

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

**January 28, 2026**



# 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, Shane Hamstra, for technical assistance issues at [shamstra@rti.org](mailto:shamstra@rti.org).
- You can submit questions via the Q&A feature or click on the "raise hand" icon to ask your question live.

# Training Session Overview



- *Protocols and Guidelines Manual, V18.0 Updates*
- *HHCAHPS Survey Changes*
- *Impact of Survey Changes*
- *Vendor Oversight Activities with Revised Survey Roll Out*
- *Q&A*

# **Protocols and Guidelines Manual, Version 18.0 Updates**

# General Content Changes (1 of 3)

- Added section and subsection numbering throughout to make finding specific requirements easier
- Removed appendices previously available in full, and replaced these with a single appendix (**Appendix A**) that contains links to the standalone documents on HHCAHPS website (as shown in example snippet)

Version 18.0

Appendix A: Links for HHCAHPS Resources and Supplemental Materials

To view the resources below, please select the link.

- [XML Data File Layouts](#)
  - Standard Header Record
  - Disproportionate Stratified Random Sampling (DSRS)
- [Model Quality Assurance Plan \(QAP\)](#)

The survey materials and resources listed below may be found on the [Survey and Protocols tab](#) of the HHCAHPS Survey website.

- **English Survey Materials**
  - Sample Cover Letter for First Questionnaire Mailing
  - Sample Cover Letter for Second Questionnaire Mailing
  - Mail Questionnaire (standard version)
  - Telephone Interview Script
  - Proxy Telephone Interview Script
- **Spanish Survey Materials**
  - Sample Cover Letter for First Questionnaire Mailing
  - Sample Cover Letter for Second Questionnaire Mailing
  - Mail Questionnaire (standard version)
  - Telephone Interview Script
  - Proxy Telephone Interview Script

## General Content Changes (2 of 3)

- Expanded the standalone documents available on “Survey and Protocols” webpage to include former appendices and some new materials (see **Exhibit 10.3** in *Protocols and Guidelines Manual, Version 18.0*).

### Snippet of Exhibit 10.3 HHCAHPS Survey Site Navigation Menus

Surveys and Protocols	
➤	Protocols & Guidelines Manual
➤	Questionnaire
➤	Supplemental Questions
➤	Consent to Share Responses
➤	Survey Composites and Global Ratings
➤	Sample Letters
➤	Telephone Scripts
➤	FAQs for Interviewers
➤	General Guidelines for Telephone Interviewers
➤	Interviewer Monitoring Form
➤	OMB Disclosure Notices
➤	Sample File Layout
➤	Vendor Application PDF
➤	Exceptions Request Form PDF
➤	Discrepancy Notification Report PDF

## General Content Changes (3 of 3)

- Reduced redundancy throughout the manual to simplify navigation
  - Example: Chapter 7 (Mixed Mode Survey Administration) consolidated to only protocols unique to mixed mode.
- Updated guidelines to reflect the revised HHCAHPS Survey throughout
  - Example: Updated “Core” and “About You” question information
  - **Exception:** Chapter 13 (Public Reporting) reflects *current* survey and publicly reported measures since that is what will be publicly reported in 2026.

# New Requirements for 2026

- Include members of the Coordination Team and/or CMS as seed mailing recipients (**Sec. 5.4.1**) (mail *and* mixed-mode data collection)
  - Vendors will be notified with seed mailing requests at least 30 days in advance to minimize disruptions
- Consider the full calling history of a case record when assigning a final status code (**Sec. 6.7.1**) (telephone data collection)
  - Vendors should *not* assign the final status code based *solely* on the final call attempt. Instead, the full calling history must be considered
- Update telephone calling queues throughout the field period to remove cases with a final mail status (**Sec. 7.3.2**) (mixed-mode data collection)
  - A final mail status would include a mail survey complete, final refusal, or identification of an ineligible respondent



