

HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines V15.0

Change Matrix: Updates and Emphasis

This document is a reference tool that highlights the major changes from the HCAHPS *Quality Assurance Guidelines V14.0 to V15.0*. The HCAHPS *Quality Assurance Guidelines V15.0* (QAG) is effective with July 1, 2020 patient discharges and forward. This document is not a substitute for reviewing the QAG in its entirety. General format and minor wording revisions have occurred throughout the manual and are not included in this change matrix. Please contact HCAHPS Technical Assistance at hcahps@hsag.com for any specific questions.

QAG V15.0 Section	Summary of Key Changes
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revised V14.0 to V15.0 ○ Revised dates as necessary (e.g., 2019 to 2020) ○ Updated references to V.37 and V.38 MS-DRG codes ○ Updated to HCAHPS File Specifications Version 4.3 ○ Added Appendix A-1 Optional Modified Initial and Follow-up Cover Letters (English) ○ Added Appendix H-1 Telephone Script with Optional Modified Introduction (English) ○ Added Appendix L-1 Active IVR Script with Optional Modified Introduction (English) ○ Updated the HCAHPS Technical Assistance email to hcahps@hsag.com ○ Updated web site links ○ Updated with minor wording revisions throughout the manual
Acknowledgements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated Official UB-04, Data Specifications Manual by permission, Copyright to reflect 2019 reference
I. Reader's Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included reference to “New for 2020” sections added throughout the QAG V15.0 ○ Included description of Index usage ○ Added references to Appendices for Optional Modified Initial and Follow-up Cover Letters (English) and the Telephone/Active IVR Scripts with Optional Modified Introduction (English) ○ Updated with minor wording revisions

HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines V15.0

Change Matrix: Updates and Emphasis

QAG V15.0 Section	Summary of Key Changes
II. Introduction and Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included “New for 2020” section highlighting Optional Modified survey materials and updated transition statement for supplemental questions ○ Updated NQF endorsement approval date ○ Included reference for the Hospital IQR Program update in the current fiscal year ○ Included reference for the Hospital VBP program in the current fiscal year ○ Updated HCAHPS public reporting information ○ Added “Reviewing and Revising the HCAHPS Survey” section ○ Updated the HCAHPS Development, Data Collection and Public Reporting Timeline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Updated with HCAHPS Podcast release dates (June and July 2019) ▪ Added FY 2020 IPPS Final Rule ▪ Updated NQF endorsement renewal ▪ Updated with HCAHPS Training and public reporting dates (January, April, July, October 2020) ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
III. Program Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added recommendation of primary and secondary HCAHPS contact persons for hospitals contracting with a survey vendor ○ Added requirement of appropriate organization back-up staff for coverage of key staff to administer the HCAHPS Survey ○ Added to the minimum survey requirements table for <i>Patient-Specific Survey Experience</i>, to include preferred experience conducting surveys in both English and Spanish ○ Added requirement to obtain a certificate of the destruction of data ○ Updated with minor wording revisions • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated the Hospital/Survey Vendor HCAHPS Rules of Participation to specify that Participation Forms must be submitted within the designated open Participation time period
IV. Communications and Technical Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revised the HCAHPS Technical Assistance email address to hcahps@hsag.com

HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines V15.0

Change Matrix: Updates and Emphasis

QAG V15.0 Section	Summary of Key Changes
<p>V. Survey Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated guidance regarding storage and retention of data files and all survey administration related data in accordance with HIPAA, including obtaining a certificate of destruction ○ Updated with minor wording revisions • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarified that the hospital/survey vendor Customer Support telephone line voice mail recording must specify that the caller can leave a message regarding the HCAHPS Survey or hospital survey ○ Clarified that monitoring and quality oversight of all key events in survey administration must be performed on an ongoing and continuous basis
<p>VI. Sampling Protocol</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added “New for 2020” section highlighting two new sampling data elements: Total Inpatient Discharges and DSRS Inpatient ○ Updated Table of MS-DRG Codes and Service Line Categories to V.37 (effective October 1, 2019), and added reference to V.38 MS-DRG codes (effective October 1, 2020) ○ Added “total inpatient discharges” to Flowchart of HCAHPS Sampling Protocol ○ Added guidance that if a hospital excludes any patient from the discharge list provided to their survey vendor, a count of total inpatient discharges must also be submitted ○ Updated guidance to include submission of total number of inpatient discharges within a stratum if using DSRS ○ Updated with minor wording revisions • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarified guidance that de-duplication procedure applies to both household and multiple discharges

HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines V15.0

Change Matrix: Updates and Emphasis

QAG V15.0 Section	Summary of Key Changes
<p>VII. Mail Only Survey Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included “New for 2020” section outlining usage of the HCAHPS Standard and HCAHPS Optional Modified Initial and Follow-up Cover Letters ○ Added strong recommendation to administer the HCAHPS Survey in both English and Spanish ○ Added requirement to submit return envelopes as a part of the mailing materials for review by the HCAHPS Project Team ○ Revised the mandatory transition statement for supplemental questions ○ Updated required guidance for the HCAHPS Standard Cover Letters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changed the question numbers referenced in the purpose of the survey verbiage ○ Added required and optional guidance for the HCAHPS Optional Modified Cover Letters ○ Added required guidance for the outgoing and return envelopes to be in a readable font with a size of 10-point at a minimum ○ Added optional guidance for outgoing envelopes to allow the following banner in at least 10-point font: “Important – Open Immediately.” No other banners may be used. ○ Updated with minor wording revisions • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarified that unique patient identification numbers must not contain any patient identifiers such as the patient’s month and/or year of discharge ○ Clarified that populated text in cover letters should appear in title case (not in all capital letters) ○ Expanded guidance regarding storage and retention of data files and all survey administration related data in accordance with HIPAA, including obtaining a certificate of destruction ○ Expanded guidance to preform interval checking of at least 10 percent of all printed mailing pieces
<p>VIII. Telephone Only Survey Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included “New for 2020” section outlining usage of the HCAHPS Standard Telephone Script and Telephone Script with Optional Modified Introduction ○ Added strong recommendation to administer the HCAHPS Survey in both English and Spanish ○ Revised the mandatory transition statement for supplemental questions ○ Added guidance on collection and use of primary (Patient Telephone Number 1) and secondary (Patient Telephone Number 2) telephone numbers ○ Updated with minor wording revisions • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expanded guidance regarding storage and retention of data files and all survey administration related data in accordance with HIPAA, including obtaining a certificate of destruction ○ Expanded guidance regarding monitoring of telephone interviews

HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines V15.0

Change Matrix: Updates and Emphasis

QAG V15.0 Section	Summary of Key Changes
IX. Mixed Mode Survey Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included “New for 2020” section outlining usage of the HCAHPS Standard and HCAHPS Optional Modified Cover Letters; and the HCAHPS Standard Telephone Script and Telephone Script with Optional Modified Introduction ○ See Mail Only and Telephone Only Survey Administration ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
X. Active Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Survey Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included “New for 2020” section outlining usage of the HCAHPS Standard Active IVR Script and Active IVR Script with Optional Modified Introduction ○ See Telephone Only Survey Administration ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
XI. Data Specifications and Coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included “New for 2020” section outlining the addition of two new fields in the HCAHPS File Specifications Version 4.3: Total Inpatient Discharges and DSRS Inpatient (file specifications also apply to the HCAHPS Online Data Entry Tool) ○ Added that unique patient identification numbers must not contain symbols or special characters as they are not valid for data submission ○ Updated with minor wording revisions • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarified that unique patient identification numbers must not contain any patient identifiers such as the patient’s month and/or year of discharge
XII. Data Preparation and Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note: Content in this chapter is subject to change upon the QualityNet rollout of the new Simple File Submission (SFS) process. Updated information will be posted on HCAHPS Online (https://www.hcahponline.org); please monitor the HCAHPS Web site for updates on this important change. ○ Updated dates in the HCAHPS Survey vendor authorization process examples ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
XIII. Oversight Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added requirement to submit return envelopes with mailing materials ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
XIV. Data Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated public reporting period table of the HCAHPS Survey Results ○ Updated with minor wording revisions

HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines V15.0

Change Matrix: Updates and Emphasis

QAG V15.0 Section	Summary of Key Changes
XV. Exception Request / Discrepancy Report Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added guidance that Exception Requests may only be implemented at the beginning of a quarter ○ Added guidance to not use symbols or special characters when submitting forms ○ Added guidance when requesting an Exception Request for Determination of Service Line based on a single service ○ Updated with minor wording revisions • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarified that approved Exception Requests are for internal hospital/survey vendor use only and must not be used for marketing purposes
XVI. Data Quality Checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarified that quality checks for key components or steps of survey administration must be operationalized on an ongoing and continuous basis
Appendices	
Appendices A, and B-G HCAHPS Standard Mail Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revised reference to number of HCAHPS questions to 1-29 on the questionnaire and cover letters ○ Updated the OMB Paperwork Reduction Act language to questions 1-29 ○ Revised mandatory transition statement in all language translations (must precede supplemental questions)
Appendix A-1 HCAHPS Optional Modified Cover Letters (English)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New Optional Modified Initial and Follow-up Cover Letters
Appendices H, and I-K HCAHPS Standard Telephone Scripts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added guidance to practice pronouncing the patient’s name before initiating the call ○ Added the mandatory transition statement for supplemental questions in all language translations (must precede supplemental questions) ○ Updated with minor wording revisions (in the guidelines and instructions) • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarified that an individual may assist the patient with translation of the survey ○ Clarified that no changes are permitted to the order of the HCAHPS Survey (Question 1-29)
Appendix H-1 HCAHPS Telephone Script with Optional Modified Introduction (English)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New HCAHPS Telephone Script with Optional Modified Introduction

HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines V15.0

Change Matrix: Updates and Emphasis

QAG V15.0 Section	Summary of Key Changes
<p>Appendices L and M HCAHPS Standard Active IVR Scripts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added guidance to practice pronouncing the patient’s name before initiating the call ○ Revised wording in Q1_INTRO to state, “Please answer the questions in this survey about <i>this</i> stay at [HOSPITAL NAME].” ○ Added the mandatory transition statement in all language translations (must precede supplemental questions) ○ Updated with minor wording revisions (in the guidelines and instructions) • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarified that an individual may assist the patient with translation of the survey ○ Clarified that no changes are permitted to the order of the HCAHPS Survey (Question 1-29)
<p>Appendix L-1 HCAHPS Active IVR Script with Optional Modified Introduction (English)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New HCAHPS Active IVR Script with Optional Modified Introduction
<p>Appendix N Interviewing Guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated with minor wording revisions • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarified that an individual may assist the patient with translation of the survey
<p>Appendix O Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revised numbering for the HCAHPS Survey questions (purpose of the survey question) ○ Updated the HCAHPS Technical Assistance email address to hcahps@hsag.com
<p>Appendix P Sample Frame File Layout</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Removed <i>File Content</i> field ○ Added required elements for data submission: Total Inpatient Discharges and DSRS Inpatient ○ Added <i>Patient Indicator</i> and <i>Patient Email Address</i> fields ○ Updated references to V.37 and V.38 MS-DRG codes ○ Revised the following DSRS data element names: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSRS Strata Name ▪ DSRS Eligible ▪ DSRS Sample Size ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
<p>Appendix Q Data File Structure Version 4.3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated references to V.37 and V.38 MS-DRG codes ○ Added the following fields to the Header Record <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Total Inpatient Discharges ▪ DSRS Inpatient ○ Updated with minor wording revisions

HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines V15.0

Change Matrix: Updates and Emphasis

QAG V15.0 Section	Summary of Key Changes
Appendix R XML File Specifications Version 4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated references to V.37 and V.38 MS-DRG codes ○ Added the following fields to the Header Record <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Total Inpatient Discharges ▪ DSRS Inpatient ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
Appendix S Quality Assurance Plan (QAP) Outline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added guidance that new items in the V15.0 QAP Outline are in red ○ Added the following to item 1, provide hospital/survey vendor contact information, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Subcontract name(s) and role(s), if applicable ▪ Language(s) survey administered in by mode ▪ Names of primary and <i>secondary</i> contact persons, their direct telephone numbers and email addresses ○ Added to item 9, unique patient identification numbers must not contain symbols or special characters as they are not valid for data submission ○ Added to item 21, describe quality control checks <i>conducted at a minimum on a quarterly basis</i> and that files are <i>easily retrievable and working</i> ○ Added to item 23, specify the frequency in which confidentiality agreements are reviewed and re-signed ○ Added to item 24, describe the destruction process for HCAHPS materials, if applicable ○ Added to item 26, submit return envelopes as a part of the mailing materials and skip pattern logic with copies of telephone scripts ○ Updated with minor wording revisions • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarified item 9, unique patient identification numbers must not contain any patient identifiers such as the patient’s month and/or year of discharge ○ Clarified item 20, the quality control process to validate the accuracy of data submission includes review of the HCAHPS Data Review and Correction Reports
Appendices T-V Participation Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revised forms to align with updates to Minimum Business Requirements ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
Appendix W Exception Request Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added guidance to not use symbols or special characters when submitting form
Appendix X Discrepancy Report Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added guidance to not use symbols or special characters when submitting form
Appendix Y Attestation Statement Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Updates

HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines V15.0

Change Matrix: Updates and Emphasis

QAG V15.0 Section	Summary of Key Changes
Appendix Z Use of HCAHPS with Other Hospital Inpatient Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="665 305 865 337">• No Updates