sections of the website in detail.

The Coordination Team provides survey vendors with technical assistance and support for data submissions to the Data Center. Survey vendors can contact the Coordination Team by sending an email or by calling the project's toll-free telephone number shown below.

Project email address: [hhcahps@rti.org](mailto:hhcahps@rti.org)

Toll-free telephone number: 1-866-354-0985

The Coordination Team operates from 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time Monday through Friday. Technical assistance is provided until 8:00 P.M. Eastern time during peak data upload periods.



## **2. The HHCAHPS Survey Website**

### **2.1 Overview**

This section provides an overview of the functions of the HHCAHPS Survey website and information on how to access and navigate the public and private sections of the website. Additional links or changes to the HHCAHPS project website will be made as needed throughout national implementation. Therefore, the links described in the following sections reflect those available at the time this manual was prepared and are subject to change. Changes to the project website will be posted on the Home page under “Recent Announcements.”

### **2.2 The Public Links on the HHCAHPS Survey Website**

The website defaults to the Home page, shown in **Figure 2.1**, where users can navigate to menu options that provide information and guidance in completing specific tasks. The Home page contains a welcome message that includes brief information about the HHCAHPS Survey. In that message, there are hyperlinks to other pages that provide more specific information on the history of the survey and how to become an approved vendor. In addition, a menu bar is displayed near the top of the Home page. Each menu has its own dropdown options to allow users to perform various functions and access more information. Public menu items include the following:

- General Information
- Training
- Forms for Vendors
- Survey and Protocols
- Data Submission
- For HHAs

Also provided on the Home page is a “Quick Links” box (**Figure 2.2**).

**Figure 2.1 HHCAHPS Survey Home Page (Public Website)**



**Figure 2.2 Quick Links Box**



The Quick Links box allows direct access to more commonly used links and includes the following topics:

- Star Ratings Information—links to a page containing information about the HHCAHPS Patient Survey Star Ratings methodology and FAQs.

- Approved Survey Vendors—a list of survey vendors that have been approved to administer the HHCAHPS Survey.
- About Home Health Care CAHPS—provides a quick reference to basic background information on the survey.
- Contact Us/Other Links—provides contact information for the Coordination Team and Technical Support and other links of interest.

Each of the menus on the Home page is described in the following sections.

### 2.2.1 General Information Menu

**Figure 2.3** displays the General Information menu.

**Figure 2.3 General Information Menu**

Home	General Information	Training	Forms for Vendors	Survey and Protocols	Data Submission	For HHAs
	About Home Health Care CAHPS Survey					
	CTQR Newsletters					
	Chartbook					
	Mode Experiment					
	Vendor Application Process					
	Approved Survey Vendors					
	Archived Publicly Reported Data					
	Calculating PR Measures					
	Contact Us / Other Links					
	Announcements					

The General Information menu includes the following dropdown links:

- About Home Health Care CAHPS Survey—provides background information on the project.
- CTQR Newsletters—links to a page where the Coordination Team Quarterly Review (CTQR) Newsletters are posted.
- Chartbook—links to a page with a Chartbook of HHCAHPS Survey results by state and CMS Region and an accompanying Excel data file.
- Mode Experiment—provides information about the HHCAHPS Survey mode experiment, which CMS and the Coordination Team conducted with a sample of home health patients in fall 2009.
- Vendor Application Process—describes the process to become an Approved Vendor.

- Approved Survey Vendors—provides the list of survey vendors that have been approved to administer the HHCAHPS Survey.
- Archived Publicly Reported Data—provides links to publicly reported state and national averages, publicly reported HHA-level data (as reported in the Provider Data Catalog on <https://data.cms.gov/provider-data/>), star ratings cut points, and linearized patient mix adjusters. **Figure 2.4** presents a screenshot of this page.
- Calculating PR Measures—links to a document that provides steps for calculating the global ratings and composite scores for the publicly reported HHCAHPS Survey measures.
- Announcements—provides updated news about the survey, the website, or other information.
- Contact Us/Other Links—provides contact information for the Coordination Team and Technical Support and other links of interest.

**Figure 2.4 Archived Publicly Reported Data Menu**

Home Health Care CAHPS Survey

The official website for news and information about the HHCAHPS Survey

Home

General Information

Training

Forms for Vendors








































































































Survey and Protocols

Data Submission

For HHAs

General Information / Archived Publicly Reported Data

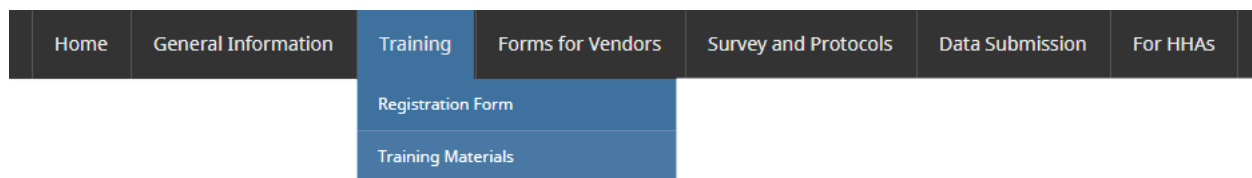
Archived Publicly Reported Data

	State and National Averages	HHA-level Data	Star Ratings Cut points	Linearized Adjustment Factors
January 2022 - December 2022				
October 2021 - September 2022				
July 2021 - June 2022				
April 2021 - March 2022				
January 2021 - December 2021				
October 2020 - September 2021				
July 2020 - June 2021				
January 2019 - December 2019				
October 2018 - September 2019				
July 2018 - June 2019				
April 2018 - March 2019				
January 2018 - December 2018				
October 2017 - September 2018				
July 2017 - June 2018				
April 2017 - March 2018				
January 2017 - December 2017				
October 2016 - September 2017				
July 2016 - June 2017				
April 2016 - March 2017				
January 2016 - December 2016				
October 2015 - September 2016				
July 2015 - June 2016				
April 2015 - March 2016				
January 2015 - December 2015				
October 2014 - September 2015				
July 2014 - June 2015				

### 2.2.2 Training Menu

The links under the Training menu, shown in **Figure 2.5**, are provided below. The “Registration Form” is an online form that organizations interested in reviewing the self-paced Introduction to the HHCAHPS Survey Training or attending the annual HHCAHPS Survey Vendor Update Webinar training session must complete. It provides details about when the Update Webinar training session will take place. The link to the Registration Form will be removed as soon as registration for the Update Webinar training session closes. The “Training Materials” link provides the agendas and slides that can be downloaded and printed, if desired.

**Figure 2.5 Training Menu**



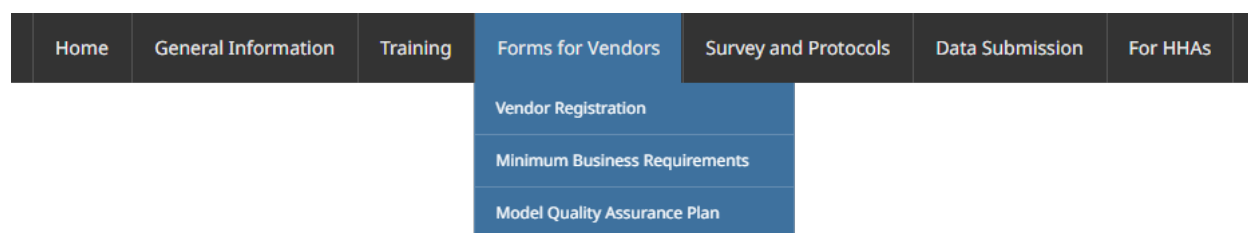
As noted in Section 1 of this manual, for organizations seeking approval status, the survey vendor’s designated HHCAHPS Survey Project Manager is required to complete the self-paced Introduction to the HHCAHPS Survey Training. Currently approved survey vendors are required to attend all Update Webinar trainings. As noted above, all organizations and individuals planning to participate in any of the training sessions must complete the online training registration form.

When the Coordination Team receives a completed registration form, the project website will send an automatic email message to acknowledge and confirm the registration. A second email will be sent to survey vendors only (not to vendor subcontractors, HHAs, or other nonsurvey vendor registrants) prior when the self-paced Introduction to HHCAHPS Survey training is available that will contain a link with an embedded unique identifier that the survey vendor’s HHCAHPS Project Manager must use to complete the certification after the training. The certification will be posted on the HHCAHPS Survey website and made available soon after the Update Webinar training.

### 2.2.3 Forms for Vendors Menu

The Forms for Vendors menu (**Figure 2.6**) includes a link to the “Vendor Registration” form, the “Minimum Business Requirements” (MBRs), and the “Model Quality Assurance Plan” (QAP).