# New Requirements for 2026 (cont'd)

- Consider full mailing and/or calling history of sampled case when assigning a final disposition code, not just the last contact attempt (**Sec. 7.3.3**) (mixed mode data collection)
- Vendors have always been required to be responsive and meet all deadlines set by CMS and the HHCAHPS Survey Coordination Team. Beginning in 2026, a failure to do so may result in a Corrective Action Plan (**Sec. 12.4**)
  - If more time is needed, vendors must request an accommodation (via email) **prior to the deadline**

# Other Changes for 2026

- Recommendations
  - Vendors should complete the survey over the telephone if a sample member requests it during the mail phase of the data collection (**Sec. 7.3.1**) (mixed-mode data collection *only*)
- Clarifications
  - Clarified guidance that home health agencies cannot use HHCAHPS Survey comments as testimonials or for marketing purposes (**Sec. 5.3.1.3**)
  - Clarified guidance on adhering to mail survey cover letter text as it appears in the cover letters available on the HHCAHPS website (**Sec. 5.3.2**) (mail and mixed-mode data collection)
  - Additional guidance on vendor-provided summary reports to client HHAs (**Sec. 8.6**) (all vendors)

# HHCAHPS Survey Changes



# Highlights from CY2026 Final Rule

- All of CMS's proposed changes were finalized in calendar year (CY) 2026 Final Rule published December 2, 2025.
- Final updates to the HHCAHPS survey instrument will roll out with the **April 2026** sample month, meaning the updated survey will be disseminated in **May 2026** for the first time.
- **No changes** to the survey administration or survey modes offered
- Changes to public reporting measures:
  - Modified Care of Patients and Communications Between Providers and Patients composites
  - Addition of three new standalone measures

# Changes to HHCAHPS Survey Instrument (1 of 3)

- 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

# Changes to HHCAHPS Survey Instrument (2 of 3)

<b>Consolidated Questions</b> 	<b>Medication Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 6 questions to 2 questions<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Q5 – "see-meds"</li><li>◦ Q11 – "take-newmeds"</li><li>◦ Q12 – "talk-about-newmeds"</li><li>◦ Q13 – "when-take-meds"</li></ul></li></ul>	<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 questions to 1 question<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Q30 – "ethnicity"</li></ul></li></ul>	
<b>Removed Questions</b> 	<b>Types of Staff Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cut 3 questions<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Q6 – "nurse-provider"</li><li>◦ Q7 – "phys-occ-sp-ther"</li><li>◦ Q8 – "personal-care"</li></ul></li></ul>	<b>Services Information Question</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cut 3 questions<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Q2 – "what-care-get"</li><li>◦ Q23 – "how-long-help-afterhours"</li><li>◦ Q24 – "problems-with-care-screener"</li></ul></li></ul>	<b>Pain Management Question</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cut 1 question<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Q10 – "talk-about-pain"</li></ul></li></ul>

***These changes were made to reduce respondent burden***

# Changes to HHCAHPS Survey Instrument (3 of 3)

## 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 changes shortened the survey by 9 questions and lowered the administration time by 3 minutes!***

# Impact of Survey Changes



# What Will the 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)
- Standard 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
- Telephone interviewer FAQs (English and Spanish)

# 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
  - 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 [HomeHealthCAHPS@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:HomeHealthCAHPS@cms.hhs.gov).

# Summary of Instrument Changes in Crosswalk

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

## *Crosswalk of Changes Between Current and Updated Surveys*

- Available through “Survey and Protocols” menu, under “Updated Survey Materials and Protocols Starting Quarter 2, 2026” view.

### Snippet of Crosswalk:

Rev. January 2026

Comparison of Current and Updated Home Health Care CAHPS<sup>®</sup> Survey Instruments<sup>1</sup>

HHCAHPS 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.	1. According to our records, you got care from the home health agency, [AGENCY NAME]. Is that right?	Second paragraph <u>revised</u> 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 <b>talk with you</b> about how to set up your home so you can move around safely?	2. When you first started getting home health care from this agency, did someone from the agency talk about <b>ways to help make your home safer?</b> 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 <b>prescription and over-the-counter medicines</b> you were taking?	3. Has someone from the agency ever <b>reviewed the prescribed and over-the-counter medicines</b> 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 <b>see</b> all the prescription and over-the-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.

