

## Service Line Benchmarks for HCAHPS Survey Top-Box Scores

### Introduction

In response to requests, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the HCAHPS Project Team have calculated benchmarks for “top-box” scores for each service line included in the HCAHPS Survey: Medical, Surgical, and Maternity. For more information about HCAHPS top-box scoring, see <https://hcahpsonline.org/en/summary-analyses/>. The Service Line Benchmark tables provide the percentile distributions, mean, and standard deviation of top-box scores for publicly reported HCAHPS measures within each service line. These tables permit a hospital to assess its performance in each service line relative to other hospitals. By doing so, a hospital can achieve more granular insights into patients’ experience of care and compare performance across its service lines.

Please note:

- *The Service Line Benchmarks tables are intended for informational and quality improvement purposes only*
- *Service Line Benchmarks are not used for CMS public reporting or hospital payment*
- *Because the Service Line Benchmarks do not employ patient-mix adjustment within service lines, they are approximations*
- *The Service Line Benchmarks for a given service line are derived from hospitals with at least 30 completed surveys in that service line and are based on patients discharged between January and December 2023, which corresponds to the October 2024 Hospital Compare public report*
  - o *CMS strongly discourages hospitals from deriving service line-specific scores for service lines in which it has fewer than 30 completed surveys over a 4-quarter (12 month) period due to the scores’ lower reliability*
  - o *CMS recommends that hospitals use HCAHPS scores from the same roll-up period as used in the Service Line Benchmark tables, in this case, Quarter 1-4 2023, which were reported on Hospital Compare in October 2024*
- *CMS produces Service Line Benchmark tables for calendar years and maintains an archive of the tables on the HCAHPS On-Line Web site, [www.HCAHPSonline.org](http://www.HCAHPSonline.org)*

### How to Use the HCAHPS Service Line Benchmark Tables

For each service line in which your hospital has at least 30 completed surveys across the 4 rolled-up quarters, use the Service Line Benchmarks tables as follows.

Step 1: Using your hospital’s HCAHPS data, compute the average, unadjusted top-box score of each measure in each service line.

Step 2: If your hospital employs the Mail Only mode of survey administration, go to Step 4.

Step 3: If your hospital employs the Telephone Only, Mixed Mode, or Interactive Voice Response mode of survey administration, adjust each top-box measure score using the HCAHPS mode adjustments found in the [Mode Adjustment Table on the HCAHPS On-Line Web site](#).

Step 4: For each measure within a service line, locate your score among the national percentiles listed in the Service Line Benchmark tables below. This shows how your performance compares to other hospitals in that service line. Please note that your score may fall between these percentiles, e.g., between the 50<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile.

### 2023 Maternity Service Line Benchmarks (N=1,570 Hospitals)

Measure	Mean	Std Dev	Percentile						
			5 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	50 <sup>th</sup>	75 <sup>th</sup>	90 <sup>th</sup>	95 <sup>th</sup>
Communication with Nurses	86.0	5.5	77	79	83	86	90	93	94
Communication with Doctors	88.7	4.9	81	82	86	89	92	95	96
Staff Responsiveness	81.2	7.8	68	71	76	82	87	91	93
Communication about Medicine	73.7	7.8	61	64	69	74	79	84	86
Cleanliness of Hospital Env.	74.1	9.6	57	62	68	75	81	86	89
Quietness of Hospital Env.	76.2	9.2	61	64	70	77	83	88	91
Discharge Information	90.2	4.4	83	85	88	91	93	95	96
Care Transition	67.0	8.9	52	55	62	68	73	78	80
Recommend the Hospital	78.3	9.7	60	65	73	79	85	90	92
Hospital Rating	73.6	9.8	57	61	68	74	80	85	88

### 2023 Medical Service Line Benchmarks (N=3,720 Hospitals)

Measure	Mean	Std Dev	Percentile						
			5 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	50 <sup>th</sup>	75 <sup>th</sup>	90 <sup>th</sup>	95 <sup>th</sup>
Communication with Nurses	77.5	6.1	68	70	74	78	81	85	88
Communication with Doctors	76.6	6.3	67	69	73	76	81	85	87
Staff Responsiveness	61.6	10.6	46	49	54	60	68	76	81
Communication about Medicine	58.2	7.8	47	49	53	58	62	68	73
Cleanliness of Hospital Env.	71.1	9.5	56	59	65	71	78	84	87
Quietness of Hospital Env.	58.4	11.1	40	44	51	58	66	73	78
Discharge Information	84.4	4.8	76	78	82	85	87	90	91
Care Transition	48.1	7.1	37	40	43	48	52	57	61
Recommend the Hospital	66.8	10.8	49	53	60	67	74	80	84
Hospital Rating	69.1	9.9	53	57	63	69	76	82	85

