

CAHPS® Clinician & Group Survey: Overview of the Questionnaires

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Documents Available for the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey

This document is part of a comprehensive set of instructional materials that address implementing the Clinician & Group Surveys, analyzing the data, and reporting the results. All documents are available on the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's Web site: www.cahps.ahrq.gov. For assistance in accessing these documents, please contact the CAHPS Help Line at 800-492-9261 or cahps1@westat.com.

For descriptions of these documents, refer to: *What's Available for the Clinician & Group Survey 3.0*.

Questionnaires

- *CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey: Overview of the Questionnaires*
- *Clinician & Group Survey 3.0* (Adult and Child, English and Spanish)
- *Clinician & Group Survey 2.0* (Adult and Child, English and Spanish)
 - *12-Month Survey 2.0*
 - *Patient-Centered Medical Home Survey 2.0*
 - *Visit Survey 2.0*

Supplemental Items

- *Supplemental Items for the Adult Survey*
- *Supplemental Items for the Child Survey*
- *About the Health Literacy Item Set for Clinicians & Groups*
- *About the Cultural Competence Item Set*
- *About the Health Information Technology Item Set*
- *About the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Item Set*

Survey Administration Guidelines

- *Preparing a Questionnaire Using the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey*
- *Fielding the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey*
- *Sample Notification Letters and Emails for the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey*
- *Sample Telephone Script for the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey*
- *Translating CAHPS Surveys*

Data Analysis Program and Guidelines

- *CAHPS Analysis Program (SAS)*
- *Preparing and Analyzing Data from the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey*
- *Instructions for Analyzing Data from CAHPS Surveys*

Reporting Measures and Guidelines

- *Patient Experience Measures for the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey*

Introduction

This document offers an overview of the 3.0 version of the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey (CG-CAHPS Survey 3.0), which includes standardized questionnaires and optional supplemental items to assess patients' experiences with primary or specialty care. The CG-CAHPS Survey 3.0 asks patients to report on their experiences with a doctor's office — both the health care provider they see and the office staff — over the last 6 months. This reference period of 6 months prompts respondents to consider multiple experiences with care when answering the questions. The Adult Survey is intended for respondents who are 18 and older; the Child Survey asks parents or guardians about the health care experiences of children 17 and younger. All survey instruments and supplemental items are available in both English and Spanish and formatted in a manner suitable for mailing.

- To learn about the recommended format of a CAHPS questionnaire, refer to *Preparing a Questionnaire Using the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey*.
- To read about the development of this survey, visit <https://cahps.ahrq.gov/surveys-guidance/cg/about/Develop-CG-Surveys.html>.

Key Components of the CG-CAHPS Survey 3.0

Core Items

The Adult and Child Surveys use a consistent set of core items to ensure standardization and comparability across survey users. The core items are applicable across various kinds of medical practices, including primary care and specialty care, and across a variety of patient populations.

Appendix A lists the topics covered by the core items in the Adult Survey; **Appendix B** lists the topics in the Child Survey.

The core items in the CG-CAHPS Survey 3.0 produce the following patient experience measures:

- Getting Timely Appointments, Care, and Information
- How Well Providers Communicate With Patients
- Providers' Use of Information to Coordinate Patient Care
- Helpful, Courteous, and Respectful Office Staff
- Patients' Rating of the Provider

How the Child Survey Expands on the Core Items

The Child version of CG-CAHPS includes additional survey items to capture:

- Communication between the provider and the child.
- Demographic information about the child and the parent/guardian.

Supplemental Items

The Clinician & Group Survey also includes an extensive list of supplemental items for both the Adult and Child versions of the survey. Supplemental items are questions that address specific areas of interest, such as experiences with health information technology or health promotion and education. By adding supplemental items to the core items, organizations can customize the survey to meet their specific needs.



The 3.0 version of the supplemental items for the Clinician & Group Survey is in development; please contact the CAHPS Help Line at cahps1@westat.com for guidance on using the 2.0 version of those items with the 3.0 version of the survey. To learn about incorporating supplemental items into your questionnaire, refer to *Preparing a Questionnaire Using the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey*.

Response Scales

The Clinician & Group Survey 3.0 uses the standard CAHPS response scales:

- A 4-point frequency scale of “Never, Sometimes, Usually, and Always”
- A “Yes/No” scale
- A “0-10” scale to rate the provider

What’s New About the 3.0 Version

The 3.0 version of the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey builds on previous versions of the survey, which has been available from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality since 2007.