<sup>1</sup> Updated HHCAHPS Survey instrument pending OMB approval.

HHCAHPS Survey Question Crosswalk 1

# Location of Updated Survey Instruments on HHCAHPS Website

## Updated Survey Materials and Protocols Starting Quarter 2, 2026

[View Current Survey Materials](#)

HHCAHPS Survey materials available below reflect the updated HHCAHPS Survey and take effect with the April 2026 sample month.



PDF versions of the materials below available upon request.

	English	Spanish	Simplified Chinese	Traditional Chinese	Russian	Vietnamese	Eastern Armenian
<a href="#">Protocols and Guidelines Manual</a>							
PDF Version	 1/23/2026						
MS Word Version (Available upon request)							
<a href="#">Questionnaire*</a>							
							






# Location of 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	
XML Sample File (Current)	

### Current Files (use for submitting data through the March 2026 sample month [CY2026,Q1])

Sampling Method	XML File Layout	XML Schema File (XSD)	Date Posted
Standard			1/23/2024
DSRS			1/23/2024
Zero Sampled			8/3/2023

### Updated files (use for submitting data starting with April 2026 sample month [CY2026,Q2])

Sampling Method	XML File Layout	XML Schema File (XSD)	Date Posted
Standard			1/21/2026
DSRS			1/21/2026
Zero Sampled			1/21/2026

# 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' <i>Survey Preview Reports</i> on HHCAHPS website	TBD 2027
First time all modified measures will be publicly reported (Quarter 2, 2026 – Quarter 1, 2027)	October 2027

\* Pending OMB approval



# 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 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 XML Data File Layout Changes in Crosswalk

- Vendors can view changes to the XML data file layout by using the 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 “Updated Survey Materials and Protocols Starting Quarter 2, 2026” view.

### Snippet of Crosswalk:

Rev. January 2026

Comparison of Current and Updated Home Health Care CAHPS® Survey XML Data File Layout (Standard)<sup>1</sup>

Header Record Changes:

- No changes. The [HHCAHPS Header Record](#) data variables can be found on the HHCAHPS website.

Patient Administrative Record Changes:

Original HHCAHPS XML Data Variable (Standard)	Updated HHCAHPS XML Data Variable (Standard)	Summary of Changes
provider-id	provider-id	Variable is unchanged.
ngi	ngi	Variable is unchanged.
sample-month	sample-month	Variable is unchanged.
sample-yr	sample-yr	Variable is unchanged.
sample-id	sample-id	Variable is unchanged.
patient-age	patient-age	Variable is unchanged.
gender	sex	Variable relabeled.
number-visits	number-visits	Variable is unchanged.
tb-visits	tb-visits	Variable is unchanged.
admission-source-1	admission-source-1	Variable is unchanged.
admission-source-2	admission-source-2	Variable is unchanged.
admission-source-3	admission-source-3	Variable is unchanged.
admission-source-4	admission-source-4	Variable is unchanged.
admission-source-5	admission-source-5	Variable is unchanged.
admission-source-6	admission-source-6	Variable is unchanged.
payer-medicare	payer-medicare	Variable is unchanged.
payer-medicaid	payer-medicaid	Variable is unchanged.
payer-private	payer-private	Variable is unchanged.
payer-other	payer-other	Variable is unchanged.
hmo-enrollee	hmo-enrollee	Variable is unchanged.
dual-eligible	dual-eligible	Variable is unchanged.
primary-diagnosis	N/A	Variable was removed.
other-diagnosis-1	N/A	Variable was removed.
other-diagnosis-2	N/A	Variable was removed.
other-diagnosis-3	N/A	Variable was removed.
other-diagnosis-4	N/A	Variable was removed.
other-diagnosis-5	N/A	Variable was removed.
surgical-discharge	surgical-discharge	Variable is unchanged.
esrd	esrd	Variable is unchanged.
adi-deficits	adi-deficits	Variable is unchanged.
adi-du	adi-du	Variable is unchanged.
adi-dl	adi-dl	Variable is unchanged.
adi-bathing	adi-bathing	Variable is unchanged.
adi-toilet-transferring	adi-toilet-transferring	Variable is unchanged.
adi-transfer	adi-transfer	Variable is unchanged.
final-status	final-status	Variable is unchanged.
language-survey	language-survey	Variable is unchanged.

