# Home Health Care CAHPS® Survey Vendor Update Webinar Training Session

**August 27, 2025** 



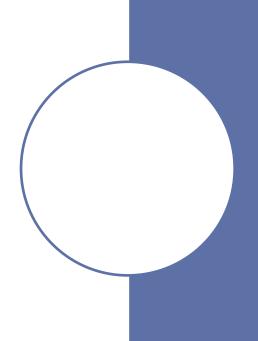
## **Training Session Logistics**

#### Welcome

- Please remain connected to both the web and phone/VOIP to receive credit for attending today's session.
- Please contact our Webinar Event Specialist, Patrick Ahearn, for technical assistance issues at: <a href="mailto:pahearn@rti.org">pahearn@rti.org</a>.
- You can submit questions via the Q&A feature or click on the "raise hand" icon to ask your question live.



## **Training Session Overview**



## **Topics**

- Proposed HHCAHPS Survey Changes
- Impact of Proposed Survey Changes
- Next Steps for Vendors
- Q&A



# **Proposed HHCAHPS Survey Changes**



## Highlights from the CY 2025 Proposed Rule

- Proposed updates to the HHCAHPS survey instrument will roll out with the April 2026 sample month, meaning the proposed survey will be disseminated in May 2026 for the first time
- No changes to the survey administration or survey modes offered
- Changes to the publicly reported measures have gone through CMS's consensus-based review process
  - We will share what those measures may look like later in this training



# Proposed Changes to the HHCAHPS Survey Instrument

- Reduced overall number of questions from 34 to 25
- Changes include removing questions, consolidating existing questions and adding a few new questions
  - Other minor wording changes throughout survey to increase clarity for patients
- Reduced administration time from 12 minutes to 9 minutes
- These changes impact both the mail and telephone versions of the survey



# Proposed Changes to the HHCAHPS Survey Instrument (cont'd)

# **Consolidated Questions**



# **Removed Questions**



#### **Medication Questions**

- 6 questions to 2 questions
  - *Q5* "see-meds"
  - Q11 "take-newmeds"
  - Q12 "talk-about-newmeds"
  - Q13 "when-take-meds"

#### **Race & Ethnicity Questions**

- 2 questions to 1 question
  - *Q30* "ethnicity"

#### **Types of Staff Questions**

- Cut 3 questions
  - *Q6* "nurse-provider"
  - Q7 "phys-occ-sp-ther"
  - Q8 "personal-care"

## **Services Information Question**

- Cut 3 questions
  - Q2 "what-care-get"
  - Q23 "how-long-helpafterhours"
  - Q24 "problems-withcare-screener"

## Pain Management Question

- Cut 1 question
  - Q10 "talk-aboutpain"

These proposed changes were made to reduce respondent burden



# Proposed Changes to the HHCAHPS Survey Instrument (cont'd)

#### **New Questions**



#### **Topics Important to Patients**

- Added 3 questions
- Items identified as important by HHAs and consumers
- Whether the care provided helped the patient take care of their health,
- Whether the patient's family/friends were given sufficient information and instructions, and
- Whether the patient felt the staff cared about them "as a person."

Overall, these proposed changes shortened the survey by 9 questions and lowered the administration time by 3 minutes!



# **Impact of Proposed Survey Changes**



## What Will the Proposed Survey Updates Impact?

- HHCAHPS Survey materials
- Data processing (e.g., definition of a completed survey)
- XML data file layouts
- Patient-mix adjusters and new mode adjuster
- Publicly reported measures (modified composites and individual items)



## Impact on Survey Materials Available on HHCAHPS Website

- Mail questionnaire (all languages)
  - Optical scan version will be posted later
- Regular and proxy versions of telephone scripts (all languages)
- Standard and DSRS versions of the XML Data File Layouts
- Standard and DSRS versions of the XML Schema Files (XSD) files



## **Impact on OMB Information**

- Final revisions to the OMB Disclosure Notice forthcoming
  - Potential OMB Disclosure Notice to the right to show scale. Do NOT implement these changes until a final version is posted on HHCAHPS website
  - No changes to OMB Disclosure Notice placement (either printed on the mail survey or cover letter)
- Updated OMB Expiration Date once OMB approval is granted
  - The HHCAHPS OMB number (0938-1066) is not expected to change

#### **Current OMB Disclosure Notice**

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0938-1066. The expiration date for OMB control number 0938-1066 is July 31, 2026. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 12 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data sources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop C1-25-05, Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850.