Background

The 2.0 version of the survey, which was released in October 2011, included three versions:¹

- **12-Month Survey 2.0** (34 items)
- **Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Survey 2.0** (52 items) – An expanded version of the 12-Month Survey that incorporated the CAHPS Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Item Set.
- **Visit Survey 2.0** (37 items) – A variation on the 12-Month Survey that asked about patients’ experiences with providers and office staff at their most recent visit. These items used an expanded 3-point Yes/No scale: “Yes, definitely; Yes, somewhat; No.” Questions about access to care and questions about development and prevention in the Child Survey retained the 12-month reference period and the standard 4-point frequency scale.

In January 2015, AHRQ issued a call for public comment on proposed changes to the CG-CAHPS Survey. Those proposed changes reflected input and lessons learned from users and stakeholders, a desire to minimize the burden of surveys on patients and providers, and an effort to maximize the reliability of reporting measures. Based on the comments received and subsequent analyses of multiple data sets, the CAHPS Consortium recommended incorporating the changes into version 3.0 of the survey.

Changes to the 3.0 Version of the CG-CAHPS Survey

The major changes to the CG-CAHPS Survey are summarized below:

- **One instrument**, in contrast to the three instruments available for the 2.0 version.
- **Use of a 6-month reference time period rather than a 12-month reference period.** This change makes the survey consistent with the implementation of the CG-CAHPS Survey by multiple stakeholders, including CMS’s ACO CAHPS Survey and the CAHPS Survey for the Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS).
- **New and modified composite measures (Adult Survey):**
 - **New composite measure for “Care Coordination.”** The new three-item composite measure is comprised of two existing core items and one new item based on an existing CG-CAHPS supplemental item.
 - **Modified composite measure for “Access.”** The revised three-item composite measure reflects multiple aspects of access that are important to patients and stakeholders.

¹ Because the changes that led to the 2.0 designation did not represent a significant digression from the 1.0 version of this survey, the shift from 1.0 to 2.0 did not affect the ability of survey users to assess trends in performance. **Appendix D** outlines the differences between the 1.0 and 2.0 versions of the survey.

- **Modified composite measure for “Communication.”** The revised four-item composite measure is consistent with the communication measure in the CAHPS Health Plan Survey.
- **In the Child Survey, a shift of the prevention and development items** from the core instrument to the Patient-Centered Medical Home Item Set. These items are recommended for use by primary care providers and may not be applicable to all specialty care providers.
- **Reduced length.** These changes reduce the length of the core surveys:
 - The Adult Survey is 31 items rather than 34.
 - The Child Survey is 39 items rather than 55.
- **Modified and reduced Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Item Set.** The PCMH Item Set has also been updated to a 3.0 version. A prepackaged instrument that incorporates the PCMH Item Set into the core survey is not available for the 3.0 version; instructions for inserting the items into the survey are provided with the item set.
 - Changes to the Adult Item Set: One question from the 2.0 version was moved into the core survey and several were moved into the general set of supplemental items. These changes reduce the Adult Item Set from 18 items to 6 items. Only the measure of “Self-Management Support” remains unchanged.
 - Changes to the Child Item Set: Several questions about prevention and development were moved from the core survey into this item set. The 3.0 version also has minor revisions that mirror the changes to the Adult version of this item set.
- **CG-CAHPS Visit Survey 2.0.** While some organizations continue to field the CG-CAHPS Visit Survey, its use has been declining steadily. In order to promote consistency across versions of the CG-CAHPS Survey, including CMS’s CAHPS surveys, AHRQ is not releasing a 3.0 version of the CG-CAHPS Visit Survey. The 2.0 version will remain available to interested users.
- **Minor changes to item wording.** Item wording was updated to be more consistent with current care practices (e.g., “did you contact” rather than “did you phone”).

Appendix A provides a crosswalk between the topics covered by the core items in versions 3.0 and 2.0 of the CG-CAHPS Adult Survey.

Appendix B provides a crosswalk between the topics covered by the core items in versions 3.0 and 2.0 of the CG-CAHPS Child Survey.

Appendix C explains how version 2.0 of the core CG-CAHPS Survey differed from version 1.0.

Appendix A: Crosswalk of Topics Covered by the Core Items in the 3.0 and 2.0 Versions of the CG-CAHPS Adult Survey

