

**CAHPS Hospital Survey
Podcast Series Transcript**

**HCAHPS Program Updates: Changes to Survey Content and Survey Protocol
Beginning with January 2025 Discharges**

Note: The information covered in this podcast was current at the time of posting. CMS will occasionally update guidelines and calculations.

Slide 1-HCAHPS Program Updates: Changes to Survey Content and Survey Protocol Beginning with January 2025 Discharges

Welcome to the HCAHPS Podcast “HCAHPS Program Updates: Changes to Survey Content and Survey Protocol Beginning with January 2025 Discharges.” During this podcast, we will summarize the recent HCAHPS program updates that will go into effect with quarter 1, 2025 discharges.

Slide 2-Overview

First, we will summarize the survey content changes made to the Updated HCAHPS survey. Next, we will summarize the survey protocol changes made to the Updated HCAHPS survey administration. Lastly, we will review the implementation timeline for the Updated HCAHPS survey.

Slide 3-Updated HCAHPS: Survey Content Changes

The Updated HCAHPS survey incorporates several changes to survey content that were finalized in the fiscal year 2025 IPPS Rule. New survey questions were created based on results and feedback obtained from literature reviews, focus groups, cognitive interviews with patients and caregivers, and Technical Expert Panels. The HCAHPS survey content was updated to address important aspects of hospital experience quality identified by patients. The changes to survey content were tested in the CMS 2021 HCAHPS Mode Experiment and will go into effect with January 2025 discharges. You can view the fiscal year 2025 IPPS Final Rule using the [URL](#) shown here.

Slide 4-Updated HCAHPS: Survey Content Changes (cont’d)

With the Updated HCAHPS survey, CMS has added 8 items and removed 5 items, resulting in a 32 item survey. The original Legacy HCAHPS survey had a total of 29 survey items. In the “About You” section of the updated survey, there were minor changes to question wording, minor revisions to response options, and a re-ordering of the “About You” survey questions.

Slide 5- Survey Content Changes: New Questions Added

Eight new survey items were added to the Updated HCAHPS survey. Two of those new survey items are part of the new HCAHPS composite measure “Restfulness of the Hospital Environment” and three of the new survey items make up the new HCAHPS composite measure “Care Coordination.” Another new survey item forms the new individual item HCAHPS measure “Information About Symptoms.” One new

survey item was added to the “Responsiveness of Hospital Staff” measure and one survey item was added to the “About You” section of the survey.

Slide 6-Survey Content Changes: New Questions Added (cont’d)

The next series of slides present each of the new questions as they appear in the English version of the updated mail survey. The blue box indicates that a question is new. Please note that the question numbering has changed for the updated survey.

“Restfulness of the Hospital Environment” is a new composite measure comprised of three survey items in the updated survey. Two of these survey items are new to HCAHPS. Question 8 asks “During this hospital stay, how often were you able to get the rest you needed?” Question 18 asks “During this hospital stay, did doctors, nurses and other hospital staff help you to rest and recover?”

Question 9 is not a new question. Previously, this question was the “Quietness” individual item in the Legacy HCAHPS survey. In the updated survey, Question 9 falls under the new “Restfulness of the Hospital Environment” composite measure. As a reminder, question 9 asks “During this hospital stay, how often was the area around your room quiet at night?”

Slide 7-Survey Content Changes: New Questions Added (cont’d)

“Care Coordination” is a new HCAHPS composite measure that is comprised of three survey items in the updated survey. All three of these survey items are new. Question 10 asks “During this hospital stay, how often were doctors, nurses and other hospital staff informed and up-to-date about your care?” Question 11 asks “During this hospital stay, how often did doctors, nurses and other hospital staff work well together to care for you?” Question 19 asks “Did doctors, nurses or other hospital staff work with you and your family or caregiver in making plans for your care after you left the hospital?”

Slide 8-Survey Content Changes: New Questions Added (cont’d)

“Information about Symptoms” is a new individual item HCAHPS measure in the updated survey. The new question, question 20, asks “Did doctors, nurses or other hospital staff give your family or caregiver enough information about what symptoms or health problems to watch for after you left the hospital?”

Slide 9 Survey Content Changes: New Questions Added (cont’d)

The “Responsiveness of Hospital Staff” composite measure has been modified in the updated survey. This composite measure is comprised of two survey items in the updated survey. The two questions are displayed on this slide. One of these two questions is new to HCAHPS. The new question in the blue box, question 14, asks “During this hospital stay, when you asked for help right away, how often did you get help as soon as you needed?”

Slide 10-Survey Content Changes: New Questions Added (cont’d)

One new question was added to the “About You” section of the updated survey. This question will be used by CMS in the patient-mix adjustment model beginning with 2025 discharges. Question 26 asks “Was this hospital stay planned in advance?”