#### **Potential OMB Disclosure Notice**

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0938-1066. This information collection produces comparable data from home health agencies to help individuals choose an agency and improve care. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average less than 9 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, to review and complete the information collection. This information collection is mandatory for qualifying home health agencies under 42 CFR §484.255(i) to meet program requirements and voluntary for survey respondents. Confidentiality is assured under 5 U.S.C. 552a (Privacy Act of 1974). If you have comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: CMS, 7500 Security Boulevard, Attn: PRA Reports Clearance Officer, Mail Stop C1-25-05, Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850. \*\*\*\*CMS Disclosure\*\*\*\* Please do not send applications, claims, payments, medical records or any documents containing sensitive information to the PRA Reports Clearance Office. Please note that any correspondence not pertaining to the information collection burden approved under the associated OMB control number listed on this form will not be reviewed, forwarded, or retained. If you have questions or concerns regarding where to submit your survey, please email <a href="Months HomeHealth CAHPS@cms.hhs.gov">HomeHealth CAHPS@cms.hhs.gov</a>.



# Summary of Proposed Instrument Changes in NEW Crosswalk

 Vendors can view what changed from the current to the draft revised survey by using the new resource document available on the HHCAHPS website:

# Crosswalk of Changes Between Current and Updated Surveys

 Available through "Survey and Protocols" menu, under "Planned Survey Materials for 2026" view:



#### **Snippet of Crosswalk:**

НН	CAHPS Survey, original version	HHCAHPS Survey, updated version	Summary of Changes
1.	According to our records, you got care from the home health agency, [AGENCY NAME]. Is that right?  As you answer the questions in this survey, think only about your experience with this agency.	According to our records, you got care from the home health agency, [AGENCY NAME]. Is that right?	Second paragraph revised and moved prior to Question 2.
2.	When you first started getting home health care from this agency, did someone from the agency tell you what care and services you would get?	N/A	Question was removed from the updated survey.
3.	When you first started getting home health care from this agency, did someone from the agency talk with you about how to set up your home so you can move around safely?	When you first started getting home health care from this agency, did someone from the agency talk about ways to help make your home safer? For example, they may have suggested adding grab bars in the shower or removing tripping hazards.	Question wording revised and examples provided.
4.	When you started getting home health care from this agency, did someone from the agency talk with you about all the prescription and over-the-counter medicines you were taking?	Has someone from the agency ever reviewed the prescribed and over-the-counter medicines you were taking? For example, they might have asked you to show them your medicines and talked with you about how and when to take each one.	Several questions about medications were combined into this new question.
5.	When you started getting home health care from this agency, did someone from the agency ask to see all the prescription and overthe-counter medicines you were taking?	N/A	Question was removed from the updated survey.
6.	In the last 2 months of care, was one of your home health providers from this agency a nurse?	N/A	Question was removed from the updated survey.
7.	In the last 2 months of care, was one of your home health providers from this agency a physical, occupational, or speech therapist?	N/A	Question was removed from the updated survey.
8.	In the last 2 months of care, was one of your home health providers from this agency a home health or personal aide?	N/A	Question was removed from the updated survey.



# Location of Draft Updated Survey Instruments on HHCAHPS Website

#### Planned Survey Materials for 2026

View Current Survey Materials

The HHCAHPS Survey materials available below are in draft format until publication of the calendar year 2026 Final Rule in late 2025. Please monitor this website for information on the Rule and expected implementation of the updated HHCAHPS Survey.

PDF versions of the materials below available upon request.

	English	Spanish	Simplified Chinese	Traditional Chinese	Russian	Vietnamese	Eastern Armenian
Questionnaire							
Standard Version	8/20/2025	8/20/2025	8/20/2025	8/20/2025	8/20/2025	8/20/2025	8/20/2025
Telephone Scripts							
Regular Script	8/20/2025	8/20/2025			8/20/2025		
Proxy Respondent	8/20/2025	8/20/2025			8/20/2025		
FAQs for rolling out updated survey	8/20/2025						
Crosswalk between original survey to updated survey	8/20/2025						
Crosswalk of publicly reported measures	8/20/2025						
Crosswalk of standard XML data file layout	8/20/2025						



# Location of Draft Revised XML and XSD Files on HHCAHPS Website

#### **Data Submission Resources**

This page provides resources for survey vendors to assist in preparing their monthly XML files. The XML Data File Layouts provide details about every data element included in the header record, patient administrative record, and patient response record. The XML Schema Files show the details of all validation that will be applied to each data element at the time the file is submitted. The *Data Submission Manual* provides guidance on the website functions, XML data file preparation, and file submission.

