

Questions and Answers from the HHCAHPS Survey Vendor January 2026 Update Webinar Training Session

Can you share a link to the slides so we can take notes during the webinar?

You can find the slides for both the Introduction and Update trainings on the [HHCAHPS website training page](https://homehealthcahps.org/Training/Training-Materials) [↗](https://homehealthcahps.org/Training/Training-Materials): <https://homehealthcahps.org/Training/Training-Materials>

If we have a prematurely terminated phone survey that passes the completeness criteria, but the respondent did not reach the end of the survey, do we continue calling or code as 120 at that point?

You should continue calling. As stated in Section 6.4.1 of the [Protocol and Guidelines Manual](#) [↗](#), "If a respondent begins the interview but cannot complete it during the call for a reason other than a refusal, the vendor should follow up with the respondent to complete the entire interview. The interviewer should follow up even if the respondent answered enough questions in the interview for the case to pass the completeness criteria. It is especially important to complete the questions in the "About You" section of the questionnaire because data from some of those questions will be used in patient-mix adjustment."

How much time between OMB approval and making updates will be provided?

We are unable to provide exact timing today as we are still waiting for final OMB approval. We will provide vendors with as much time as we can to allow them to make the required changes.

Is there a date estimate for the OMB approval?

We do not have a date estimate for when we may hear about OMB approval.

Can we keep using our own QA monitoring methods as long as all items on the official monitoring form are covered?

Yes. Vendors are free to continue using their own QA monitoring methods if they meet HHCAHPS requirements. The [Interviewer Monitoring Form](#) [↗](#) available on the Survey and Protocols tab is an additional resource for vendors, but its use is optional.

Are CMS staff going to change on a monthly basis for seed mail?

No. The upcoming seed mail request for the April 2026 sample month may include a mix of RTI and CMS staff and will only be requested for one sample month. This initial seed mail request will be sent to all vendors who conduct mail only and mixed-mode versions of HHCAHPS Survey as an additional oversight measure for the revised survey roll-out. After the April 2026 sample month, seed mail requests will be sent to vendors on an as-needed basis with at least 30 days' notice.

Will the Coordination Team be requesting seed mailings for a single/specific wave, the next available wave or all waves? (This answer could impact whether 30-day notice is enough time.)

We will request that seed mail recipients receive the full mailing protocol specific to each mode for the requested sample month. For mail only vendors, that would include both the first and second mailings. For mixed mode vendors, that would include only the first mailing.

Please note that no seed mail recipients will return a completed survey to the vendor. As such, seed mail recipients should be removed from the vendor's sample prior to telephone follow-up (for mixed mode vendors) or before data submission (both mail only and mixed mode vendors).

Will HHCAHPS star [ratings] weight the three individual measures separately or average them as one "wedge"?

The three individual measures will have their star ratings calculated and reported individually, similar to the star ratings for the Global Items. For the calculation of the Summary Star rating, as currently stated in the [CY2026 Final Rule](#), "each of the three new stand-alone measures will have a weight of one-third". The star ratings for the new measures are scheduled to be reported beginning in October 2027.

Do you foresee any changes to the remote interviewing exceptions? Do you anticipate vendors having to require on-site interviewing only?

We do not currently anticipate any changes for remote interviewing exceptions. Vendors with existing approved exceptions for remote work will be required to renew their exception request in April 2027.

Any vendors who wish to receive an exception to conduct HHCAHPS Survey activities remotely should submit an [Exception Request Form](#) via the HHCAHPS website. For more information on requesting an exception to conduct remote work for HHCAHPS, please see Section 14.2 of the [Protocols and Guidelines Manual](#).