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Hospice CAHPS Survey Update: Preparing For 2025 Changes

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Learning Objectives

1. Describe the updated survey distribution modes
2. Discuss the updated survey measures, requirements, and deadlines
3. Gain actionable survey implementation strategies for success



Hospice CAHPS Nuts & Bolts

What Is CAHPS?

- Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey
- It is a standardized questionnaire used to gather feedback from patients about their experiences with healthcare providers
- It is developed and maintained by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)
- The CAHPS program launched in October 1995 in response to concerns about the lack of good information about the quality of health plans from the enrollees' perspective

Hospice CAHPS

- Developed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and began national implementation in 2015
- The survey is a tool to measure the quality of hospice care
- Assesses experiences of patients who died while receiving hospice care, as well as the experiences of their informal primary caregivers
- The primary caregiver completes the 47-question survey after the patient's death



Hospice CAHPS Goals

1. Provide a source of information from which selected measures could be publicly reported to beneficiaries and their family members as a decision aid for selection of a hospice program
2. Aid hospices with their internal quality improvement efforts and external benchmarking with other facilities
3. Provide CMS with information for monitoring the care provided

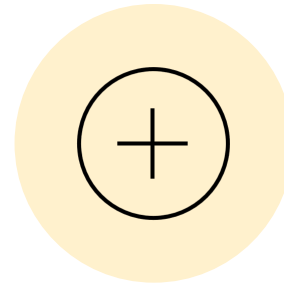
Survey Modes



Mail



Telephone



Mixed Mode

(mail with telephone
follow-up)

CAHPS Compliance

- **Hospices are required to contract with an approved survey vendor** to collect data monthly during a calendar year
- **Data is submitted to CMS quarterly** by designated due dates
- **Participation in the CAHPS Hospice Survey is required** to meet pay for reporting, or a provider will receive a 4% deduction on a coordinating annual payment update fiscal year




Current CAHPS Measures

Composite measures

- Communication with the family
- Getting timely help
- Treating the patient with respect
- Emotional and spiritual support
- Help for pain and symptoms
- Training the family to care for the patient

Global measures

- Rating of this hospice
- Willingness to recommend this hospice



Hospice CAHPS Updates

Polling Slide

1. **Were you aware of an update CAHPS survey for 2025?**
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. **No**
 - c. **Not sure**



Updated Survey

CMS finalized the implementation of a revised hospice CAHPS survey in the FY 2025 final payment update rule

CAHPS Survey Update Implementation

Updated Survey Implementation

April 2025 Decedents

Survey version (QAG V10.0) remains in effect through March 2025 (Q1 2025) decedents

Survey version QAG V11.0 will supersede all previous materials beginning with April 2025 (Q2 2025) decedents

[Web survey materials](#)

Data Collection and Submission Timeline

| | Month of Death | Survey Field Period Begins | Data Submission to the CAHPS Hospice Survey Data Warehouse |
|--|-------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Existing survey and administration procedures continue | July 2024 | October 1, 2024 | February 12, 2025 |
| | August 2024 | November 1, 2024 | |
| | September 2024 | December 1, 2024 | |
| | October 2024 | January 1, 2025 | May 14, 2025 |
| | November 2024 | February 1, 2025 | |
| | December 2024 | March 1, 2025 | |
| | January 2025 | April 1, 2025 | August 13, 2025 |
| | February 2025 | May 1, 2025 | |
| | March 2025 | June 1, 2025 | |
| Revised survey and administration procedures begin | April 2025 | July 1, 2025 | November 12, 2025 |
| | May 2025 | August 1, 2025 | |
| | June 2025 | September 1, 2025 | |

Source: [CAHPS Hospice Survey Vendor Training October 2024](#)

New Survey Mode

CMS Finalized:

Web-mail Mode

The addition of a web-mail mode (email invitation to a web survey, with mail follow-up to nonresponders)