**Figure 2.6 Forms for Vendors Menu**



The “Vendor Registration” link allows vendors to gain access to the Vendor Application Form, an online form that must be completed by vendors interested in becoming an approved HHCAHPS Survey vendor. Vendors must first register for login credentials before they can access the Vendor Application Form, which is housed on the private side of the website. Once a vendor has been approved by CMS, the Coordination Team mails the vendor’s Survey Administrator (as named in the Vendor Application Form) a Consent Form that must be completed, signed, notarized, and sent to the Coordination Team so that the vendor can be granted access to the rest of the private links on the website. The second link under this menu, the “Minimum Business Requirements” document, contains the initial set of CMS requirements that organizations interested in becoming approved survey vendors must meet to apply for approval. The third link, the “Model Quality Assurance Plan,” is a sample QAP outline that approved survey vendors should use as a guide when completing their own QAP.

#### **2.2.4 Survey and Protocols Menu**

The Survey and Protocols menu (see **Figure 2.7**) includes forms and materials that approved HHCAHPS Survey vendors will use to administer the HHCAHPS Survey. The forms and materials available at this link are described below.

- *Protocols and Guidelines Manual*—provides guidance and standard protocols for conducting the HHCAHPS Survey.
- Questionnaire—contains links to the HHCAHPS mail survey instrument, in various languages (English, Spanish, simplified and traditional Chinese, Russian, Vietnamese, and Armenian).
- Supplemental Questions—provides additional questions that vendors may use if an HHA desires.
- Consent to Share Responses—provides text for vendors to use if HHAs wish to add a question to allow vendors to share identified responses with the HHA (assuming that the respondent consents).
- Survey Composites—identifies measures containing two or more questions about a related topic that are reported together. The HHCAHPS Survey results that will be publicly reported will be the composite scores, not percentages for individual survey questions.
- Sample Letters—provides sample text for letters to send with the mail survey questionnaire.

- Telephone Scripts—contains scripts for telephone interviewers to use.
- FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) for Interviewers—provides answers for many of the common questions posed to telephone interviewers by sample members.
- OMB Disclosure Notice—contains the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) disclosure statement that must be printed on either the mail survey cover letter or the front or back of the mail survey.

All of the survey administration materials are provided in multiple languages (at this time, English, Spanish, simplified and traditional Chinese, Russian, Vietnamese, and Armenian versions of the mail survey instrument are available; the telephone scripts are available in all of those languages except Chinese and Armenian).

**Figure 2.7 Survey and Protocols Menu**

Home	General Information	Training	Forms for Vendors	Survey and Protocols	Data Submission	For HHAs
				Protocols & Guidelines Manual		
				Questionnaire		
				Supplemental Questions		
				Consent to Share Responses		
				Survey Composites		
				Sample Letters		
				Telephone Scripts		
				FAQs for Interviewers		
				OMB Disclosure Notice		

### 2.2.5 The Data Submission Menu

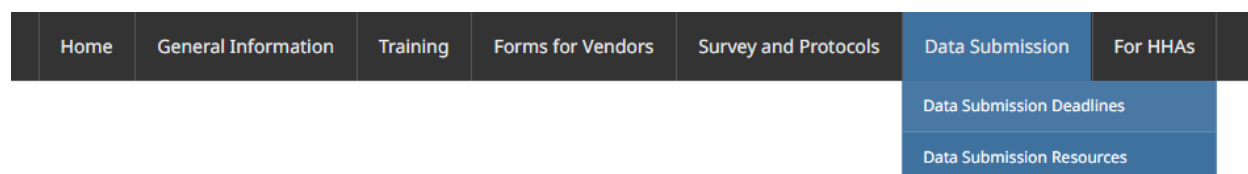
**Figure 2.8** shows the links to pages containing data submission forms/materials that are available on the public side of the website (additional links under this menu are accessible on the private site for credentialed users). The following is a brief description of the public links under the Data Submission Menu.

- Data Submission Deadlines Page—shows the deadline for uploading HHCAHPS Survey data files for each of the next four upcoming calendar year quarters.
- Data Submission Resources Page—takes users to a page containing the documents listed below:
- User Manual—The *Website User and Data Submission Manual* provides information on the functions and uses of the HHCAHPS Survey website, including both public and private links available to vendors and HHAs.



- Extensible markup language (XML) File Layout—specifies the format of HHCAHPS Survey data files.
- XML Sample File—contains a sample data file that survey vendors can use to construct the monthly sample frames for the HHCAHPS Survey.
- XML File Schema—provides the XML Schema Definition (XSD) file that vendors can use to construct or validate their XML files.

**Figure 2.8 Data Submission Menu**



Please refer to the *HHCAHPS Survey Protocols and Guidelines Manual* for more information about data submission deadlines and sample file layouts. The data submission deadlines are posted on the project website at <https://homehealthcahps.org/Data-Submission/Data-Submission-Deadlines> and are updated regularly.

Quarter and Year	Data Submission Deadline
Quarter 4, 2023	April 18, 2024
Quarter 1, 2024	July 18, 2024
Quarter 2, 2024	October 17, 2024
Quarter 3, 2024	January 16, 2025
Quarter 4, 2024	April 17, 2025

## 2.3 The Private Links on the HHCAHPS Survey Website

The HHCAHPS Survey private website menu options differ slightly from those on the public website. To log into the secure portion of the website, all users must first establish a registered account. More information about registering for an account is provided on the website and in **Chapter XI** in the *HHCAHPS Survey Protocols and Guidelines Manual*, which can be obtained from the public side of the website. Several of the menus on the navigation bar include additional links that allow users to perform various functions and provide information specific to authorized vendors and HHAs. The remainder of this section is focused on survey vendor users, with detailed private links information for HHAs provided in Section 6.

### **2.3.1 Survey Vendor Dashboard**

The HHCAHPS website includes custom dashboard views for survey vendor and HHA users. Each dashboard features relevant links to the user. **Figure 2.9** shows the Vendor Dashboard view once a user has selected the Dashboard menu.

The “Dashboard” view provides survey vendors with the status of key elements of the Vendor Approval Process—including the status of and links to their Vendor Application Form, HHCAHPS Survey Administrator Consent Form, and overall approval status; links to both data submission reports and reports showing the HHAs that have authorized them; a User Access console, showing administrative users within the organization; and Recent Announcements.

**Figure 2.9 Vendor Dashboard View**

**Home Health Care CAHPS Survey**  
The official website for news and information about the HHCAHPS Survey

Vendor Dashboard

### Vendor Approval Process

	Item	Status	Resource
✓	Vendor Registration	Complete	
✓	Vendor Application	Complete	<a href="#">Edit/View Vendor Application</a>
✓	Consent Form	Complete	<a href="#">Consent Form</a>
✓	Vendor Approval Status	Approved	

### Data Submission

	Authorizations	
	Number of agencies with Submissions	2
	Number of agencies with Passed Submissions *	2

\* This number only includes data submissions that have passed ALL validations.

[Data Submission Reports](#)  
[Data Submission Tool](#)

### User Access

Administrative Users

Backup Admin
Test Vendor

[Manage User Console](#)

### Recent Announcements

[2019 HHCAHPS Survey Chartbook and Accompanying Data File Available](#)  
Posted on: Wednesday, August 7, 2019

[Public Reporting Results Refreshed on Home Health Compare: Archived Publicly Reported Data Available on HHCAHPS Website](#)  
Posted on: Wednesday, July 24, 2019

[CY19 Quarter 1 Data Submission Deadline Reminder: One Week Left](#)  
Posted on: Thursday, July 11, 2019

[CY19 Qtr. 1 Data Submission Deadline Reminder](#)  
Posted on: Wednesday, July 3, 2019

[HHCAHPS Coordination Team Quarterly Review \(CTQR\) Newsletter – July 2019 Edition](#)  
Posted on: Monday, July 1, 2019

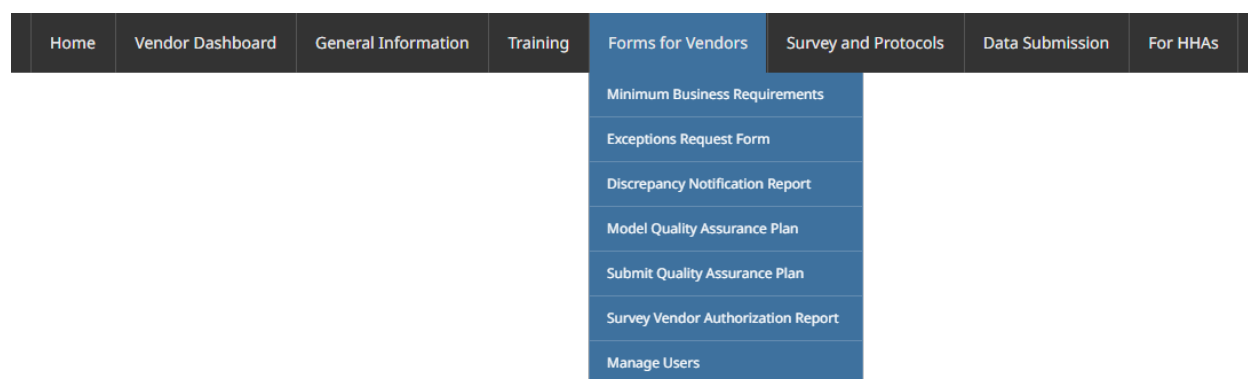
### 2.3.2 Forms for Vendors—Private Links

**Figure 2.10** displays the links under the Forms for Vendors menu that appear when an approved survey vendor user is logged into the site.

