



Improve Patient Experience and Quality of Care

Patients who have a positive experience are more likely to stay engaged with their health care.¹ Use these tips to help guide your patient engagement approach and improve CAHPS scores.



Patient experience matters	
Strengthen patient loyalty	A high-quality relationship between patient and provider can greatly affect patient loyalty to your practice.
Improve patient engagement and clinical outcomes	Positive patient experience led to higher adherence to medical advice and treatment plans. ¹ Engaged patients are more likely to take charge of their care plan and stay up-to-date with their care.
Uphold reputation	Satisfied and content patients are likely to share their experience with others. Positive reviews can also lead to new patient referrals to your practice.

What is the CAHPS survey?

- The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey is an annual health care experience survey that:
 - Asks patients to evaluate their experience with their providers and health plan (i.e. access to care, provider communication, customer service, ease of getting Rx)
 - Includes select Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) quality measures²
 - Impacts various Rating Systems (Medicare STARS, Quality Rating Systems, Office of the Patient Advocate)
- Administered annually each spring via mail and phone.
- Results help identify opportunities for patient experience improvement.

(continued)

Focus areas

CAHPS measure	Survey questions	Tips and best practices
Provider communication³	<p>How often did your personal doctor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain things in a way that was easy to understand? • Listen carefully to you? • Show respect for what you had to say? • Spend enough time with you? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all staff are trained to handle sensitive situations. • Treat patients with empathy and respect. Make eye contact, listen carefully and express understanding. • Visit www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/culture.html for cultural competency and health literacy tools and resources that promote effective communication. • No-cost interpreter services can be requested for your patients. Contact Member Services at the phone number on the member's identification (ID) card or by calling the Provider Services Center.
Getting needed care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often did you get an appointment to see a specialist as soon as you needed? • How often was it easy to get the care, test or treatment you needed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set expectations with patients by informing them of any timeframes and/or turnaround times for scheduling routine appointments, prior authorization and/or referral approvals. • Review authorization and referral processes to remove patient barriers to access care. • Continue offering telehealth appointments as a convenient option for patients.
Getting appointments and care quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you needed care right away, how often did you get care as soon as you needed? • How often did you get an appointment for a checkup or routine care as soon as you needed? • How often did you see the person you came to see within 15 minutes of your appointment time? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set aside time slots each day to accommodate urgent visits. • Offer early morning and/or evening appointment slots one day each week. • Offer appointments with a nurse or physician assistant for urgent issues. • If applicable, offer a telehealth appointment. • Provide patients with the addresses and phone numbers of local urgent care centers.

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CAHPS measure	Survey questions	Tips and best practices
Care coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you visited your personal doctor for a scheduled appointment, how often did he or she have your medical records or other information about your care? • When your personal doctor ordered a blood test, X-ray or other test for you, how often did someone from your personal doctor’s office follow up to give you those results? • When your personal doctor ordered a blood test, X-ray or other test for you, how often did you get those results as soon as you needed them? • How often did you and your personal doctor talk about all the prescription medicines you were taking? • Did you get the help you needed from your personal doctor’s office to manage your care among these different providers and services? • How often did your personal doctor seem informed and up-to-date about the care you got from specialists? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have medication list and medical history, including appointments with specialists, at hand to review during patient office visits. • Ask patients if they have seen any other medical providers since their last visit with you. Discuss any visits and/or treatment plans with them. • Set expectations by informing patients of when they can expect to get their test results back. • Implement processes for patients to easily and securely access test results. • Ask patients how they prefer to receive test results: phone call, email, etc. • Share test results/medical history with all of the patient’s applicable providers.
Annual flu vaccine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you had a flu shot since July 1 of the prior year? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing appointments by offering a flu shot to all patients who come into the office. • Have flu clinics where patients can get the vaccine without an office visit. • Visit www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/flu-vaccine-recommendation.htm for techniques on how to talk to your patients about the flu vaccine and make a strong recommendation; address misconceptions for those who refuse.



Questions?

Email the Quality Improvement CAHPS Team for more tools: **Program_Accreditation@healthnet.com**

¹Why Improve Patient Experience? Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). www.ahrq.gov/cahps/quality-improvement/improvement-guide/2-why-improve/index.html

²HEDIS measures performance in health care where improvements can make a meaningful difference in people’s lives. www.ncqa.org/hedis/using-hedis-measures/

³This CAHPS composite measure is not a Star measure but is a top driver of members’ perception of overall ease of getting care.