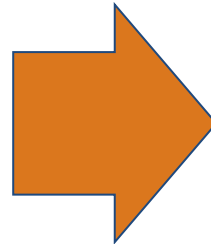
<sup>1</sup> Updated HHCAHPS Survey instrument pending OMB approval.

Crosswalk of HHCAHPS Survey Standard XML File Layout Fields 1

# 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



## Updated 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

# 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)

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

# Impact on Public Reporting

Updated 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

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

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

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

- Available through “Survey and Protocols” menu, under “Updated Survey Materials and Protocols Starting Quarter 2, 2026” view.

### Snippet of Crosswalk:

Rev. January 2026

Updated Home Health Care CAHPS Survey Measures<sup>12</sup>

Measure with Updated Survey	Item(s) in Current Measure	Item(s) in Updated or New Measure
Care of Patients (Modified)	• In the last 2 months of care, how often did home health providers from this agency seem informed and <u>up-to-date</u> 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 <b>aware of all the care or treatment</b> you were getting at home? (Q6)
	• In the last 2 months of care, how often <u>did</u> 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 <b>treat you with care</b> –for example, when moving you around or changing a bandage? (Q7)
	• In the last 2 months of care, how often <u>did</u> home health providers from this agency <u>treat</u> 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 <b>courtesy and respect</b> ? (Q10)
	• N/A	• In the last 2 months of care, how often did you feel that home health staff from the agency <b>cared about you as a person</b> ? (Q11)
	• N/A	• In the last 2 months of care, how often have the services you received from this agency <b>helped you take care of your health</b> ? (Q13)
	• In the last 2 months of care, <u>did</u> you have any problems with the care you got through this agency? (Q24)	• N/A (removed from updated survey)
Communications between Providers and Patients (Modified)	• 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)
	• In the last 2 months of care, how often <u>did</u> home health providers from this agency <u>keep</u> 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 <b>keep you informed about when they would arrive</b> at your home? (Q5)

<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> Updated HHCAHPS Survey instrument pending OMB approval.

Crosswalk of Publicly Reported HHCAHPS Survey Measures1

# 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



# FAQs for Rolling Out Updated Survey

- Vendors and HHAs can access frequently asked questions (FAQs) for rolling out the updated HHCAHPS Survey, available on the HHCAHPS website.
- Available through “Survey and Protocols” menu, under “Updated Survey Materials and Protocols Starting Quarter 2, 2026” view.

## Snippet of FAQs:

Rev. January 2026

### HHCAHPS Frequently Asked Questions for the Updated Survey

Please note the Updated HHCAHPS Survey instrument is pending OMB approval.

#### HHCAHPS Survey Changes

**What changes have been made to the HHCAHPS Survey?**

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

- Addition of three new questions to assess topics of importance to patients:
  - 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.”
- 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 (Q13).
- 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).
- Minor text changes to some existing questions to help clarify the question or response options, based on feedback from patients.

HHCAHPS FAQs for the Updated Survey 1

# **HHCAHPS Vendor Oversight Activities with Revised Survey Roll Out**

# Expectations for Site Visits in 2026

All 2026 site visits will remain virtual.

Site Visit Team reviews materials prior to site visit. Starting in 2026, this will include:

- raw telephone survey response data, and
- call attempt data for cases coded 350-No Response After Max Attempts.

Site visits this year will focus on preparation and implementation activities for the revised HHCAHPS Survey roll out.

Site visits will be shortened to 4-5 hours in length.

The pre-site visit call (to review agenda, logistics and address questions) will be optional starting in 2026.

Telephone monitoring will take place outside of the site visit meeting; either before or after the scheduled visit.

Vendors are encouraged to develop a PowerPoint presentation for the site visit that aligns to the topics and guidelines stated in the site visit agenda.