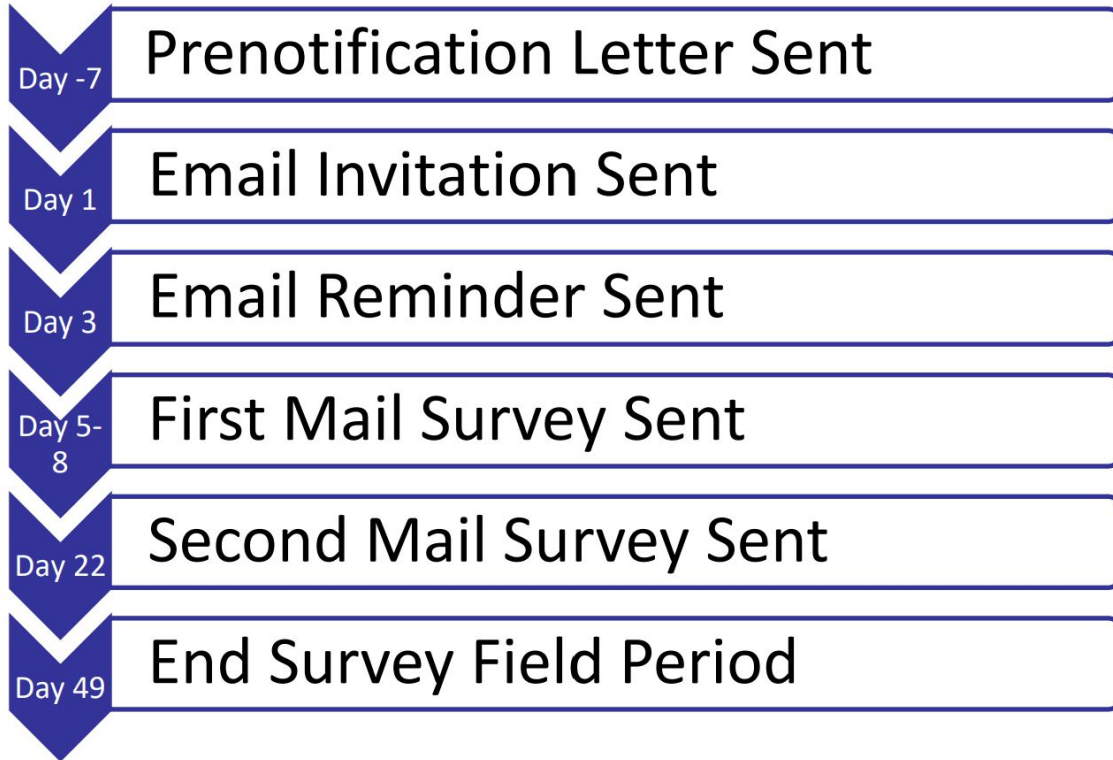
Pre-notification Letter

Addition of a pre-notification letter, which will be sent to the designated contact one week before the survey administration

Extension

Extending the field period from 42 to 49 days

New Web Mail Mode



Source: [CAHPS Hospice Survey Vendor Training October 2024](#)

New Survey Mode

Per CMS, hospice providers **should check with their current vendor** about plans for web-mail mode implementation, as it is not required

If your organization wishes to offer surveys via web-mail mode and your current vendor is not planning to implement that mode, you may need to change vendors



Updated Survey Structure

Survey length

- 39 questions vs. current 47 questions
- 30 questions about hospice care
- 9 questions about demographics

Items removed

- Removal of three nursing home items and an item about moving the family member that is not included in scored measures
- Removal of one survey item regarding confusing or contradictory information from the Hospice Team Communication measure

Updated Survey Structure

Items added

- Addition of two new items, which will be used to calculate a new Care Preferences measure

Wording simplified

- Simplified wording to component items in the Hospice Team Communication, Getting Timely Care, and Treating Family Member with Respect measures

Updated CAHPS Measures

- CMS developed a new CAHPS measure and updated two CAHPS measures related to revising the overall survey

New: Care Preferences measure

Revised: Hospice Team Communication measure

Revised: Getting Hospice Care Training measure

New Care Preferences Measure

- CMS added two new items to the survey, which will be used to calculate a new Care Preferences measure
- The items are related to respecting patient wishes and listening to what matters to the patient
 - “Did the hospice team provide care that respected your family member’s wishes?”
 - “Did the hospice team make an effort to listen to the things that mattered most to you or your family member?”