### 2023 Surgical Service Line Benchmarks (N=2,663 Hospitals)

Measure	Mean	Std Dev	Percentile						
			5 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	50 <sup>th</sup>	75 <sup>th</sup>	90 <sup>th</sup>	95 <sup>th</sup>
Communication with Nurses	80.2	5.9	70	73	77	80	84	87	90
Communication with Doctors	83.7	5.0	75	78	81	84	87	90	92
Staff Responsiveness	64.8	9.4	51	54	59	64	70	77	82
Communication about Medicine	61.8	7.3	51	53	57	61	66	71	75
Cleanliness of Hospital Env.	73.1	8.3	60	62	68	73	79	84	87
Quietness of Hospital Env.	57.5	11.6	39	43	50	57	65	72	78
Discharge Information	89.7	4.1	82	85	88	90	92	94	96
Care Transition	55.2	7.7	43	46	50	55	60	65	69
Recommend the Hospital	72.9	10.5	55	59	67	73	80	86	90
Hospital Rating	74.1	9.2	59	62	68	75	80	85	89

*Note: The Service Line Benchmarks are derived from hospitals with at least 30 completed surveys in each service line and are based on patients discharged between January and December 2023.*

### Example 1

Hospital A, which uses **Mail Only** mode, has 50 completed surveys across 4 quarters in the Maternity service line. For these 50 cases in the Maternity service line, the mean top-box score is 85 for the Communication with Nurses measure. Using the Maternity Service Line Benchmarks table, Hospital A finds that “85” falls between 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentile column for this measure. This means that Hospital A exceeds the performance of 25% -50% of hospitals in the Maternity service line on this measure.

Hospital A has 58 completed surveys across 4 quarters in the Medical service line. Breaking out its scores by service lines, it sees that it has a top-box score of 85 for Communication with Nurses in the Medical service line. Using the Medical Service Line Benchmarks table, Hospital A finds that “85” falls at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile. This means that Hospital A is doing better than 90% of hospitals in the Medical service line on the Communication with Nurses measure.

Hospital A has only 19 completed surveys across 4 quarters in the Surgical service line. Due to the low reliability of scores based that on fewer than 30 completed surveys, Hospital A does not calculate its measure scores in the Surgical service line.

In sum, Hospital A learned that, even though it has a top-box score of 85 in both the Maternity and Medical service lines, in the Maternity service line it is doing better than 25% of hospitals, while in the Medical service line it is doing better than 90%.

### Example 2

Hospital B, which uses **Telephone Only** mode, has 105 completed surveys across 4 quarters in the Maternity service line. For these 105 cases in the Maternity service line, the mean unadjusted top-box score is 92 for the Communication with Nurses measure. Because Hospital B uses the Telephone Only mode, it applies the top-box Communication with Nurses mode adjustment of -4.2 (see Step 3 above). This results in a mode-adjusted top-box score of 87.8 for Communication with Nurses measure. Using the Maternity Service Line Benchmarks table, Hospital B finds that “87.8” falls between the 50<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile columns for this measure. This means that Hospital B exceeds the performance of 50%-75% of hospitals in the Maternity service line on this measure.

Hospital B, which uses the Telephone Only mode, has 200 completed surveys across 4 quarters in the Medical service line. For these 200 cases in the Medical service line, the mean unadjusted top-box score is 92 for the Communication with Nurses measure. Because Hospital B uses the Telephone Only mode, it applies the top-box Communication with Nurses mode adjustment of -4.2, which results in a mode-adjusted top-box score of 87.8 for this measure. Using the Medical Service Line Benchmarks table, Hospital B finds that “87.8” falls between the 90<sup>th</sup> and 95<sup>th</sup> percentile columns for this measure. This means that Hospital B exceeds the performance of 90%-95% of hospitals in the Medical service line on this measure.

Hospital B, which uses Telephone Only mode, has 150 completed surveys across 4 quarters in the Surgical service line. For these 150 cases in the Surgical service line, the mean unadjusted top-box score is 92 for Communication with Nurses measure. Because

Hospital B uses the Telephone Only mode, it applies the top-box Communication with Nurses mode adjustment of -4.2, which results in a mode-adjusted top-box score of 87.8. Using the Surgical Service Line Benchmarks table, Hospital B finds that “87.8” falls between the 90th and 95th percentile columns for this measure, which means that Hospital B exceeds the performance of 90%-95% of hospitals in the Medical service line on this measure.

In sum, Hospital B has learned that, although it has a mode-adjusted top-box score of 87.8 for the Communication with Nurses measure in all three service lines, in the Medical service line it is doing better than 90% of hospitals, while in the Maternity service line better than 50%, and in the Surgical service line better than 90%.

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