- Exceptions Request Form—approved survey vendors must complete to request a planned deviation from standard survey administration protocols.
- Discrepancy Notification Report Form—approved survey vendors must complete and submit for any unplanned deviations from survey administration protocol.

- Model Quality Assurance Plan—as previously noted, this is an outline that vendors should use to develop their own QAP for submission to the Coordination Team.
- Submit Quality Assurance Plan—an online tool that approved survey vendors will use to submit (and subsequently update) their QAP, within 6 weeks after their first HHCAHPS data file is submitted to the HHCAHPS Data Center.
- Survey Vendor Authorization Report—allows survey vendors to see which HHAs have authorized them to submit data.
- Manage Users—allows the vendor’s HHCAHPS Survey Administrator to create, edit and remove backup and non-administrative users.

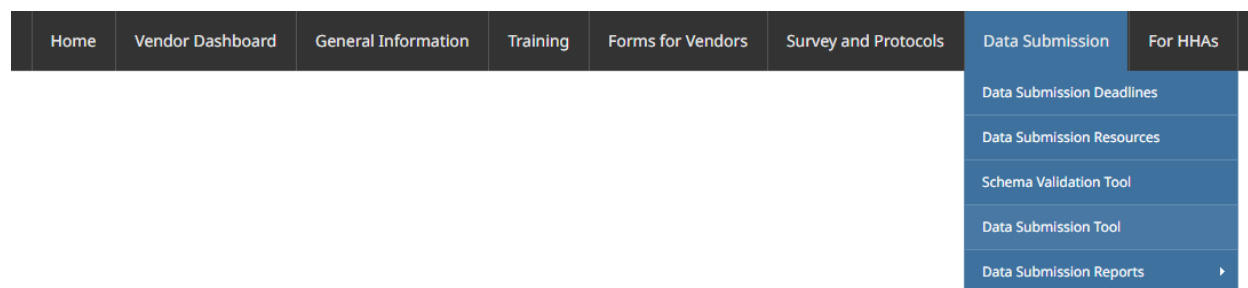
**Figure 2.10 Forms for Vendors Menu—Private Side**



### 2.3.3 Data Submission Menu—Private Links

**Figure 2.11** shows both the public and private links under the Data Submission menu. There are three private links under this menu—the “Schema Validation Tool” link, the “Data Submission Tool” link, and the “Data Submissions Reports” link.

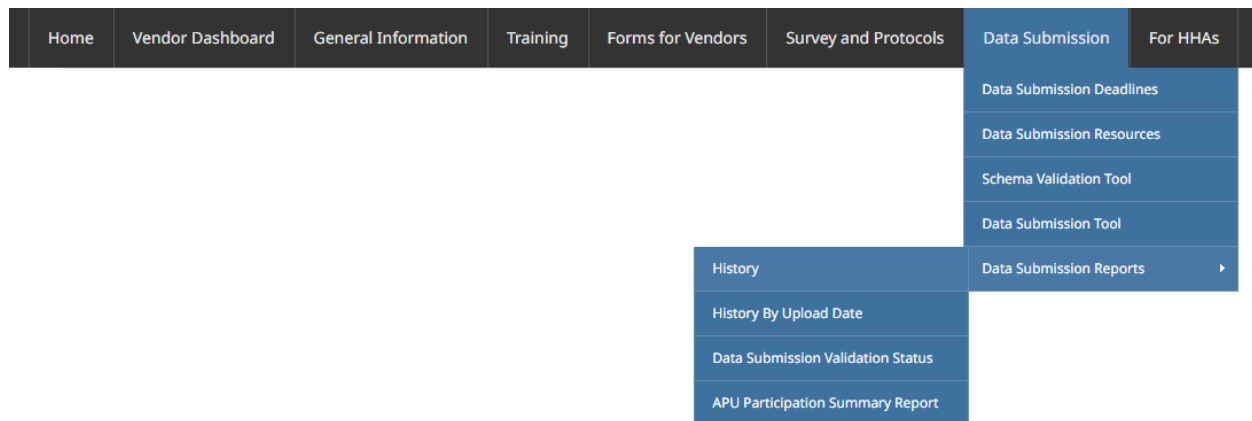
**Figure 2.11 Submit Data Menu—Private Side**



The “Schema Validation Tool” link allows the vendor to test their file formatting prior to submitting their files to the HHCAHPS Data Center. The “Data Submission Tool” link takes the user to a page where survey vendors browse for, select, and then upload their monthly

XML files to the Data Center. The last link under the Data Submission menu is the “Data Submission Reports” link (see **Figure 2.12**). There are four links under the Data Submission Reports menu item. These four reports provide the vendor with historical information about its data file submissions. Please refer to **Chapter XI** of the *HHCAHPS Survey Protocols and Guidelines Manual* for a description and use of these reports. The “Helpful Submission Tips” available via the “Data Submission Resources” link provides information to help approved survey vendors avoid problems when uploading files containing HHCAHPS Survey data.

**Figure 2.12 View Data Submission Reports Menu—Private Side**



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### 3. System and Security Requirements for the HHCAHPS Website

#### 3.1 Overview of System and Security Requirements

Approved survey vendors submit or upload HHCAHPS Survey data to the HHCAHPS Data Center through a link on the HHCAHPS Survey website. This chapter provides information on the minimum technology required for the upload process. To use the HHCAHPS Survey website vendors must have, at a minimum, the following equipment and software:

- Web browser, such as Microsoft Edge, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, or Apple Safari
- An Internet Service Provider
- Adobe Acrobat Reader (available for download from the Adobe website, <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>, at no cost)

#### 3.2 HHCAHPS Website Data Security

HHCAHPS Survey vendors can submit only **de-identified data files** to the HHCAHPS Data Center. Although only de-identified data are submitted, ensuring data security was a major concern and consideration during the design and development of the HHCAHPS Survey website. The website balances a straightforward and flexible design with the need to protect the privacy and security of HHCAHPS Survey data. Data are encrypted whenever vendors upload their data files. The Coordination Team has implemented policies and procedures to ensure that all communications and transfers are secure. These measures include:

- requiring that each individual provided access to the private links on the website has a secure login to the private side of the website;
- requiring users to create and use a **strong** password;
- using Transport Layer Security (TLS) technology to encrypt all communication between the browser and server using the website; and
- carefully monitoring uploads, upload attempts, and website use on an ongoing basis.

When users log into the private links on the website, the system automatically checks and authenticates their credentials before allowing access. This ensures that only authorized users log into the system.

In addition to allowing only credentialed users access to the private links on the website, all electronic data are stored behind a firewall in a password-protected network. All data traffic between the vendor's network and the Internet pass through this single connection point. This process provides the same level of protection and monitoring to all systems connected to the survey vendor's network. The website firewall is programmed to allow or prevent access to the network by using a set of rules to determine whether

attempted network access is compliant with the Data Center's network security policy. In addition, the firewall logs all incoming traffic to help detect and analyze any problems or suspicious activity.

### 3.3 Survey Vendor Website Security Responsibilities

All approved HHCAHPS survey vendors must adhere to strict website data security requirements to continue their participation. By following the HHCAHPS security procedures, survey vendors will protect their client HHAs' data and those of other vendors participating in the HHCAHPS Survey.

When issued credentials to access the private links on the project website, approved survey vendors must follow all safeguards to prevent an unauthorized person from entering the private side of the website. The website password protection system requires that approved survey vendors follow the password guidelines listed below.

- When a survey vendor's account is approved, the user will be required to log into the system and change the password on first login.
- Each account will be locked out after five successive incorrect password entries. If the account is locked, the user will need to contact the Coordination Team to have the account unlocked.
- If a user's password is compromised or lost, contact the Coordination Team immediately to ask that the account be deactivated. The Coordination Team will then issue new credentials to the user.
- When survey vendors and HHAs generate a password to access the private links on the project website, they must develop a strong password. ***A strong password is defined as one that contains at least nine (9) characters.*** These nine characters must include the following:
  - one upper-case alphabet letter,
  - one numeral, and
  - one special character (&,%,#,!).

An example of a strong password is **Mgh0721\$&**; it meets the required criteria shown above.