*See Section 12.5 in Protocols and Guidelines Manual*

# Expectations for 2026 Annual QAP Update

Changes to key personnel (i.e., Project Manager or Survey Administrator, Sampling Manager, or Lead Computer Programmer) should also be updated in vendor's online HHCAHPS Survey Vendor Application form.

Include changes vendor made to reflect the revised HHCAHPS Survey rollout.

Follow Model QAP Outline when developing or updating QAP.

Use "tracked changes" to make annual updates. Doing so allows reviewers to easily see what has changed since previously approved QAP.

Include updated mail questionnaire and/or CATI scripts when submitting your QAP, if applicable.

Attachments and supporting materials should be included as appendices within the QAP document or submitted as a zipped file via email.

Embedded documents are now prohibited.

*See Section 12.2 in Protocols and Guidelines Manual*

# Timeline for Additional Oversight Activities in 2026 (1 of 7)

## ***NOW:* Finalize updated survey materials**

- Finish:
  - Developing revised survey questionnaires
  - Revising survey letters as needed
  - Developing revised CATI instruments (including proxy instrument)
  - Revising data processing programs, XML file development programs, and QC processes, as needed

# Timeline for Additional Oversight Activities in 2026 (2 of 7)

## *Upcoming: February 2026*

- Vendors must submit the following materials to Coordination Team via email for review **by February 27, 2026**:
  - Revised mail questionnaire (in English)
  - Revised standard and proxy CATI scripts (in English)
- Submit revised materials on a flow basis.
- Resubmission may be needed once OMB approval granted (if not granted by end of February 2026) and expiration date is confirmed.

# Timeline for Additional Oversight Activities in 2026 (3 of 7)

## ***Upcoming: March 2026\****

- **Within 2 weeks** after notification of OMB approval, vendors must resubmit their revised mail survey materials to Coordination Team via email for review. These materials should be updated with approved OMB disclosure notice and OMB expiration date including:
  - Revised mail questionnaire, and
  - Both mail survey cover letters (if they include the OMB disclosure notice).

*\*Date subject to change*

# Timeline for Additional Oversight Activities in 2026 (4 of 7)

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

- Vendors should have finalized their programs and systems to implement the updated survey, beginning with the April 2026 sample month.
  - First questionnaire mailing and first telephone call attempts will begin by May 21, 2026.
- Vendors administering mail-only and mixed modes will include RTI/CMS mailing seeds with final April 2026 sample. Instructions will be provided to vendors closer to this date.

*\*Assuming OMB approval*



# Timeline for Additional Oversight Activities in 2026 (5 of 7)

## ***Upcoming: mid-May to end of June 2026***

- A one-hour live monitoring session will be scheduled with each telephone and mixed-mode vendor.
  - Starting with the April 2026 list sample.
  - The Coordination Team will contact vendors to schedule the live monitoring session starting in March 2026.
  - Immediate feedback will be provided to vendor during session and in a summary following the session.

# Timeline for Additional Oversight Activities in 2026 (6 of 7)

## *Upcoming: mid-July to end of August 2026*

- Submit test XML data file **by August 31, 2026**
  - In summer 2026, vendors will receive a reminder to submit a test XML file using updated Data Submission Tool on HHCAHPS website.
  - Vendors will be notified when the Data Submission Tool is unavailable while it is updated.
  - Vendors will have from late July 2026 through August 31, 2026, to submit the test XML data file.
  - This will allow vendors time to correct any issues and receive guidance from the Coordination Team, if needed, before Quarter 2, 2026 data are due October 15, 2026.

# Timeline for Additional Oversight Activities in 2026 (7 of 7)

## ***Upcoming: after October 15, 2026***

- First data submission with revised survey data (Quarter 2, 2026).
- RTI will perform data frequencies and other data checks on survey data (e.g., compare data to original survey response data, where possible, to look for unexpected patterns).
- Issues identified will be shared with vendors.

# Questions?

# Thank You

- Thank you for participating in this Vendor Update Training Session.
- Please complete the evaluation form that will be available after disconnecting from this session.

If you have questions following today's training, please reach out to us via email at [hhcahps@rti.org](mailto:hhcahps@rti.org) or call us at 1-866-354-0985