Resource	File
Website User and Data Submission Manual	PCS Middle
XML Sample File (Current)	

#### Current

Sampling Method	XML File Layout	XML Schema File (XSD)	Date Posted
Standard	OC SAN	NIO S	1/23/2024
DSRS	PCS Adda	MID.	1/23/2024
Zero Sampled		NO.	1/23/2024

#### Planned

Sampling Method	XML File Layout	XML Schema File (XSD)	Date Posted
Standard	POP AGE	E30	8/20/2025
DSRS	PCC AGAIN	E30	8/20/2025
Zero Sampled		200	8/20/2025



# Anticipated Timeline for Data Submission and Public Reporting Milestones\*

Activity	Estimated Date(s)
First sample month fielding the revised HHCAHPS Survey	April 2026
Data Submission Tool unavailable on HHCAHPS website so that transition can be made to the revised tools	After July 2026 data submission deadline
First quarterly data submission deadline in which revised survey data are submitted	October 2026
Last time current survey data publicly reported (Quarter 2, 2025 – Quarter 1, 2026)	October 2026
Revised modified measure scores available via agencies' Survey Preview Reports on HHCAHPS website	TBD 2027
First time all modified measures will be publicly reported (Quarter 2, 2026 – Quarter 1, 2027)	October 2027

<sup>\*</sup> Information reflects a launch of the revised survey with April 2026 sample month. Any changes to this launch will be announced on HHCAHPS website. Information is not final until CY2026 Final Rule published later in 2025.



## **Impact on HHCAHPS Data Processing**

#### **Definition of a Completed Survey**

- Survey is considered "complete" and should be assigned a final disposition code of 110 (Completed Mail Survey) or 120 (Completed Phone Interview) if at least 50% of the questions applicable to all sample members (Questions 1-15, 17) on the draft survey are answered
- Vendors must revise completeness algorithms to reflect these adjustment

#### Example Case:

Survey returned with the following responses marked: Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q16, Q18, Q19, Q20, Q21, Q22, Q23, and Q24.

- 7 questions answered applicable to all sample members (Q1-Q7).
- 7/16 = 44%
- Code 310—Breakoff



## **Impact on XML Data File Layout**

- Header Record No changes
- Patient Administrative Data Record
  - Removed 6 diagnosis code variables (Primary and Other Diagnosis Codes)
  - Programmatically relabeled <gender> data variable to <sex>



## Impact on XML Data File Layout (cont'd)

- Patient Response Record
  - Removed 12 data variables corresponding to survey questions removed or consolidated
  - Renamed 4 data variables based on revised questions
  - Added 3 new data variables corresponding to new survey questions
  - Added 2 new response categories to the former race question due to combining race and ethnicity questions



## Summary of Planned XML Data File Layout Changes in NEW Crosswalk

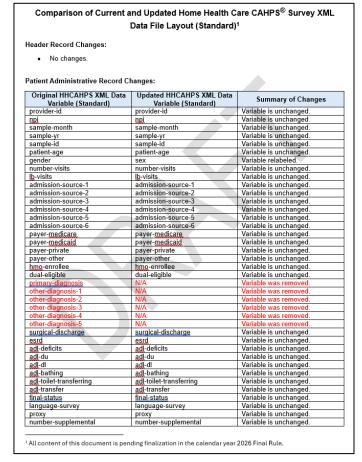
 Vendors can view planned changes to the XML data file layout by using the new resource document available on the HHCAHPS website:

# Crosswalk of Changes Between Current and Updated XML Data File Layout (Standard)

 Available through "Survey and Protocols" menu, under "Planned Survey Materials for 2026" view:



#### **Snippet of Crosswalk:**





## **Impact on Survey Analysis**

## **Current Patient-Mix Analysis Variables:**

- Age
- Education
- Self-Reported Overall Health
- Self-Reported Mental Health
- Diagnosis of Schizophrenia or Dementia
  - Patient Lives Alone
  - Survey answered by proxy
  - Language in which Survey Completed



## Planned Patient-Mix Analysis Variables\*:

- Age
- Education
- Self-Reported Overall Health
- Self-Reported Mental Health
- Diagnosis of Schizophrenia or Dementia
  - Patient Lives Alone
  - Survey answered by proxy
  - Language in which Survey Completed

\* Not final until CY2026 Final Rule published later in 2025.