Topic	Short Item Title	Adult 3.0 Item #	Short Item Title	Adult 2.0 Item #
Confirmation of provider	Patient received care from provider named below	1	Patient received care from provider named below	1
Provider identification	Patient usually sees this provider for care	2	Patient usually sees this provider for care	2
Length of relationship	How long patient has been going to this provider	3	How long patient has been going to this provider	3
Utilization	Number of times patient visited this provider for care in last 6 months	4	Number of times patient visited this provider for care in last 12 months	4
Access to care	Patient got appointment for urgent care as soon as needed	6	Patient got appointment for urgent care as soon as needed	6
	Patient got appointment for non-urgent care as soon as needed	8	Patient got appointment for non-urgent care as soon as needed	8
	Patient got answer to medical question the same day he/she contacted provider's office	10	Patient got answer to medical question the same day he/she phoned provider's office	10
	<i>(Not included)</i>		Patient got answer to medical question as soon as he/she needed when phoned provider's office after hours	12
	<i>(Not included)</i>		Patient saw provider within 15 minutes of appointment time	13
Provider communication	Provider explained things in a way that was easy to understand	11	Provider explained things in a way that was easy to understand	14
	Provider listened carefully to patient	12	Provider listened carefully to patient	15
	<i>(Not included)</i>		Provider gave easy to understand information about health questions or concerns	17

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Topic	Short Item Title	Adult 3.0 Item #	Short Item Title	Adult 2.0 Item #
	Provider showed respect for what patient had to say	14	Provider showed respect for what patient had to say	19
	Provider spent enough time with patient	15	Provider spent enough time with patient	20
Care Coordination	Provider knew important information about patient's medical history	13	Provider knew important information about patient's medical history	18
	Someone from provider's office followed up with patient to give results of blood test, x-ray, or other test	17	Someone from provider's office followed up with patient to give results of blood test, x-ray, or other test	22
	Someone from provider's office talked about all prescription medications being taken	20	<i>(Not included)</i>	
Rating	Rating of provider	18	Rating of provider	23
Clerks and receptionists at provider's office	Clerks and receptionists helpful	21	Clerks and receptionists helpful	24
	Clerks and receptionists courteous and respectful	22	Clerks and receptionists courteous and respectful	25
Health status	Rating of overall health	23	Rating of overall health	26
Mental and emotional health status	Rating of overall mental or emotional health	24	Rating of overall mental or emotional health	27
Demographic items	Age of patient	25	Age of patient	28
	Patient male or female	26	Patient male or female	29
	Highest grade level completed	27	Highest grade level completed	30
	Hispanic or Latino	28	Hispanic or Latino	31
	Race	29	Race	32
Proxy respondent items	Someone helped patient/[respondent] complete survey	30	Someone helped patient complete survey	33
	How that person helped	31	How that person helped	34

Appendix B: Crosswalk of Topics Covered by the Core Items in the 3.0 and 2.0 Versions of the CG-CAHPS Child Survey

Topic	Short Item Title	Child 3.0 Item #	Short Item Title	Child 2.0 Item #
Confirmation of provider	Child received care from provider named below	1	Child received care from provider named below	1
Provider identification	Child usually sees this provider for care	2	Child usually sees this provider for care	2
Length of relationship	How long child has been going to this provider	3	How long child has been going to this provider	3
Utilization	Number of times child visited this provider for care in last 6 months	4	Number of times child visited this provider for care in last 12 months	4
Access to care	Child got appointment for urgent care as soon as needed	13	Child got appointment for urgent care as soon as needed	13
	Child got appointment for non-urgent care as soon as needed	15	Child got appointment for non-urgent care as soon as needed	15
	Respondent got answer to medical question the same day he/she contacted provider's office	17	Respondent got answer to medical question the same day he/she phoned provider's office	17
	<i>(Not included)</i>		Respondent got answer to medical question as soon as he/she needed when phoned provider's office after hours	19
	<i>(Not included)</i>		Child saw provider within 15 minutes of appointment time	20
Provider communication with child	Provider explained things in a way that was easy for child to understand	8	Provider explained things in a way that was easy for child to understand	8
	Provider listened carefully to child	9	Provider listened carefully to child	9
Provider communication	Provider gave respondent enough information about child's visit if respondent not in exam room with child	6	Provider gave respondent enough information about child's visit if respondent not in exam room with child	6

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Topic	Short Item Title	Child 3.0 Item #	Short Item Title	Child 2.0 Item #
	Provider gave respondent enough information about what to do to follow up with child's care	11	Provider gave respondent enough information about what to do to follow up with child's care	11
	Provider explained things in a way that was easy to understand	18	Provider explained things in a way that was easy to understand	21
	Provider listened carefully to respondent	19	Provider listened carefully to respondent	22
	<i>(Not included)</i>		Provider gave easy to understand information about health questions or concerns	24
	Provider showed respect for what respondent had to say	21	Provider showed respect for what respondent had to say	26
	Provider spent enough time with child	22	Provider spent enough time with child	27
Care Coordination	Provider knew important information about child's medical history	20	Provider knew important information about child's medical history	25
	Someone from provider's office followed up with respondent to give results of blood test, x-ray, or other test	24	Someone from provider's office followed up with respondent to give results of blood test, x-ray, or other test	29
Development	<i>(Not included)</i>		Respondent and provider talked about child's learning ability	31
	<i>(Not included)</i>		Respondent and provider talked about age-appropriate behaviors	32
	<i>(Not included)</i>		Respondent and provider talked about child's physical development	33
	<i>(Not included)</i>		Respondent and provider talked about child's moods and emotions	34

