

The CAHPS® Database
2013 CAHPS Health Plan Survey Data Submission Process Training Session Transcript

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Welcome to the CAHPS Health Plan Survey Data Submission Process training session. This training session is designed for new and previous participants and anyone who wants a more comprehensive orientation to the Health Plan data submission process. We will review the CAHPS Database submission requirements and also walk you through the basic steps involved in data submission.

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In this training session we will cover registration for the CAHPS Database; data submission requirements; acceptable survey data specification formats; an overview of the basic steps of the data submission process, and the online data submission system.

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Sponsors that submitted data to the CAHPS Database no longer have to register for a new account this year. Sponsors will receive an email with instructions on re-activating their account. When the submission system opens, it will already contain the Sponsor account and a list of the health plans and the key information you submitted. Sponsors may add new plans, edit any existing plans if necessary, and delete plans that are not participating this year. You will receive an email with instructions to confirm your contact information and participation for this year. Once the information is confirmed the account will be re-activated and you will receive your username and password to access the online submission system.

Please note that all vendors will still need to register this year for access to the submission system.

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Let's take a moment and review the current data submission requirements. You must submit the sponsor contact information, the Health Plan key characteristics and survey administration information, a copy of the questionnaire used for collecting survey data, and the respondent-level data files through the Online Submission System.

There are a few items that cannot be submitted through the online submission system, such as the Data Use Agreement (DUA) and authorization forms. These items must be submitted to the CAHPS Database by mail or fax. Let's go over these items in detail.

All sponsors participating in the Health plan survey must submit a signed DUA. The DUA states that you will send us the data, we will protect it, and we will give you a report at no charge. The respondent-level data you submit to the CAHPS Database is classified by HIPAA as a Limited Data Set, which by definition excludes any personal identifiers and covers confidentiality issues. We encourage you to start this process as soon as possible, especially if your legal department must review the agreement before signing. The DUA should be sent to the CAHPS Database prior to submitting the data files.

You must also sign and return the NHQR Authorization form. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) requests authorization from State Medicaid programs to use selected measures from the CAHPS Health Plan survey data that you provide to the CAHPS Database for purposes of reporting State-level Medicaid results in the next National Healthcare Quality Report.

If your Health Plan is a member of the Association for Community Affiliated Plans, you must submit the ACAP authorization form. ACAP seeks your authorization to include your results in a special report that the CAHPS Database compiles for ACAP. This report compares plan-specific results for ACAP members, for quality improvement purposes.

These paper submissions must be completed before we can grant final approval and accept your data in the Health Plan Database.

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Now we will review the acceptable data file formats. This year the CAHPS Database is only accepting Medicaid and CHIP survey data.

The data file format for submissions will be the same as required by NCQA for the Adult and Child versions. Data files submitted to the CAHPS Database must meet these file specifications. The current data file specifications are available for download on the CAHPS Database Web site.

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There are 7 basic steps involved in the data submission process.

First download and submit the signed DUA, the NHQR authorization form and if you are a ACAP member, submit the signed ACAP Authorization form.

If you are a new participant you must register online to request a sponsor or vendor account to start the submission process. Sponsors that participated will receive an email with instructions on re-activating their account.

Once you receive your user name and password you can begin entering the health plan characteristics and survey administration information

Then you submit a copy of the questionnaire you used for data collection. The CAHPS Database will review your questionnaire to see that meets CAHPS standards.

Once you receive approval on your questionnaire you can begin submitting your data files. These files will be reviewed and approved by the CAHPS Database.

You can check of the status of your submission periodically to see if the data files and all other required information have been received and approved by the CAHPS Database.

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Here's an example of the Welcome page of the Online Data Submission System. This page gives you an overview of the steps involved in the data submission process. If you are a new participant you must register for an account. Sponsors, health plans, and vendors are required to complete a registration request form. After you submit the registration form, the CAHPS Database will review your request and get back to you within one business day. Upon approval, you will receive an e-mail with your username and password that will allow you access to the submission system.

If you are a sponsor you will also receive a separate e-mail with the account ID and password to pass on to your vendor or health plans in order to assist them in submitting the survey information. Sponsors should forward the account ID and password only to those users who should have authorized access to your account. Once you have received your username and password, you can login as a "Registered User" and begin the data submission process.

The "Resources" section contains relevant documents and information needed for data submission.

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Once you log on to the system, you will arrive at this “Main Menu” page. This page provides an overview of the steps for the data submission process. Notice there are tabs across the top of the page that will take you to different sections in the site. You can navigate between these menu tabs at any time as needed. The first time you log on to the system, you will need to go to the Plan Information section and enter the health plan and survey administration information for each health plan you are submitting data for.