Slide 11-Survey Content Changes: Questions Removed

Five survey items were removed from the Legacy HCAHPS survey and are not included in the Updated HCAHPS survey. One survey item from the “Responsiveness of Hospital Staff” composite measure was removed. The three questions that made up the Care Transition measure were removed, and the entire “Care Transition” composite measure will no longer be part of the HCAHPS survey. Lastly, one survey item from the “About You” section of the survey was removed.

Slide 12-Survey Content Changes: Questions Removed (cont’d)

The next series of slides present each of the survey items that were removed from the HCAHPS survey. The red box indicates that a survey item has been removed and is no longer included in the updated survey. Please note that the question numbering has changed for the updated survey.

The “Responsiveness of Hospital Staff” survey measure has been modified in the updated survey. As mentioned in a previous slide, one question was added to this HCAHPS composite measure. In addition, here we see that one question was removed from this composite measure. The two survey items from the legacy survey that formed the “Responsiveness of Hospital Staff” HCAHPS measure are displayed on this slide. The question in the red box has been removed and is not included in the updated survey. In the legacy survey, this question asked, “During this hospital stay, after you pressed the call button, how often did you get help as soon as you wanted it?” The question that is not in a red box remains in the updated survey as part of the “Responsiveness of Hospital Staff” measure, however, note the question number has changed in the updated survey.

Slide 13-Survey Content Changes: Questions Removed (cont’d)

The “Care Transition” measure was comprised of three survey items in the legacy survey. The three questions and the composite measure were removed entirely from the HCAHPS survey. The measure questions covered patient experience topics of patient preferences, discharge understanding, and medication purpose. These three survey items are not included in the updated survey.

Slide 14-Survey Content Changes: Questions Removed (cont’d)

One question from the “About You” section was removed. In the legacy survey this question asked, “During this hospital stay, were you admitted to this hospital through the Emergency Room?” This question is not included in the updated survey.

Slide 15-Survey Content Changes: Other Minor Changes

The next series of slides will review the minor changes made to the “About You” questions in the Updated HCAHPS survey. There were minor changes to question wording, minor revisions to response options, and a re-ordering of the “About You” survey questions.

Slide 16-Minor Changes to Survey Content: Question Wording

Three survey questions in the “About You” section had minor changes to their question wording. Please note that the question numbering has changed for the updated survey. In question 21 on the updated survey, the word “after” was replaced with “when.” Question 21 asks “When you left the hospital, did you go directly to your own home, to someone else’s home, or to another health facility?” The updated question 22 replaced the word “when” with “after.” Question 22 asks “During this hospital stay, did doctors, nurses or other hospital staff talk with you about whether you would have the help you needed after you left the hospital?” The updated question 31 removed the two words “or decent.” Question 31 asks “Are you of Spanish, Hispanic or Latino origin?”

Slide 17-Minor Changes to Survey Content: Response Options

The number of response options to the survey question “What language do you mainly speak at home?” was collapsed in the updated survey to make survey administration more efficient and reduce respondent burden. The new survey response options are English, Spanish, Chinese, or another language. As we can see here, the legacy survey included the response option “Some other language” and provided a blank space for the respondent to print a different language that was not listed. However, the updated survey replaced this response option with “Another language” and does provide a blank space for a respondent to write in a different language.

Slide 18-Minor Changes to Survey Content: Response Options (cont’d)

The “Yes” response options to the question “Are you of Spanish, Hispanic or Latino origin?” have been rearranged alphabetically. Here you can see the order of the response options for Cuban and Puerto Rican were switched in the updated survey. Also, as mentioned in a previous slide, the two words “or decent” were removed from this question in the updated survey.

Slide 19-Minor Changes to Survey Content: Response Options (cont’d)

The third survey item with revised response options in the updated survey is question 32, which asks “What is your race? Please choose one or more.” The response options to this question were rearranged alphabetically in the updated survey.

Slide 20- Minor Changes to Survey Content: Order of “About You” Questions

Questions in the “About You” section were re-ordered in the updated survey. The survey question that asks, “What language do you mainly speak at home?” was previously the last question in the legacy survey. However, this question was moved, and it is now listed before the education question in the updated survey.

This slide displays the first half of the “About You” survey items as they appear in the English version of the updated mail survey. As you can see here, the survey question “What language do you mainly speak at home?” is question number 29 in the updated survey.

Slide 21-Minor Changes to Survey Content: Order of “About You” Questions (cont’d)

This slide displays the second half of the “About You” survey items as they appear in the English version of the updated mail survey. Since the language question was moved, the race and ethnicity survey questions are now the last two questions in the updated survey.

Slide 22-More Information on Survey Content Changes

More information on the changes to the Updated HCAHPS survey content can be found on the HCAHPS Online website under the new “Updated HCAHPS Survey” button. The [URL](#) shown here will navigate you to this webpage. On this webpage you can access the official version of the Updated HCAHPS mail survey, a crosswalk of questions from the Legacy HCAHPS survey to the Updated HCAHPS survey, and a crosswalk of updated survey items into their corresponding composite measures.