These password rules and guidelines are designed to minimize the chance that automated password-cracking routines used by unauthorized personnel can gain access to the website. In addition to the above rules, the following guidelines will help create a strong password:

- Combine two or more related words with punctuation, such as Radio-Cook1.
- Use a password that looks like nonsense but allows an easy way to remember it, such as "Thaaw7som." for "The hills are alive with the sound of music." (Note the end punctuation.)
- Think in terms of vanity license plates, such as "I8myfood."



The following should be **avoided** when creating a password:

- do not use a single English word;
- do not use a scientific name, biological term, or geographic name; and
- do not use a person's name or part of name, even with slight modifications like an added character at the end or beginning.

In addition, **do not** use the following items in the password:

- known combinations (e.g., NLRB 1234, attorney1, judge111);
- words found in a dictionary, including names, obscene words, or well-known phrases;
- a password with a repeating series of characters;
- reverse spellings of dictionary words;
- a name associated with the user in any way (middle name, family names, pet's name, sports team name, films, etc.);
- portions of a User ID on the current or other systems; or
- simple keyboard patterns (e.g., "asdfjkl").

A user should never write down his or her password. If the user needs to store passwords, there are free applications that can be downloaded and used. An application like this can be very helpful because another password safety rule is to never use the same password across applications or computers. Finally, do not share or give the password to anyone. All HHCAHPS users are responsible for all access to the private links on the project website that are made under their credentials.

### **3.4 What to Do If a User Forgets the Password**

If a user forgets their password, they can click on the Reset Password link on the Login menu on the HHCAHPS Survey website, enter their username, and follow the directions to complete the request. HHCAHPS Data Center project staff will send a password reset link to the user via the email address provided when the user first registered for access credentials. When the email containing the password reset is received, the user should log in and follow the directions to create a new password.

### **3.5 Managing the HHCAHPS Website Survey Vendor Account and Profile**

HHCAHPS Survey vendors may need to update information in their user account as circumstances change or information about HHCAHPS Survey personnel or the organization changes over time. An approved user can edit their account information at any time after logging in by clicking on his or her name displayed in the upper right corner of the private side of the website. Once the username is clicked, the user should then click on the "Edit profile" link, which will bring up the screen called Manage Account (depicted in **Figure 3.1**).

The Manage Account screen contains two tabs: Manage Account and Manage Profile. The Manage Account tab contains the following information:

- Login User Name;
- Display Name; and
- Contact Email Address.

**Figure 3.1 Manage Account**

The screenshot shows the 'Manage Account' tab of the Home Health Care CAHPS Survey. The page has a blue header with the site name and a navigation bar with links like Home, Vendor Dashboard, General Information, Training, Forms for Vendors, Survey and Protocols, Data Submission, and For HHAs. The main content area is titled 'User Profile' and contains a 'Profile' section with two tabs: 'Manage Account' (active) and 'Manage Profile'. Under 'Manage Account', there are sections for 'Account Settings', 'Manage Password', and 'Account Information'. The 'Account Settings' section includes fields for 'User Name' (testvendor), 'Display Name' (Test Vendor), 'Email Address' (testvendor@rti.org), and 'Profile URL' (homehealthcahps.org/users/test-vendor). A note states: 'Note: You can only update your public Profile URL once.' An 'Update' button is next to the Profile URL field. A blue 'Update' button is at the bottom of the form.

Approved survey vendors can change information in their profile by going to the Manage Profile tab (see **Figure 3.2**) and making edits in the available fields. As noted in Section 1 of this manual, a website user can contact the Coordination Team by sending an email or calling the toll-free project number to get help establishing a username or setting up an account to access the private links in the system. Users should notify the Coordination Team immediately if they suspect that there has been a breach in security in their own data system.

**Figure 3.2    Manage Profile**

The screenshot shows the 'Manage Profile' page of the Home Health Care CAHPS Survey website. The page has a blue header with navigation links: Home, Vendor Dashboard, General Information, Training, Forms for Vendors, Survey and Protocols, Data Submission, For HHAs, and a Logout button. Below the header is a banner for the 'Home Health Care CAHPS Survey' with the tagline 'The official website for news and information about the HHCAHPS Survey'. The main content area is titled 'User Profile' and contains a 'Profile' section with two tabs: 'Manage Account' and 'Manage Profile'. The 'Manage Profile' tab is active, showing a form for updating user information. The form includes fields for Name (Prefix, First Name, Middle Name, Last Name, Suffix) and Address. The 'First Name' field contains the text 'Test' and the 'Last Name' field contains the text 'Vendor'. There is an 'Update' button at the bottom of the form. The page also features a 'Back' button in the top right corner of the main content area.

Home Health Care CAHPS Survey  
The official website for news and information about the HHCAHPS Survey

Home Vendor Dashboard General Information Training Forms for Vendors Survey and Protocols Data Submission For HHAs Logout

User Profile [Back](#)

**Profile**

[Manage Account](#) [Manage Profile](#)

Name [^](#)

Prefix:

First Name:

Middle Name:

Last Name:

Suffix:

Address [v](#)

Contact Info [v](#)

Preferences [v](#)

[Update](#)

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## 4. Using an XML Template to Submit HHCAHPS Data Files

### 4.1 Overview

This section contains information about preparing HHCAHPS Survey data files for submission to the Data Center. After reviewing this information, HHCAHPS Survey vendors will know how to clean and successfully format XML HHCAHPS data files in preparation to submit them via the HHCAHPS website. If any problems occur when submitting data to the Data Center, the Coordination Team will be available to work with survey vendors to resolve the problems. The Coordination Team can be reached by telephone at 1-866-354-0985 or by email to [hhcahps@rti.org](mailto:hhcahps@rti.org).

### 4.2 Format and Clean Survey Data Following the XML File Specifications

Survey vendors can submit data only in the XML format. Each XML file should contain only one month of survey data, with one file for each HHA. Survey vendors should note that if a data file for a sample month is submitted more than once, the most recent data submission will overwrite the file previously submitted for that sample month. **Therefore, the final file submission must contain data for all patients who were sampled in that sample month for a specific HHA.** Detailed information about the data submission process can be found in **Chapter X** of the *HHCAHPS Survey Protocols and Guidelines Manual*.

The data file layouts for HHCAHPS Survey XML files described below are included in **Appendices N** and **O** of the *HHCAHPS Survey Protocols and Guidelines Manual*. **Appendix N** contains the XML Data File Layout for the Standard Header Record, which is used with simple and proportionate random sampling methods. If disproportionate stratified random sampling (DSRS) is used, survey vendors must use the DSRS Data File Layout (found in **Appendix O**). The specifications in these Appendices contain details about the data to be submitted such as data type, field sizes, and order. The format of each HHCAHPS Survey data file must match the specifications provided. Survey vendors can also download the XML data file templates from the HHCAHPS Survey website through the “Data Submission Resources” webpage. The XML data file templates were developed based on data elements needed for analysis and on the HHCAHPS Survey questionnaire.

Each XML file will consist of three sections: a Header Record, a Patient Administrative Data Record, and a Patient Response Record. There should be only one Header Record for each HHCAHPS XML file. Each sampled patient within the XML file should have a corresponding Patient Administrative Data Record. A Patient Response Record must be included for every sampled patient who completed the survey questionnaire.

#### 4.2.1 Header Record

The Header Record contains the identifying information for the HHA corresponding to data included on the file, sampling information, survey administration mode, and the method by which the sample was selected. Information required in this section includes the name of the HHA and its CMS Certification Number (CCN). Other sampling information required in the Header Record is shown below.

- Sample Year—the calendar year in which the survey is being conducted.
- Sample Month—the month for which the sample was selected. Survey vendors will select a sample of patients who meet survey eligibility criteria for each calendar month.
- Mode of Survey Administration—the method by which the survey was administered. The survey mode, either mail only (1), phone only (2), or mixed mode (3), *must be the same for all patients in each sample month in the calendar quarter for each HHA*. HHAs and their survey vendors cannot change survey administration modes until a new quarter begins.
- Type of Sampling—the sampling method that was used to select the sample. These include census, simple random sampling (SRS), proportionate stratified random sampling (PSRS), and DSRS. See **Chapter IV** in the *Protocols and Guidelines Manual* for detailed information about each of these methods.
- Number of Patients Served—the number of patients who had at least one visit for skilled care at any point during the sample month, regardless of whether they are eligible for the HHCAHPS Survey. In other words, this number should include both patients who are eligible for the survey and those who are not.
- Number of Patients on the File Submitted to Vendor—the HHA must provide a list of all patients served during the sample month to the survey vendor, with the exception of those patients whose care was not paid for by Medicare or Medicaid, those who are deceased, are not 18 years old or older, currently receive hospice care, received home health care for routine maternity care only, those whose illnesses or conditions are protected by state laws and regulations (“state-regulated” patients), and those who requested that the HHA not release their name to anyone outside the HHA (“no publicity” patients).
- Number of Eligible Patients—the number of patients on the sample frame provided by the HHA who meet survey eligibility criteria in the sample month.
- Number of Patients Sampled—the number of patients selected for the survey during the sample month.