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You will be required to provide specific information for each health plan, such as the Health Plan name, the product name, the population type, the product type, the health plan State, the CAHPS survey version you used, the total enrollment, information on how the sample was selected, the mode of survey administration, and the field period.

Please note that the total enrollment count is not a required field for NCQA submissions. However, you do need to provide this number to the CAHPS Database.

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Here is an example of the health plan information page. Notice that there is one row for each health plan. You must add the health plan name and characteristics for each health plan you are submitting data for. If you submitted data in a previous year, this grid will be pre-populated with the key characteristics for each health plan from your previous submission. You can add new plans, edit any existing plans if necessary, and delete plans that are not participating this year.

The first four columns are the “key” characteristics. The key characteristics are the Health Plan Name, Product Name, Population Type, and Product Type. You must enter these first four items in order to save the health plan record.

Once you provide these key items you may come back to the system later to complete the rest of the plan information. However, all the required fields must be completed before you can upload your survey data file.

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Now that you've entered the Health Plan information, you can submit your questionnaires. You will see a list of all the questionnaires you have uploaded and can then link them to all of the health plans that used that particular questionnaire. This may be helpful for those of you that used one questionnaire across multiple plans in your group.

The CAHPS Database will review your survey to see that it meets the CAHPS standards and that your data will be comparable to data submitted by others. Expect to receive an approval or rejection notice by email from the CAHPS Database within three business days.

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Here is an example of the list of uploaded questionnaires on the Submit Questionnaires tab. You will also see the status of each questionnaire, the number of plans you have linked this file to, and if the questionnaire has been approved or rejected by the CAHPS Database. You may also delete a questionnaire if you have uploaded the wrong file.

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After you have submitted all the required health plan information and received notification that your questionnaire has been approved, you will be allowed to submit data files for plans that used the approved questionnaire. As you upload each data file, the submission system will automatically check your file to see that it follows the correct data layout specifications. First, the system will check the header record portion of your file and will provide you a detailed report. This way you will get a chance to confirm that you've uploaded the correct file for the intended health plan. Once this process is complete, the system will check the member-level records in your file and provide you a detailed status report for these records.

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Here is an example of the submit data file tab this is where you will upload your survey data files. Once the system has checked the header record, you will be asked to view a Detailed Header Record Evaluation Report by clicking on the "Awaiting User Confirmation" link. You should carefully review this report.

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Here is an example of a Detailed Header Record Report. Please carefully review the details listed in this report to confirm that the correct file has been uploaded for the health plan. Also, confirm that the system has read in the correct number of data rows and that the number of survey completes are accurate.

This report will also list either a Warning notice for fields where there are missing data or a Failure notice for any fields where there are errors in the file such as “invalid values”. If there are no Failure notices and you are satisfied with this report you can confirm the file and the system will then begin processing the member-level records.

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Here is an example of a member-level records detailed report. This report will let you know if your data file has been approved or rejected. Just as in the Header Record Report, this report will also display any warnings or failures.

The first column displays the field position within the file. Notice there is a plus sign that you can expand or collapse to display the frequency for that item. This may be helpful for you to locate an invalid value or other problems with your file.

Even though your file may have passed the automatic file check, the CAHPS Database will review all aspects of your submission, including your data file before granting final approval for accepting your data in the Health Plan Database.

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We recommend that you check the status of your account often to ensure that your vendor and health plans have provided the necessary items. In order for your data to be accepted in the Health Plan Survey Database you must have completed each of the required steps.

The CAHPS Database must have received your signed Data Use Agreement; you must have entered all required health plan and survey administration information, submitted and received approval for your questionnaire; and the data files you submitted have been accepted.

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Here is an example of the Submission Status screen. This screen displays the status for each step of the submission process. It shows you whether the health plan information is complete or not, if your questionnaire has been accepted, and the status of your data file. It also lets you know if the CAHPS Database has granted Final approval which means your data has been accepted into the Health Plan Database.

You can view the status of your account at any time while the online submission system is open.

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And now let's recap the first steps of the submission process. Sponsors that participated should expect to receive an email containing instructions on how to re-activate their account. All others can visit the CAHPS Health Plan Survey Data Submission Web site and register for a sponsor or vendor account. All participants may also begin the submission process at that time.

Remember, the only information not submitted online is the DUA, and the authorization forms for NHQR and ACAP.

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Now that you have viewed the online training session, you may contact the CAHPS Database Helpline or send an email to the Technical Assistance mailbox should you have any questions about the submission process.

This training session will remain on the CAHPS Web site throughout the submission process. Thank you for watching this training session. We hope you found it helpful. Please feel free to send us your comments and feedback about this training session.