## Impact on Survey Analysis (cont'd)

# Mode Adjustments of Top Box Percentages After Patient-Mix Adjustment to Adjust Other Modes to a Reference of Mail Only (Derived from the Mode Experiment)\*

Proposed HHCAHPS Survey	Top-Box Adjustments		
Publicly Reported Measures	Phone Only	Mail with Phone	
HHCAHPS Composite Measures			
Care of Patients	-0.026	-0.017	
Communications between Providers and Patients	-0.024	-0.017	
HHCAHPS Individual Items			
Talk About Home Safety	-0.021	0.005	
Review Medicines	-0.045	-0.019	
Talk About Medicine Side Effects	-0.060	-0.033	
HHCAHPS Global Items			
Overall Agency Rating	-0.027	-0.035	
Willingness to Recommend Agency	-0.035	0.003	

<sup>\*</sup> Not final until CY2026 Final Rule published later in 2025.



## **Impact on Public Reporting**

Planned publicly reported measures with revised survey:\*

Measure	Modified or Unchanged Measure	Item(s) in Updated Survey
Care of Patients	Modified	Q6, Q7, Q10, Q11, Q13
Communications Between Providers and Patients	Modified	Q5, Q8, Q9, Q12, Q16
Talk About Home Safety	Modified	Q2
Review Medicines	Modified	Q3
Talk About Medicine Side Effects	Modified	Q4
Overall Rating	Unchanged	Q14
Willingness to Recommend	Unchanged	Q17

<sup>\*</sup> Not final until CY2026 Final Rule published later in 2025.



## Summary of Planned Changes to Publicly Reported Measures to be Displayed in NEW Crosswalk

 Vendors can view planned changes to the publicly reported measures by using the new resource document available on the HHCAHPS website:

# Crosswalk of Changes Between Current and Updated Publicly Reported Measures.

 Available through "Survey and Protocols" menu, under "Planned Survey Materials for 2026" view:



#### **Snippet of Crosswalk:**

Measure with Updated Survey	Item(s) in Current Measure	Item(s) in Proposed Updated or New Measure
	In the last 2 months of care, how often did home health providers from this agency seem informed and up-to-date about all the care or treatment you got at home? (Q9)	In the last 2 months of care, how often did home health staff from this agency seem to be aware of all the care or treatment you were getting at home? (Q6)
	In the last 2 months of care, how often did home health providers from this agency treat you as gently as possible? (Q16)	In the last 2 months of care, how often did home health staff from this agency treat you with care – for example, when moving you around or changing a bandage? (Q7)
Care of Patients (Modified)	In the last 2 months of care, how often did home health providers from this agency treat you with courtesy and respect? (Q19)	In the last 2 months of care, how often did home health staff from this agency treat you with courtesy and respect? (Q10)
	• N/A	In the last 2 months of care, how often did you feel that home health staff from the agency cared about you as a person? (Q11)
	• N/A	In the last 2 months of care, how often have the services you received from this agency helped you take care of your health? (Q13)
	In the last 2 months of care, did you have any problems with the care you got through this agency? (Q24)	N/A (removed from updated survey)
	When you first started getting home health care from this agency, did someone from the agency tell you what care and services you would get? (Q2)	N/A (removed from updated survey)
Communications between Providers and Patients (Modified)	In the last 2 months of care, how often did home health providers from this agency keep you informed about when they would arrive at your home? (Q15)	In the last 2 months of care, how often did home health staff from this agency keep you informed about when they would arrive at your home? (Q5)
	In the last 2 months of care, how often did home health providers from this agency explain things in a way that was easy to understand? (Q17)	In the last 2 months of care, how often did home health staff from this agency explain things in a way that was easy to understand? (Q8)
	In the last 2 months of care, how often did home health providers from this agency listen carefully to you? (Q18)	In the last 2 months of care, how often did home health staff from this agency listen carefully to you? (Q9)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For some survey items, there are slight tweaks to the item wording in the revised survey based on testing.