DSRS Sampling. Vendors with HHA clients seeking to use DSRS sampling must complete and submit an Exceptions Request Form (ERF) to the Coordination Team prior to sampling (see **Chapter IV** of the *Protocols and Guidelines Manual* for more information about the ERF). If a vendor submits a data file with a DSRS Header Record and does not have prior approval from CMS for using DSRS, the data file will be rejected. More information about DSRS and requirements for DSRS sample selection and file construction is provided in the *Protocols and Guidelines Manual* (**Chapters IV** and **X**).

If DSRS is used, survey vendors must include the following information in the Header Record:

- DSRS Stratum Name—note that there must be at least two strata identified for DSRS sampling.
- DSRS Number of Patients on File Submitted to Vendor—the number of patients included on the file that the HHA provided for this stratum.
- DSRS Number of Patients Eligible in Stratum—the number of patients who meet survey eligibility criteria within each stratum.
- DSRS Number of Patients Sampled in Stratum—the number of patients sampled within the stratum.

#### **4.2.2 Patient Administrative Data Record**

The second section of the XML file contains data about each patient who was sampled for the sample month, including both those who responded to the survey and nonrespondents. In this section of the file, some of the information provided in the Header Record is repeated, including the HHA's CCN and the Sample Year and Sample Month. All other information included in this section of the file is about the patient. HHCAHPS Survey vendors are required to assign a unique sample identification (SID) number to each sampled patient included in the survey, regardless of whether the sample member completed the survey. More information about assigning a unique SID to each sampled patient is included in **Chapter IV** of the *HHCAHPS Protocols and Guidelines Manual*.

**All files submitted with missing SID numbers will be rejected during the upload process.**

Most of the information required in the Patient Administrative Data Record should be provided to the HHCAHPS Survey vendor by the HHA on the monthly patient information file. This information includes the patient's age (the survey vendor will calculate the patient's age based on the date of birth provided by the HHA), the patient's gender, the number of skilled visits the patient had in the sample month, payer information, admission source, activities of daily living (ADLs), and diagnosis codes. The information in the last part of this section is survey administration data, including the final disposition code assigned to each case, a flag to indicate whether the survey was completed by a proxy respondent, and the number of supplemental items the HHA added.

It is the vendor's responsibility to flag all surveys completed with a proxy respondent as a "proxy" interview. For telephone interviews, it is the vendor's responsibility to assign a flag to those cases completed with a proxy respondent. For mail questionnaires, the vendor must assign a proxy flag to any case where the respondent indicated in Question 34 that the person helping him or her "answered the questions for me" (response option 3).

#### **4.2.3 Patient Response Record**

The third section of the XML file is the Patient Response Record, which contains the responses to the HHCAHPS Survey from every patient who completed the survey during the sample month. Users should submit **only** data corresponding to the HHCAHPS Survey questions. Do not submit responses to questions that were added by the HHA (non-HHCAHPS questions), and do not submit responses to any HHCAHPS supplemental questions included in the survey. The only response records that survey vendors should include are those with a final survey disposition code for a completed survey (Codes 110 and 120) and those with Code 310 (Break-Off). For all Patient Response Records that are included, all response fields must have a legitimate value. Legitimate values can include "Missing" or "Not applicable."



## 5. Submitting Data to the HHCAHPS Data Center

### 5.1 Overview

This chapter describes the process to submit data via the HHCAHPS Survey website and the reports available to survey vendors and HHAs to ensure that this process is completed successfully.

### 5.2 Submitting Data

To submit data on the HHCAHPS website, approved HHCAHPS Survey vendors will need to first log into the secure portion of the website with their unique username and password. Survey vendors can submit data files to the HHCAHPS Data Center in one of two ways, as a single XML file or as a ZIP file containing multiple XML files.

Prior to submitting XML files, vendors can test their data files with the "Schema Validation Tool" posted on the HHCAHPS website, under the Data Submission menu. The Schema Validation Tool is formatted in accordance with the XML Data File Specifications that are described in the sections that follow, and vendors should make sure that they have reviewed these specifications prior to submission. The Schema Validation Tool also contains some, but not all, of the same validation checks that are applied when the data file is submitted to the Data Center. Using the Schema Validation Tool to identify file problems and correcting any problems detected will reduce the number of attempts to submit the data file.

Follow the steps below to submit data via the project website:

1. Log on to the HHCAHPS Survey website.
2. Click the "Data Submission Tool" link under the Data Submission menu. The data submission tool page will display (as shown in **Figure 5.1** below).
3. Click the "Choose File" button to select the file to upload. Up to five XML files can be uploaded at a time. The Choose File button permits users to locate and directly upload a file that has been saved in their own computer system. Survey vendors can select either a single XML file or a single ZIP file that contains multiple XML files.

NOTE: The text that displays on the "Choose Files" button may vary, depending on the web browser. For example, it could appear as "Browse" or "Select."

4. After selecting the file to be uploaded, click "Upload" to submit the file. The Data Upload Summary Report based on the file selected will appear. A link to this report will also be emailed to the vendor's HHCAHPS Survey Administrator.

**Figure 5.1 Link to Data Submission Tool**

The screenshot shows the 'Home Health Care CAHPS Survey' website. The header includes a navigation bar with links: Home, Vendor Dashboard, General Information, Training, Forms for Vendors, Survey and Protocols, Data Submission (highlighted), and For HHAs. A 'Logout' button is in the top right. Below the header, the 'Data Submission / Data Submission Tool' breadcrumb is visible. The main content area is titled 'Data Submission Tool' and contains instructions: 'Please click **Choose File** to locate the XML or ZIP file(s) you wish to upload on your computer then click the **Upload** button.' It also states: 'To upload an entire directory of XML files, please first put the XML files into a single ZIP file and use the upload tool below to submit the ZIP file.' A red warning message reads: 'If your file has any errors during the data file upload process or the secondary validation checks, you will need to correct the errors and upload your file again.' Below this, there are five 'Choose Files' buttons, each with the text 'No file chosen' to its right. At the bottom of this section is a blue 'Upload' button.

As the upload begins, the XML file will undergo several validation checks. The first check will determine whether the CCN in the Header Record and the Patient Administrative Data Record matches the CCN listed as having authorized the survey vendor submitting the data file. The next validation checks will determine the quality and completeness of the data. If the file fails any of the validation checks, the survey vendor will receive an error message after a file error is detected noting that the file upload did not take place and giving details on why the file failed to upload. For example, the message may indicate that there is no authorization from the HHA for the vendor to submit data on its behalf or that the number of patient records listed in the Header does not match the number of sample patients for which data are provided in the Patient Administrative Data Record section of the file.

Survey vendors are strongly advised to submit XML files far enough in advance of the quarterly submission deadline to allow for both the initial upload file checks and the data processing checks, in the event they are required to resubmit a file because the file failed the validation process. **CMS will not accept revised or resubmitted files after the data submission deadline.** Survey vendors can resubmit a data file for a client HHA as many times as needed prior to the data submission deadline. However, survey vendors must keep

in mind that each time a data file for an HHA is submitted, it overwrites any data for that same agency that were previously submitted for that survey period.

### 5.3 Review and Follow-up on Data Upload Reports

Five reports are available to survey vendors via the HHCAHPS Survey website. These reports serve to inform survey vendors about the outcome of each of the vendor's data file upload attempts, and they also provide the vendor with a history of upload efforts, successful or unsuccessful. The five reports are listed below:

- Data Submission Summary Report
- Data Submission History Report
- Data Submission History by Upload Date
- Data Submission Validation Status Report
- Annual Payment Update (APU) Participation Summary Report

Each of these reports is described below.

#### 5.3.1 Data Submission Summary Report

This report will be available via an email link immediately after the survey vendor has uploaded data via the "Data Submission Tool" link on the HHCAHPS Survey website. Once the survey vendor uploads a data file(s), the system will check for the correct file layout, missing data, duplicate SID numbers, invalid responses, etc. An example of this report is shown in **Figure 5.2**.

**Figure 5.2 Example Data Submission Summary Report**

<b>Validation Results Report for File: HHCAHPS Standard xml - passes all.xml, CCN #: 160035, # Patients: 1</b>
Message 1010: File Passed all XML Format checks.
Schema Validation: VALID
Data Validation Checks: VALID

<b>Validation Results Report for File: HHCAHPS Standard xml - not well formed.xml, CCN #: Could not Retrieve, # Patients: 0</b>
Error 1020: This file has not been properly formatted. Please review XML file specifications and upload again.
Schema Validation: NOT CHECKED due to XML failing Well Formed test.