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Topic	Short Item Title	Child 3.0 Item #	Short Item Title	Child 2.0 Item #
	<i>(Not included)</i>		Respondent and provider talked about how child gets along with others	40
Prevention	<i>(Not included)</i>		Respondent and provider talked about injury prevention	35
	<i>(Not included)</i>		Provider gave information on injury prevention	36
	<i>(Not included)</i>		Respondent and provider talked about how much time child spends on a computer and in front of TV	37
	<i>(Not included)</i>		Respondent and provider talked about child's eating habits	38
	<i>(Not included)</i>		Respondent and provider talked about child's physical activity	39
	<i>(Not included)</i>		Respondent and provider talked about any problems in the household that might affect child	41
Rating	Rating of provider	25	Rating of provider	30
Clerks and receptionists at provider's office	Clerks and receptionists helpful	26	Clerks and receptionists helpful	42
	Clerks and receptionists courteous and respectful	27	Clerks and receptionists courteous and respectful	43
Health status	Rating of child's overall health	28	Rating of child's overall health	44
Mental and emotional health status	Rating of child's overall mental or emotional health	29	Rating of child's overall mental or emotional health	45
Demographic items	Age of child	30	Age of child	46
	Male or female child	31	Male or female child	47
	Hispanic or Latino	32	Hispanic or Latino	48
	Race of child	33	Race of child	49

Topic	Short Item Title	Child 3.0 Item #	Short Item Title	Child 2.0 Item #
	Age of respondent	34	Age of respondent	50
	Male or female respondent	35	Male or female respondent	51
	Highest grade level completed	36	Highest grade level completed	52
	Respondent's relationship to child	37	Respondent's relationship to child	53
Proxy respondent items	Someone helped respondent complete survey	38	Someone helped respondent complete survey	54
	How that person helped	39	How that person helped	55

Appendix C: How Version 2.0 of the Core CG-CAHPS Survey Differed from Version 1.0

The CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey was updated from 1.0 to 2.0 in October 2011. The 2.0 version of the surveys reflected lessons learned from users and stakeholders as they implemented the surveys as well as further item development and testing. No changes made in the 2.0 version significantly affected trending.

The following changes were made for the 2.0 version of the core surveys:

- **The Adult Visit Survey was finalized.**
- **All items referred to “this provider” rather than “this doctor.”** This change in focus, which allows for the inclusion of other types of providers, such as physicians’ assistants and nurse practitioners, was a response to requests from users and stakeholders. The term “this provider” was tested with patients to ensure that they interpreted the term as intended. Users could still use the term “this doctor,” but all items in the Clinician & Group Surveys 2.0 referred to “this provider.”
- **The items about access to urgent and non-urgent appointments** were modified to ask respondents if they were able to get an appointment “as soon as they needed,” as opposed to “as soon as they *thought* they needed.” This revision simplified the items and made them consistent with questions in other CAHPS surveys.
- **The item asking whether the respondent got easy to understand instructions about taking care of health problems or concerns** was modified to address whether the respondent got easy to understand information about health *questions* or concerns. This revision acknowledged that not all patients receive instructions about caring for health problems but most patients receive information about health questions or concerns.
- **The chronic condition screening items** were moved from the core items to the supplemental items. This revision shortened the length of the core survey.
- **The item asking whether respondents have seen a doctor or other health provider 3 or more times for the same health problem or condition** was simplified to ask respondents whether they got health care 3 or more times for the same health problem or condition. The simplified wording eliminated the need to define health providers.
- **An item asking about overall mental or emotional health status** was added to the core items in recognition of the importance of mental or emotional health in addition to physical health. Testing confirmed that the performance of this item was similar to the overall health status item already included in the core items.

- **The Child 12-Month Survey** was finalized. In addition to the other changes listed above:
 - A new prevention item addressed whether the respondent and the provider talked about how much time the child spends on a computer or in front of the TV. This item was also part of the composite measure on prevention.
 - The development and prevention items were changed from asking about whether the respondent and the provider talked about specific topics to whether anyone in the provider’s office talked with the respondent about specific topics. This change addressed the fact that communication about development and prevention is often the responsibility of members of the practice team other than the focal provider, such as nurse educators.
 - The item that confirmed whether “this provider” is the child’s usual source of care was revised to make it more similar to the adult version.
 - The term “or want advice about a health problem” was revised to “has a health problem.”