You can also access two crosswalks of questions from the updated survey into Hospital VBP dimensions. One version for fiscal year 2027 to 2029 program years and a second version for fiscal year 2030 and forward.

Slide 23- Updated HCAHPS: Survey Protocol Changes

Next, we will review the changes to survey protocols that were finalized in the fiscal year 2024 IPPS Rule. Each of the survey protocol changes listed here will be reviewed in the upcoming slides. These changes were tested in the 2021 HCAHPS Mode Experiment and will go into effect with January 2025 discharges. You can view the fiscal year 2024 IPPS Final Rule using the [URL](#) shown here.

Slide 24-Updated HCAHPS: Survey Protocol Changes (cont’d)

Three new web-first modes of administration were added to the updated survey. The new survey modes are Web-Mail, Web-Phone, and Web-Mail-Phone. The legacy survey modes, Mail Only, Telephone Only and Mail-Phone remain available. Mail-Phone mode was formerly known as Mixed mode in the legacy survey. Also, the Active Interactive Voice Response, also known as IVR, is in red text here because this option was removed from HCAHPS. This will be discussed in a later slide.

Slide 25-Updated HCAHPS: Survey Protocol Changes (cont’d)

The new Web-Mail survey mode begins with sending email invitations for the web survey, followed by contact attempts to administer the survey to non-respondents by mail. The second new survey mode, Web-Phone, begins with sending email invitations for the web survey, followed by contact attempts to administer the survey to non-respondents by phone. The third new survey mode, Web-Mail-Phone, begins with sending email invitations for the web survey, followed by one contact attempt to administer

the survey to non-respondents by mail, followed by contact attempts to administer the survey to the remaining non-respondents by phone.

The table on the right displays the schedule of days that contact attempts occur for each mode of administration for the updated survey. Please refer to the most recent version of the Quality Assurance Guidelines for more details on the schedule of contact attempts.

Slide 26-Updated HCAHPS: Survey Protocol Changes (cont'd)

Here are three more survey protocol changes that were finalized in the fiscal year 2024 IPPS rule. There is a new limit placed on the number of supplemental items for the Updated HCAHPS survey. A maximum of 12 supplemental items may be added after all of the HCAHPS questions and after the mandatory transition statement.

The data collection period for all survey modes has been extended from 42 to 49 calendar days. The first contact attempt period of 48 hours to 42 days after discharge remains unchanged.

The Updated HCAHPS survey now allows proxy respondents across all survey modes. While sampled patients are encouraged to respond directly to the survey, not all patients are able to do so. In such cases, proxy responses are acceptable.

Slide 27-Updated HCAHPS: Survey Protocol Changes (cont'd)

Survey vendors and self-administering hospitals are required to collect the language that the patient prefers to speak while hospitalized. Additionally, the official Spanish translation of the updated survey must be administered to the patients who prefer to speak Spanish. These two requirements apply to all survey modes. The table at the bottom of this slide lists the survey languages that are available for the updated survey, beginning with January 2025 discharges.

Slide 28-Updated HCAHPS: Survey Protocol Changes (cont'd)

The final survey protocol change was the removal of two rarely used survey administration options. The Active Interactive Voice Response survey mode option and the "Hospitals Administering HCAHPS for Multiple Sites" option. Both of these administration options have been removed and were rarely used for the Legacy HCAHPS survey.

Slide 29-Implementation Timeline for the Updated HCAHPS Survey

Survey vendors and self-administering hospitals will continue to administer the Legacy HCAHPS survey to patients discharged until the end of quarter 4, 2024. The legacy survey will no longer be administered after December 31st, 2024. Only the Updated HCAHPS survey will be administered to patients in the hospital beginning with January 1st, 2025 patient discharges.

Notice that quarter 1, 2025 will be a period where concurrent fielding and data collection for both the legacy and updated surveys will occur.

Slide 30

Here is a diagram that provides more detail on the timelines for the implementation of the Updated HCAHPS survey and the discontinuance of the Legacy HCAHPS survey. From January 2025 to March 2025, there will be a period where fielding and data collection will occur for both the legacy and updated HCAHPS surveys. Fielding and data collection of legacy survey data will officially end in April 2025 once the final quarter of the legacy survey data, quarter 4, 2024, has been submitted.

Slide 31-HCAHPS Website and Program Updates

Please visit the HCAHPS Online website using the URL shown here. This is the official HCAHPS program website for survey content, announcements, reminders, and new developments. More information on the changes to the Updated HCAHPS survey can be found under the new “Updated HCAHPS Survey” button. The home page provides quick links to current news, HCAHPS background, and more.

Slide 32-Resources

Please contact HCAHPS Technical Support for any questions you might have using the email address or telephone number displayed on this slide. Additional HCAHPS Podcasts can be found on the HCAHPS Online website using the URL shown. We hope you have found this podcast helpful. Thank you for listening to “HCAHPS Program Updates: Changes to Survey Content and Survey Protocol Beginning with January 2025 Discharges.”