<sup>2</sup> All content of this document is pending finalization in the calendar year 2026 Final Rul

## **Future Impact on Public Reporting Resource Documents**

- Additional HHCAHPS website materials will be updated at a future date.
   Materials include:
  - Calculating Public Reporting Measures (via "General Information" menu)
  - Survey Composites and Global Ratings (via "Survey and Protocols" menu)
  - Understanding the Preview Report (via "For HHAs" menu)
  - Star Ratings Informational documents (via "Quick Links" box on Home page)
  - Patient-Mix Adjustment Factors (via "Information for HHAs" box on Home page)
- Announcements will be posted on the HHCAHPS website when these materials are updated and available



## **NEW FAQs for Rolling Out Updated Survey**

- Vendors and HHAs can access frequently asked questions (FAQs) for rolling out the draft, updated HHCAHPS Survey, available on the HHCAHPS website.
- Available through "Survey and Protocols" menu, under "Planned Survey Materials for 2026" view:



#### **Snippet of FAQs:**

#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR ROLLING OUT UPDATED HHCAHPS SURVEY<sup>1</sup>

#### **Proposed HHCAHPS Survey Changes**

#### What proposed changes have been made to the HHCAHPS Survey?

The draft updated HHCAHPS Survey is shorter than the current survey and includes new questions on topics suggested by interested collaborators. Specifically, proposed changes to the survey include:

- · Addition of three new questions to assess topics of importance to patients:
  - o whether the care provided helped the patient take care of their health,
  - whether the patient's family/friends were given sufficient information and instructions, and
  - o whether the patient felt the staff cared about them "as a person."
- Removal of questions or topics of less importance to patients (i.e., six questions about medications were reduced to two questions). The following four questions were removed:
  - whether someone asked to see all the prescription and over-the-counter medicines the patient was taking (Q5).
  - whether the patient is taking any new prescription medicines or whether the patient's medicines have changed (Q11),
  - whether home health providers talked to patient about the purpose for taking new or changed prescription medicines (Q12), and
  - whether home health providers talked to the patient about when to take the medicines (O13).
- Removal of questions not currently used in public reporting composites (i.e., three
  questions on which type of staff served the patient—nurse Q6, physical or occupational
  therapist Q7, and home care aide Q8).
- Removal of one question that did not perform well in testing to stand alone or fit into one
  of the modified composite measures:
  - whether the patient got information about what care and services they would get when they first started getting home health care (Q2).



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> All content of this document is pending finalization in the calendar year 2026 Final Rule.

# **Next Steps for Vendors**



# NOW: Review the draft updated survey materials on HHCAHPS website

#### **Updated Materials**

- ☐ Standard mail questionnaires in all languages
- ☐ Regular and proxy CATI instruments in all languages
- ☐ XML data file layouts, standard and DSRS
- ☐ XML schema files (XSD)

#### **New Materials**

- □ FAQs for rolling out updated survey
- ☐ Crosswalk of current survey to updated survey
- ☐ Crosswalk of current and updated publicly reported measures
- ☐ Crosswalk of current and updated standard XML data file layout



# NOW: Begin developing draft updated survey materials

- Begin developing revised survey questionnaires
- Review and revise survey letters if they include OMB disclosure
- Begin developing revised CATI instruments (including proxy instrument)
- Review and revise your data processing programs, XML file development programs, and QC processes as needed



### **Upcoming: January 2026**

- Attend Survey Vendor Update Training
- Review self-paced Introduction Training as relevant
- Review newly-released HHCAHPS Survey Protocols & Guidelines Manual, V 18.0
- Update revised mail instruments with final OMB number and expiration date



### **Upcoming: February 2026**

- The following materials must be submitted to the Coordination Team for review no later than February 28, 2026
  - Revised mail questionnaire (in English)
  - CATI scripts (in English)
- Vendors can submit their revised materials to the Coordination Team on a flow basis



## **Upcoming: March 2026**

- Within 2 weeks after notification of new OMB approval information, vendors must resubmit their revised materials, updated with approved OMB disclosure notice, OMB number (if different), and expiration date including
  - Revised mail questionnaire
  - Cover letters (if they include the OMB disclosure notice)



## **Upcoming: April 2026 sample month**

- Vendors must finalize their programs and systems in time to implement the updated survey, beginning with the April 2026 sample month.
  - First questionnaire mailing and first telephone call attempts will begin May 21, 2026
- The Coordination Team will notify vendors if there are any delays in implementing the updated survey.



## **Upcoming: August 2026**

- Submit test XML data file to the Coordination Team
  - After July 2026, vendors will receive an email reminder to submit a test file using the new tool, to help them make sure all data elements are properly named and formatted



# **Questions?**



### **Thank You**

- Thank you for participating in this Vendor Update Training Session.
- Please complete the evaluation form before disconnecting from this session.

If you have questions following today's training, please reach out to us via email at <a href="mailto:hhcahps@rti.org">hhcahps@rti.org</a> or call us at 1-866-354-0985