<b>Validation Results Report for File: HHCAHPS Standard xml - fails value missing for header-type.xml, CCN #: 160035, # Patients: 1</b>
Message 1010: File Passed all XML Format checks.
Schema Validation: INVALID. Please review XML file specifications and upload again. Please see the schema validation errors below:
Error 2001: Value for "header type" is missing

<b>Validation Results Report for File: HHCAHPS Standard xml - fails data validation 18 for number-sampled.xml, CCN #: 160035, # Patients: 1</b>
Message 1010: File Passed all XML Format checks.
Schema Validation: VALID
Data Validation Checks: NOT VALID. Please review Data Validation specifications and re-upload.
18 - The number of Patient Administrative Data Records on the file does not match the number of patients sampled!

The initial validation check of the submitted data file is to make sure that the XML template has been used and is properly formatted. If any of a survey vendor's data files has an incorrectly formatted template, the data upload process will stop immediately and send an error message to the survey vendor that describes the problem detected. After the system verifies that a properly formatted template has been used, it begins a series of data checks which look for any fields in the Header Record with missing data.

If any required data are missing, the file will be rejected, and the **Data Submission Summary Report** will let the survey vendor know what data fields are missing. The system will also check for any duplicate SIDs to make sure that the same SID has not been used more than once for a given HHA in a quarter. If a vendor has used a duplicate SID, the file will be rejected. This report will identify where the error is located so it can be corrected. Finally, the report will check to make sure that the survey vendor has been authorized by the HHA for which a data file is being loaded to submit data on the HHA's behalf.

If the data file successfully passes these initial validation checks, the file will be sent through a more formal secondary data processing step. HHCAHPS Survey vendors will be notified via email within a short period of time that the *Data Submission Summary Report* has been updated to reflect the result of the secondary validation checks. An example of an updated *Data Submission Summary Report* is shown in **Figure 5.3**. The validation will check for missing data fields required for patient eligibility determination, including the number of visits over the lookback period, payer, or patient age. The process will also check each Patient Response Record included on the file to ensure that all entries are within the acceptable range. A completeness algorithm will be run to verify that all patient survey data records included on the file meet survey completeness criteria.

**Figure 5.3 Example of Updated Data Submission Summary Report**

<b>Validation Results Report for File: HHCAHPS Standard xml - incomplete.xml, CCN #: 160035, # Patients: 1</b>
Message 1010: File Passed all XML Format checks.
Schema Validation: VALID
Data Validation Checks: VALID
Nightly Data Check 23: INVALID: 23 - The patient Response Record does not meet the completeness criteria for one or more cases.
<b>Validation Results Report for File: HHCAHPS DSRs xml - passes all.xml, CCN #: 160035, # Patients: 20</b>
Message 1010: File Passed all XML Format checks.
Schema Validation: VALID
Data Validation Checks: VALID
Nightly Data Check: VALID.

Following completion of all edit checks, the data submission system will generate and send an email to the survey vendor indicating that this data processing step has been completed. This email will include a link that will take the vendor user to the updated *Data Submission Summary Report*. The report will be identical to the original report, but it will include more detailed information about the checks that were performed during the secondary data checks process. The report will provide the survey vendor with sufficient detail, by CCN, of data file errors that caused data files to be rejected so that the vendor can correct the errors and resubmit the file(s). The report will also indicate which of the vendor's data files have successfully passed this second set of edit checks.

Once the data files successfully pass this secondary checks, the vendor's data submission is considered successful, and the files will be accepted and processed for public reporting. If all the records for a given CCN are accepted, the vendor does not need to resubmit that file. However, if a vendor submits a file for multiple CCNs and there are one or more invalid records for a given CCN, the vendor will need to resubmit a file containing all records for the CCN that had invalid records.

### **5.3.2 Data Submission History Reports**

HHCAHPS Survey vendors will be able to view a history of their data submission activities via two reports under the Data Submission Report menu: *Data Submission History* and *Data Submission History by Upload Date*. The *Data Submission History Report* allows vendors to see a summary or detailed list of data submission activity (as shown in an example report in **Figure 5.4**). The *Data Submission History by Upload Date* allows vendors to search for a data submission report by the actual file upload date (as shown in an example report in **Figure 5.5**).

**Figure 5.4 Example Data Submission History Report**

### Data Submission History

HHA: <Show All HHAs>

Sample Date Range:

Start Month: 1
Start Year: 2010

End Month: 12
End Year: 2010

Validation Status: All
Report Type: Summary

☐ Show records with missing/invalid sample month/year
☐ Hide records that have been replaced

Show Report

Export to Excel

Sample Year	Sample Month	CCN #	Filename	Submission Date	# of Patients Sampled	# of Complete Responses	# of Incomplete Responses	Validation Status	Replaced	Authorized
2010	Jul	160035	<a href="#">160035 Std 2 - passes all (2).xml</a>	12/16/2010	2			Failed		No
2010	Mar	160035	<a href="#">160035 Std 2 - passes all (2).xml</a>	06/29/2010	2			Failed		No
2010	Mar	160035	<a href="#">160035 Std 2 - passes all (2).xml</a>	06/28/2010	2			Failed		No
2010	Mar	160035	<a href="#">160035 Std 2 - passes all.xml</a>	05/27/2010	2			Failed		
2010	Mar	160035	<a href="#">160035 Std 2 - passes all.xml</a>	05/27/2010	2			Failed		
2010	Feb	101010	<a href="#">101010 Std - zero sampled.xml</a>	07/21/2010	0	0		Passed		
2010	Feb	101010	<a href="#">101010 Std - zero sampled.xml</a>	07/21/2010	0			Failed		
2010	Jan	160035	<a href="#">160035 Std 2 - passes all.xml</a>	07/21/2010	2			Failed		

Number of records = 8

**Figure 5.5 Example Data Submission History by Upload Date Report**

### Data Submission History By Upload Date

Data Submission Date: 

Jul 21 2010 9:55AM

XML Validation Results:

Validation Results Report CCN #: 101010, Sample Month: 2/2010, Patients Sampled: 0 File: 101010 Std - zero sampled.xml
Message 1010: File Passed all XML Format checks.
Schema Validation: VALID
Data Validation Checks: VALID

BatchID: 106

### **5.3.3 Data Submission Validation Status Report**

The purpose of the *Data Submission Validation Status Report* is to allow vendors to view a summary of their data submissions, by CCN, with failed submissions listed at the top. Since most of the failed submissions are because of invalid or missing vendor authorizations, this report shows whether the vendor authorization is valid for each CCN. Vendors can use this report to quickly identify agencies that need to correct their vendor authorizations prior to an upcoming data submission. See **Figure 5.6** below for an example report.

**Figure 5.6 Example Data Submission Validation Status Report**

### Data Submission Validation Status

Date Range

Start Month1▼

End Month12▼

Start Year2010▼

End Year2010▼

Show Report

Export to Excel

CCN	Sample Month	Sample Year	Authorized	Status	Submission Date
160035	1	2010	Yes	Failed	7/21/2010 1:15:04 PM
160035	3	2010	No	Failed	6/29/2010 9:14:37 AM
160035	7	2010	No	Failed	12/16/2010 11:45:43 AM
101010	2	2010	Yes	Passed	7/21/2010 9:55:03 AM

4 row(s) in report. (1 passed, 3 failed)

#### **5.3.4 APU Participation Summary Report**

The purpose of the *APU Participation Summary Report* is to give vendors a summary view of all files that they have uploaded for their clients, organized by each APU summary period. This report will indicate each month within the APU period that a data file has been successfully submitted to the Data Center, per agency (as shown in an example report in **Figure 5.7**). Vendors can quickly get a summary view of the submission status for each of their clients.



**Figure 5.7 Example APU Participation Summary Report**

APU Participation Summary Report

Export to Excel

APU period 2018 APU Period (Apr 16 - Mar 17) ▼

APU Participation Summary Report for Test Vendor

Agency Name	CCN	State	Apr 2016	May 2016	Jun 2016	Jul 2016	Aug 2016	Sep 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Jan 2017	Feb 2017	Mar 2017	No. Mos. Participated
TEST HHA 1	148193	Illinois	Yes	Yes	Yes										3
TEST HHA 2	368250	Ohio	Yes	Yes	Yes										3
TEST HHA 3	267140	Missouri	Yes	Yes	Yes										3
TEST HHA 4	148325	Illinois	Yes	Yes	Yes										3
TEST HHA 5	148258	Illinois	Yes	Yes	Yes										3
TEST HHA 6	677809	Texas	Yes	Yes	Yes										3
TEST HHA 7	097025	District of Columbia			Yes										1
TEST HHA 8	059306	California	Yes	Yes	Yes										3
TEST HHA 9	267634	Missouri	Yes	Yes	Yes										3
TEST HHA 10	467207	Utah	Yes	Yes	Yes										3
TEST HHA 11	108450	Florida	Yes	Yes	Yes										3

11 row(s) in report.

