

**Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)**  
**CAHPS® Database**  
**Information and Instructions for Requesting De-Identified CAHPS Database Data**

**This document is for individuals interested in requesting de-identified CAHPS data from the AHRQ CAHPS Database.**

### **Introduction**

The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) Database is a central repository for CAHPS survey data to facilitate comparisons of health plan, medical group, clinician, and health care facility performance as measured by the CAHPS suite of surveys. The CAHPS Database is funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and managed and administered by its contractor, Westat.

The CAHPS Database is populated with CAHPS data through the voluntary participation of organizations that have administered a CAHPS survey and are willing to submit their CAHPS data for inclusion in the Database. Because participating organizations (e.g., health plans, medical groups, clinicians) voluntarily submit data to the CAHPS Database, the Data do not constitute a nationally representative sample.

AHRQ and its contractor, Westat, may grant researchers access to de-identified respondent and organization level data from the CAHPS Database, and would only include data that do not identify or permit re-identification of individual respondents or participating organizations. The de-identified data elements include:

1. CAHPS® Survey Response Data: Survey data submitted at the individual respondent level by participating organizations according to specifications provided by the CAHPS Database. These data include all responses from CAHPS survey questions but do not include information identifying respondent names, addresses, and telephone numbers.

2. Survey Administration and Health Plan/Provider Characteristics Data: Information regarding survey administration, such as mode of administration, response rates, and dates of survey completion. Descriptive information relating to each of the sampled units (e.g., health plans or provider groups) is also included, such as type of organization, size of enrollment, ownership, physician specialty, and region.

### **Process for Requesting CAHPS Database De-identified Data Files**

Researchers interested in obtaining data must submit:

1. A completed Research Abstract Form and
2. A signed Data Release Agreement

All completed research abstract forms are reviewed by AHRQ and its contractor, Westat, in accordance with the criteria outlined below. The review period for de-identified data requests is up to 45 days.

### **Research Abstract Form Contents**

Research Abstracts should include the following information:

1. Title of the proposed research project.
2. Statement of the purpose of the proposed research.
3. Hypotheses for the proposed research.
4. Description of the methodology and analytic methods.
5. Expected project timeline.
6. Expected outcomes of the research and how results will be presented.

7. Any funding sources to complete the project.
8. Specific data files requested (e.g., Medicaid, adult, children, CAHPS® version) and the Year(s) requested.
9. Key personnel involved.

### **Conditions for Denying a Request for De-identified Data**

Requests for access to de-identified data files may be denied under any of the following conditions:

1. If the central purpose of the study is not for research. Valid purposes for using de-identified data do NOT include the use of data for public reporting, proprietary, commercial, or competitive purposes, or to determine the rights, benefits, or privileges of organizations participating in the Database. An example of commercial or competitive purposes includes, but is not limited to, combining the requested Database data with other data sources to report together for commercial or public reporting purposes.
2. If the research objectives are not feasible using the requested data.
3. If the data processing required to produce the requested data files places an unusually heavy burden on Database staff.

If there are concerns about a submitted Research Abstract raised during the review process, the comments of the reviewers will be sent to the requester. Data requesters may make modifications and re-submit the Research Abstract for review.

### **Publication Requirements**

Individuals receiving data are required to include the following acknowledgment in any report, publication, or presentation using CAHPS Database data:

“The CAHPS® data used in this analysis was provided by the CAHPS Database. The CAHPS Database is funded by the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and administered by Westat under Contract No. HHSP233201500026I/HHSP23337004T.”

Copies of all publications and presentations using CAHPS Database data must be sent to the CAHPS Database.

### **Disclaimer**

Approval of data access does not constitute endorsement by AHRQ or Westat of the proposed research project, study findings, or recommendations of the research team.

### **Applying for De-identified Data and Contact Information**

Researchers interested in obtaining de-identified CAHPS data from the CAHPS Database must submit a completed Research Abstract Form and signed Data Release Agreement. These forms are available by emailing [CAHPSDatabase@westat.com](mailto:CAHPSDatabase@westat.com) (Subject Line: CAHPS Data Request).

All materials can be faxed or emailed to:

The CAHPS Database  
Westat  
1600 Research Boulevard  
Rockville, MD 20850  
Phone: (888) 808-7108  
Fax: (301) 315-5912  
[CAHPSDatabase@westat.com](mailto:CAHPSDatabase@westat.com)