Guidance to Medicare-Certified Home Health Agencies on Reviewing the Data Submission Summary Report on the Home Health Care CAHPS Survey Website

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Importance of Reviewing HHCAHPS Data Submission Reports

This announcement is to remind Medicare-certified home health agencies (HHAs) participating in the Home Health Care CAHPS (HHCAHPS) Survey that they should check the **Data Submission Report** available on the HHCAHPS website on a regular basis to ensure that their approved survey vendor is submitting survey data to the HHCAHPS Data Center before each quarterly data submission deadline. The information included on the Data Submission Report may also help selected HHAs understand why they did not meet HHCAHPS participation requirements for a given annual payment update (APU).

HHAs participating in the HHCAHPS Survey should follow up with their approved survey vendor to make sure that the vendor submits data files well in advance of each quarterly data submission deadline. Each data file submitted will undergo two different validation checks before it is accepted; the first validation check is conducted as the file is being transmitted. If the file does not pass the initial validation check, it will be rejected. The second validation check is made within an hour after the file passes the initial validation check. Each file submitted must pass both the initial upload and the secondary validation check before it is accepted. Submission of data files early in the data submission period will allow the vendor to correct any problems detected and resubmit the files before the deadline.

HHAs should be aware that files submitted on the day of the deadline will be rejected if they do not pass the secondary validation check; therefore, vendors that wait until the day of the deadline to risk files being rejected. **The Centers for Medicare & Medicare Services (CMS) will not allow any HHCAHPS data files to be submitted to the Data Center after the data submission deadline ends.** The data submission deadline for each calendar year (CY) quarter is posted on the HHCAHPS website at the following link: https://homehealthcahps.org/DataSubmission/DataSubmissionDeadlines.aspx .

Instructions for Accessing the HHCAHPS Data Submission Report

The HHCAHPS Data Submission Report is posted under a private (secured) link on the HHCAHPS website. To access the report, HHAs must have already registered for user credentials to access the private links on the website. HHAs should be aware that one of the main reasons that files are rejected is that the HHA has not completed the online Authorize a Vendor Form. The Data Center cannot accept files until the HHA has authorized the vendor to submit

data on its behalf. HHAs that have not completed the two-part registration process to access the private links on the website should review the instructions for getting started on HHCAHPS, which are available on page 2 of the document linked here: https://homehealthcahps.org/Portals/0/HHA_Responsibilities_List.pdf ⬀.

HHAs can access the Data Submission Report by following the instructions below.

1. Log into the HHCAHPS website using the user credentials issued to the HHA's HHCAHPS Survey Administrator.

2. Place the cursor on the "For HHAs" tab. A dropdown list of links will appear.

3. Click the "Data Submission Reports" link.

Once the Data Submission Reports link is clicked, the Report displays options for filtering the report based on CMS Certification Number (CCN) and date range. The default options will show all submitted files for every CCN over the date range specified. To narrow the results, select a specific CCN and/or date range.

How to Read the Data Submission Report

The intent of the Data Submission Report is to allow an HHA to monitor whether its vendor is successfully submitting data files by the required quarterly data submission deadlines. To protect the confidentiality of the HHA and its approved survey vendor, only the HHA and its authorized vendor will be able to view the submission history relating to that HHA's data.

When reviewing the Data Submission Report, HHAs should keep in mind the following:

- The data submission deadline is several months after the sample month at issue. For example, the data submission deadline for all sample months in Quarter 2 of any given calendar year (April, May, and June) is in October of that same calendar year.

- Vendors have the option of submitting HHCAHPS data files on a monthly basis or they can submit the files for all months in a quarter at the same time.

The Data Submission Report will show, for each monthly file submitted, the following information:

- Vendor name.

- Sample year.

- Sample month.

- The HHA's CCN.

- The file name, which is the name the vendor assigned to the file.

- The date the file was submitted.

- The number of patients sampled for the specific sample month.

- The number of completed surveys—that is, the number of sampled patients who completed and returned the mail survey or completed a telephone interview.

Please review Chapter 9 in the *HHCAHPS Survey Protocols and Guidelines Manual* for more information about the HHCAHPS completeness criteria).

- The number of incomplete responses. Note that the vendor must check all completed surveys received to ensure that the survey passes the completeness criteria. The HHCAHPS Data Center also applies the same completeness criteria to all cases included on the file as part of the secondary validation. This column will show the number of cases that did not pass the completeness check applied by the Data Center.
- An indicator of whether the file passed or failed the validation checks will appear in the "Validation Status" column.

Monitoring Vendor Performance

HHAs are advised to check the Data Submission Report regularly to ensure that their vendor submits a data file for <u>every sample month</u>. If a file is not submitted for each sample month, the HHA will not be in compliance with HHCAHPS participation requirements for the APU.

The HHA is responsible for submitting the monthly patient information file to the survey vendor so that the vendor can implement the survey for each sample month. A vendor cannot implement the survey unless the HHA provides the monthly patient information files needed for fielding the survey and for data analysis. HHAs are encouraged to submit the monthly patient information files by the date established by the vendor so that the vendor can implement the survey for each sample month.

More Information About the HHCAHPS Data Submissions

More information about HHCAHPS Survey implementation protocols is available in the aforementioned *Protocols and Guidelines Manual*, which is available on the "Survey and Protocols" link on the HHCAHPS website. HHAs are also encouraged to review the *HHCAHPS Website User and Data Submission Manual*, which is available on the "Data Submission" tab on the HHCAHPS website.

HHAs should contact their HHCAHPS Survey vendor if they have any questions about HHCAHPS data submissions. HHAs may also contact the HHCAHPS Coordination Team at hhcahps@rti.org or by calling the toll-free number at (866) 354-0985 for more information about the HHCAHPS Survey.