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## 6. Information for Home Health Agencies

### 6.1 Overview

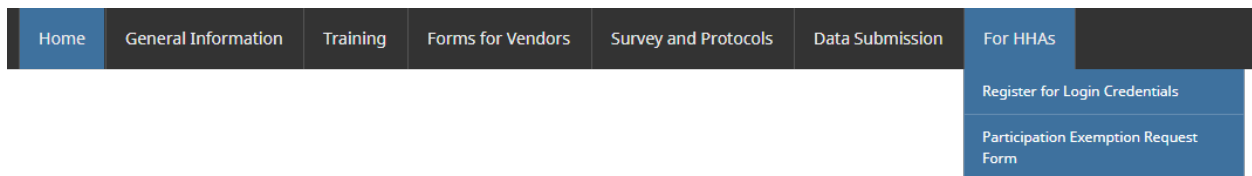
This section contains information specific to HHAs on registering for user credentials, authorizing a vendor, and viewing data submission reports. Also covered in this section is a set of frequently asked questions and answers addressing common questions from HHAs on how to manage their user accounts. We begin this section with a description of the “For HHAs” menu, discussing several of the links under that menu in more detail.

#### 6.1.1 The “For HHAs” Menu

The “For HHAs” menu contains links to documents, forms and reports for HHAs. The public links under this menu (see **Figure 6.1**) include an online form (through the “Registration for Login Credentials” link) for registering for credentials needed for accessing the private links on the website. The second link is the “Participation Exemption Request Form.” This is for HHAs that are requesting exemption from implementing HHCAHPS because they served fewer than the number of required eligible patients (e.g., fewer than 60 eligible patients for the CY 2025 APU period).

More information about these links is provided in the *HHCAHPS Survey Protocols and Guidelines Manual*.

**Figure 6.1 For HHAs Menu—Public Side**



#### 6.1.2 For HHAs Menu—Private Links

**Figure 6.2** displays the private links under the For HHAs menu; a description of the private links under this menu is provided below.

**Figure 6.2 For HHAs Menu—Private Side**

Home	HHA Dashboard	General Information	Training	Forms for Vendors	Survey and Protocols	Data Submission	For HHAs	
							Register CCNs	
							Participation Exemption Request Form	
							Manage Users	
							Authorize a Vendor	
							Data Submission Reports	
							Survey Preview Report	
							Understanding the Preview Report	

- Register CCNs—this is the link that appears once the authorized user has logged into the private side of the website. Clicking on this link allows users to register as their HHA’s HHCAHPS Survey Administrator.
- Participation Exemption Request Form—this link, described above, appears on both the public and private sides of the website.
- Manage Users—allows the HHA’s HHCAHPS Survey Administrator to create, edit and remove backup and non-administrative users.
- Authorize a Vendor—an online form that HHA’s HHCAHPS Survey Administrators must complete to authorize an approved survey vendor to submit data on the agency’s behalf.
- Data Submission Reports—allows HHAs to view the data submission activity of their authorized vendor.
- Survey Preview Report—allows HHAs to view their publicly reported data for the 2-week period prior to the data being posted on Medicare’s Care Compare website (<https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare>).
- Understanding the Preview Report—provides an explanation of each of the publicly reported measures shown in the HHCAHPS Survey Preview Report.

### **6.1.3 HHA Dashboard**

When an HHA logs into the HHCAHPS website, he or she will see the “HHA Dashboard” menu, as noted in **Figure 6.3**. The “Dashboard” view provides the user with links to key items on the website (such as those described in the paragraphs above) and is intended to give HHAs a quick way to manage the activities they are responsible for. HHAs are provided with links to documents required for the Registration and Vendor Authorization processes, including links to the Register CCNs and vendor authorization forms; a User Access console, showing administrative users within the organization; and a link to their data submission report.

**Figure 6.3 HHA Dashboard View**

**Home Health Care CAHPS Survey**  
The official website for news and information about the HHCAHPS Survey

Home **HHA Dashboard** General Information Training Forms for Vendors Survey and Protocols Data Submission For HHAs

HHA Dashboard [Back](#)

### Required Action Items

Item	Status	Resource
✓ Agency Registration	Completed	
✓ Register one or more home health agencies (by CCN)	9 CCN(s) already registered	<a href="#">Click here to register your home health agency (by CCN)</a>
✓ Vendor Authorization	9 of 9 CCNs have current authorization	<a href="#">Authorize a Vendor</a>

### Data Submission

8 of 9 agencies have data successfully submitted for Quarter 2, 2023. [View Data Submission Reports](#)

### User Access

Administrative Users: RTI Test Facility, Backup Admin

Non-Administrative Users: No users found

[Manage User Console](#)

### Information for HHAs

Home Health Agencies (HHAs) should click the appropriate link below for information about:

- [HHA Participation Exemption Request Form](#) (2025 Form Available)
- [HHCAHPS Exemption Information](#) (Updated 4/3/23)
- [HHCAHPS Participation Periods](#) (Updated 4/3/23)
- [HHA Responsibilities](#) (Updated 4/3/23)
- [Authorize Survey Vendor](#) (Updated 3/22/18)
- [Review Data Submission Reports](#) (Updated 5/5/20)
- [Final Rule for Calendar Year 2023](#) (Posted 11/7/22)
- [Patient Mix Adjustment Factors](#) (Updated 7/19/23)

#### **6.1.4 Authorizing a Vendor**

The online Vendor Authorization Form allows HHAs to perform the following four actions once they have logged in to the private side of the website, through a dropdown list (see **Figure 6.4**):

- Authorize a vendor for an HHA for which a vendor has never been authorized.
- Change the start or end date for the current vendor.
- Change/switch to a different HHCAHPS Survey vendor.

- View the current authorization status.

A brief description and the steps in each of these functions are provided below, and in the instructional document available on the HHCAHPS Survey website's Home page in the "Information for HHAs" box.

**Figure 6.4 HHCAHPS Vendor Authorization Form**

Home Health Care CAHPS Survey  
The official website for news and information about the HHCAHPS Survey

Home HHA Dashboard General Information Training Forms for Vendors Survey and Protocols Data Submission **For HHAs**

For HHAs / Authorize a Vendor

### Vendor Authorization Form for HHAs

**Home Health Care CAHPS - Vendor Authorization Form for HHAs**  
This form will allow you to do the following:

- Authorize a vendor for an HHA for which you have never authorized a survey vendor.
- Change the start or end date for your current vendor.
- Change/Switch to a different HHCAHPS Survey vendor for one or more HHAs.
- View the current vendor authorizations for HHAs for which you have authorized a vendor.

Note that you can authorize the same vendor for more than one HHA. If you have multiple CCNs and would like to authorize one vendor for some of them and a different vendor for others, first authorize a vendor for the HHAs that will have the same vendor and click the "Submit" button. Repeat the steps for the next HHA(s) for which you would like to authorize a survey vendor. You will receive an e-mail message confirming the vendor that you selected for each HHA.

**Select Action**  
Select the action you wish to perform.

<Select an Action>

- <Select an Action>
- Select a vendor for an HHA for the first time
- Change the start/end date for an existing vendor authorization
- Change/switch to a different vendor
- View current vendor authorizations

## 1. To Authorize a Vendor for an HHA for the First Time

HHAs should select the "Select a vendor for an HHA for the first time" action from the dropdown list on the Vendor Authorization Form if an HHCAHPS Survey vendor has never been authorized before (see example in **Figure 6.5**). To authorize a vendor for one or more HHAs for the first time:

- Select an approved vendor from the dropdown list;
- Select the Start Date, which corresponds to the first sample month the survey vendor is administering the HHCAHPS Survey on the HHA's behalf (HHCAHPS protocols strongly recommend leaving the End Date blank);
- select the CCN(s) to which the authorization applies; and
- click the "Submit" button. An email notification will be sent to the HHA's HHCAHPS Survey Administrator confirming that the vendor has been authorized immediately after the form has been submitted.

**Figure 6.5 Example Vendor Authorization Form When Authorizing Vendor for First Time**

**Home Health Care CAHPS Survey**  
The official website for news and information about the HHCAHPS Survey

Home HHA Dashboard General Information Training Forms for Vendors Survey and Protocols Data Submission **For HHAs**

For HHAs / Authorize a Vendor [Back](#)

### Vendor Authorization Form for HHAs

**Home Health Care CAHPS - Vendor Authorization Form for HHAs**  
This form will allow you to do the following.

- Authorize a vendor for an HHA for which you have never authorized a survey vendor.
- Change the start or end date for your current vendor.
- Change/Switch to a different HHCAHPS Survey vendor for one or more HHAs.
- View the current vendor authorizations for HHAs for which you have authorized a vendor.

Note that you can authorize the same vendor for more than one HHA. If you have multiple CCNs and would like to authorize one vendor for some of them and a different vendor for others, first authorize a vendor for the HHAs that will have the same vendor and click the "Submit" button. Repeat the steps for the next HHA(s) for which you would like to authorize a survey vendor. You will receive an e-mail message confirming the vendor that you selected for each HHA.

