

HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines V19.0

Summary of Changes

This document is a reference tool that summarizes the major changes from the HCAHPS *Quality Assurance Guidelines V19.0 Draft (May 2024) to V19.0 Final (October 2024)*. [The HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines V19.0](#) applies to **January 1, 2025 patient discharges and forward**. The *Quality Assurance Guidelines V19.0 (October 2024)* includes highlighted text noting the major changes from the Draft version. This document is not a substitute for reviewing the *Quality Assurance Guidelines* in its entirety. General formatting and minor wording revisions have occurred throughout the manual and are not included in this document. Please contact HCAHPS Technical Assistance at hcahps@hsag.com for any specific questions.

Schedule of Contact Attempts – (All Mode Chapters)

- Guidance has been added to allow flexibility in the second mailing of the survey in the Mail Only mode or a mail phase of the Web-Mail and Web-Mail-Phone modes.
- The *Schedule of HCAHPS Contact Attempts by Survey Mode* table has been revised to clarify the count of days following the first contact attempt.

Web-First Modes – (Web-Mail, Web-Phone, Web-Mail-Phone Chapters)

- Protocols
 - Requirements regarding the email address that HCAHPS email invitations are sent from have been added, including prohibiting use of do-not-reply or no-reply email addresses and the responsibility of survey vendors/hospitals to follow industry best practices for sending emails.
 - Guidance on including an optional Unsubscribe statement on the email invitations by the survey vendor/hospital has been added. The section also details that sampled patients who unsubscribe are only removed from further email invitations and not the secondary phase(s) for that hospital stay.
- Email Address Validation
 - Guidance has been added to clarify that email address updates may only be provided by client hospitals and no other secondary sources.
 - Supplemental or adjunct services such as commercial software or other means to find or replace email addresses provided by the hospital must not be used.
- Email Invitations
 - Verbatim language requirements for the subject line and body of the email invitations have been revised. In addition, email invitations must not include the patient's discharge date.
- Web Survey
 - Guidance has been added to note that every web screen shaded header must appear verbatim. In addition, HCAHPS question headers must not be repeated as supplemental item headers.

MS-DRG Codes – (Sampling Protocol Chapter)

- Included Table of [MS-DRG Codes and Service Line Categories](#) to V.42 (effective October 1, 2024 patient discharges).

Lag Time – (Data Specifications and Coding Chapter)

- Examples have been included to illustrate the calculation of lag time. In addition, a table detailing examples to determine the Data Collection End Date for each Final Survey Status has been added.

HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines V19.0

Summary of Changes

Updated HCAHPS Survey

- Additional minor edits have been made to the English survey materials
- Additional minor edits have been made to the Spanish survey instruments and include revisions to the following items:
 - All modes: Q10, Q11, Q18
 - Mail Questionnaire: Title and survey instructions
 - Phone Script: Q19 and Q29
- The Updated HCAHPS Survey instruments have been posted to the [Survey Instruments](#) page of the HCAHPS Website including the following official HCAHPS translations:
 - All modes: Chinese and Russian
 - Mail Only and Web-Mail Modes: Vietnamese, Portuguese, German, Tagalog, Arabic

Please carefully review the final survey materials in their entirety to capture all updates.