**Select Action**  
Select the action you wish to perform.  
Select a vendor for an HHA for the first time

**Select Survey Vendor**  
In this step, select the vendor you wish to authorize from the drop down list.  
Vendor: <Select Vendor>

**Select Dates**  
In this step, select the Start Date that reflects the first day of the calendar year quarter in which you are authorizing this vendor to submit HHCAHPS Survey data on this agency's behalf. For example, if this vendor will submit data on your behalf for the first time for Quarter 4 of 2010, select 10/1/2010. Do not select an End Date unless you know you will be switching to a different vendor after a specific quarter ends.  
Start Date: <Select Start Date>  
End Date: <Select End Date> (Optional)

**Select HHA**  
In this step, check the box by each HHA to which this authorization or change applies. Click the box in the top row of the grid if this action applies to all of the agencies listed in the grid.  
If you are selecting a different survey vendor for different HHAs, you must click the Submit button after each vendor selection to record your authorization. Then, repeat the steps for the next survey vendor you need to authorize. You will receive an email confirmation verifying your authorization(s) each time you submit this form.

<input type="checkbox"/>	CCN	HHA Name	Authorized Vendor	Start Date	End Date
<input type="checkbox"/>	999999	RTI Facility			

Click the Submit button to complete this process.

Submit

## 2. To Change the Date of an Existing Vendor Authorization

This function will allow an HHA to do the following:

- select new Start or End Date for an existing vendor authorization;
- select the CCN(s) to which the authorization applies; and
- click the "Submit" button.

## 3. To Switch/Change to a Different HHCAHPS Vendor

To complete the vendor change process, the HHA should first follow the directions in Item 2 above and enter an End Date for the HHCAHPS vendor that was previously

authorized. After selecting an End Date, the HHA must then select and submit the authorization for the new vendor by following the steps in Item 1 above, by selecting “Change or Switch to a Different Vendor” in the Select Action dropdown list on the online form. HHAs that want to switch vendors in the middle of the quarter are asked to contact the Coordination Team to make sure that their vendor authorizations are correctly set up to allow their old and new vendors to submit all required files.

#### **4. View Current Authorization Status**

Selecting the “View current vendor authorizations” action in the dropdown list on the online form will allow HHAs to view the list of HHAs for which a vendor has been authorized, the current vendor’s name, and the Start Date for each vendor. If the HHA entered an End Date for the vendor currently authorized, the End Date will also show for each HHA.

#### **6.1.5 Data Submission Report for HHAs**

All HHCAHPS Survey vendors’ work is subject to review by the HHAs with which they have contracted. The *Data Submission Report* located under the “For HHAs” menu on the project website provides the HHA with detailed information about its vendor’s data submission activities (see **Figure 6.6**). Each HHA should review these reports on a monthly or quarterly basis, depending on the agreement that the HHA has worked out with the vendor in terms of frequency of data submission. HHAs that have contracted with a survey vendor will be able to log into the website and view or print a report that includes information on the number of submissions and the submission status of their contracted vendor’s monthly or quarterly file submissions.



**Figure 6.6 HHA Data Submission History Report**

The screenshot shows the 'Data Submission History' report interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like Home, HHA Dashboard, General Information, Training, Forms for Vendors, Survey and Protocols, Data Submission, and For HHAs. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: 'For HHAs / Data Submission Reports'. The main section is titled 'Data Submission History'. It includes filters for 'HHA:' (a dropdown menu set to '<Show All HHAs>'), 'Sample Date Range:' (with 'Start Month' set to 1, 'End Month' set to 3, 'Start Year' set to 2019, and 'End Year' set to 2019), and buttons for 'Show Report' and 'Export to Excel'. Below the filters is a table with the following data:

Vendor	Sample Year	Sample Month	CCN #	Filename	Submission Date	# of Patients Sampled	# of Complete Responses	# of Incomplete Responses	Validation Status
Test Vendor	2019	Mar	999999	2019-03-HHCAHPS-999999.xml	7/3/2019	164	61	0	Passed
Test Vendor	2019	Feb	999999	2019-02-HHCAHPS-999999.xml	7/3/2019	156	62	0	Passed
Test Vendor	2019	Jan	999999	2019-01-HHCAHPS-999999.xml	7/3/2019	178	64	0	Passed

Below the table, it says 'Number of records = 3'.

The *Data Submission Report* displays the dates on which the HHCAHPS Data Center accepted the data files the vendor submitted for the HHA. The intent of this report is to allow an HHA to monitor whether its vendor is successfully submitting data files by the required quarterly data submission deadlines. **Only files that pass both the initial and the secondary validation checks will be listed on this report.** The *Data Submission Report* includes a hyperlink embedded in the date of each submission that will take the user to the *Processed Data Files Summary Report* for that date.

To protect the confidentiality of the HHA and the vendor it has selected, only the HHA and its authorized vendor will be able to view the submission history relating to that agency's data.

## 6.2 Frequently Asked Questions and Answers Related to Managing User Accounts

In this section, we present a list of questions the Coordination Team frequently receives from HHAs about managing their user accounts; responses are provided for each question. Please review these carefully if you are experiencing problems conducting any of the functions on the HHCAHPS website, because it is possible that your question may be

addressed here. If you attempt to correct the problem without success, please contact the Coordination Team by emailing [hhcahps@rti.org](mailto:hhcahps@rti.org) or by calling toll-free at 866-354-0985.

**Q: I lost my password. What do I do?**

A: Navigate to the Login page on the HHCAHPS website by clicking on the "Login" link in the upper right-hand corner of the Home page. Click on the "Reset Password" button. Enter your registered username and click the "Send Reset Link" button. You will receive an email shortly containing a link to reset your password.

**Q: I've tried to reset my password several times but haven't received the instructional email message with the reset link. What do I do?**

A: Sometimes the password reset messages that are sent directly from the website may go into your Spam or Junk email folders instead of your Inbox. Users typically receive the email within a few minutes of resetting the password. If you do not receive the password reset message in your Inbox, check the Spam/Junk email folders.

If you still do not receive the reset password email message after trying again, you should contact the Coordination Team at [hhcahps@rti.org](mailto:hhcahps@rti.org) for assistance.

**Q: My password reset expired. What do I do?**

A: Follow the steps to reset your password again. For security reasons, a password reset is valid for only 24 hours.

**Q: My password isn't working. What do I do?**

A: You have two options:

1. From the HHCAHPS website, go to the Login page. Click on the "Reset Password" button. Enter your username and click the "Send Reset Link" button. You will receive an email shortly containing a link to reset your password.
2. Email the Coordination Team at [hhcahps@rti.org](mailto:hhcahps@rti.org) and we will send you an email containing a link to reset your password.

**Q: I need to add another CCN to my user account. How do I do that?**

A: First, log into the HHCAHPS website using your username and password. Next, click on the "Register CCNs" link under the "For HHAs" menu, or click on the "Click Here to register your home health agency (by CCN)" link on your HHA Dashboard. Complete the *Register CCNs* form with your new CCN and click "Submit."

**Q: The person who registered as the HHCAHPS Survey Administrator for our agency left, and we don't know the password.**

A: Unfortunately, if the person who was registered as the HHCAHPS Survey Administrator did not designate a Backup Administrator within your agency, your only choice is to contact the Coordination Team at [hhcahps@rti.org](mailto:hhcahps@rti.org) and request that we delete the

registration. This will allow you or someone else within your agency to register a new Survey Administrator. Remember that you should have this new person designate a Backup Administrator as soon as possible.

**Q: How do I designate a Backup Administrator?**

A: The HHCAHPS Survey Administrator should log onto the HHCAHPS website and select the "Manage Users" link under the "For HHAs" menu. Then, click on the "Add New User" link toward the top and complete the User Details form. In the form, select the "role" that he or she wants the new user to have. One of the roles available is "Backup Administrator," who will have the same privileges and access as the Survey Administrator. Note that you can have multiple Backup Administrators within an agency.

**Q: My email address has changed. Can you just fix this in the system so that the confirmation emails come to my new e-mail address?**

A: The only way to change an email address for your HHCAHPS Survey Administrator in our system is to contact the Coordination Team at [hhcahps@rti.org](mailto:hhcahps@rti.org) and request that we delete your current registration to allow you to reregister with your valid email address. We cannot change e-mail addresses for you.

**Q: How do I remove access for someone in my organization who is no longer working here?**

A: The person in your organization designated as the HHCAHPS Survey Administrator or Backup Administrator can manage user accounts (that is, add or remove users) by logging into the HHCAHPS website and selecting the "Manage Users" link under the "For HHAs" menu. A list of all users within your organization should appear, along with the option to "edit" or "delete" a user. The pencil icon is the edit icon and the "X" that is adjacent to the username is the delete icon.

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