Hospice Team Communication Measure Update

Simplified wording to component items

| Current CAHPS Survey | Updated CAHPS Survey |
|--|--|
| While your family member was in hospice care, how often did the hospice team keep you informed about when they would arrive to care for your family member?" | "How often did the hospice team let you know when they would arrive to care for your family member?" |
| "While your family member was in hospice care, how often did the hospice team explain things in a way that was easy to understand?" | "How often did the hospice team explain things in a way that was easy to understand?" |
| "While your family member was in hospice care, how often did the hospice team keep you informed about your family member's condition?" | "How often did the hospice team keep you informed about your family member's condition?" |

Hospice Team Communication Measure Update (cont.)

Simplified wording to component items

| Current CAHPS Survey | Updated CAHPS Survey |
|--|---|
| "While your family member was in hospice care, how often did anyone from the hospice team give you confusing or contradictory information about your family member's condition or care?" | N/A (removed from revised survey) |
| "How often did the hospice team listen carefully to you when you talked with them about problems with your family member's hospice care?" | "How often did the hospice team listen carefully to you when you talked with them about problems with your family member's hospice care?" |
| "While your family member was in hospice care, how often did the hospice team listen carefully to you?" | "While your family member was in hospice care, how often did the hospice team listen carefully to you?" |

Getting Timely Care Measure Update

Simplified wording to component items

| Current CAHPS Survey | Updated CAHPS Survey |
|---|---|
| "How often did you get the help you needed from the hospice team during evenings, weekends, or holidays?" | "How often did you get the help you needed from the hospice team during evenings, weekends, or holidays?" |
| "While your family member was in hospice care, when you or your family member asked for help from the hospice team, how often did you get help as soon as you needed it?" | "When you or your family member asked for help from the hospice team, how often did you get help as soon as you needed it?" |

Treating Family Member With Respect Measure Update

Simplified wording to component items

| Current CAHPS Survey | Updated CAHPS Survey |
|---|---|
| "While your family member was in hospice care, how often did the hospice team treat your family member with dignity and respect?" | "How often did the hospice team treat your family member with dignity and respect?" |
| "While your family member was in hospice care, how often did you feel that the hospice team really cared about your family member?" | "How often did you feel that the hospice team really cared about your family member?" |

Public Reporting of Measure Updates

- No impact on the Summary Star Rating
- CMS will not report until there are eight quarters of data for the new Care Preferences measure
- “Getting Hospice Care Training” will be treated as a new measure, and CMS will not publicly report until eight quarters of data are collected
- No public reporting impact on the “Hospice Team Communication” measure



Public Reporting Transition Period

- CMS will calculate scores and Star Ratings by combining scores from quarters using the current and new survey
- Family Caregiver Survey Rating Summary Star Rating will be based on seven measures rather than the current eight measures until a full eight quarters of data are available for the "Getting Hospice Care Training" measure
- Summary Star Rating would be based on nine measures once eight quarters of data are available for the new Care Preference and Getting Hospice Care Training measures

Public Reporting of Measure Updates: Timing

- CMS anticipates the new measures will be reported in the February 2028 refresh to public reporting on Medicare Care Compare using Q2 2025 through Q1 2027 data
- Measure scores and Star Ratings are not calculated on the same schedule
- CMS will make measure scores available to providers in their Provider Preview reports once they meet a threshold number of completed surveys

Polling Slide

1. **Has your organization done any preparation for the updated CAHPS survey?**
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. **No**
 - c. **Not sure**



Hospice CAHPS Reminders

CAHPS Survey Communication: Can Do

- ✓ Hospice providers can tell a patient and family/caregiver that a survey will be sent to ask about their hospice experience
 - The hospice must inform all caregivers
- ✓ Providers may communicate the name of the survey vendor that will be administering the survey to all caregivers during the hospice admission process
- ✓ Providers may conduct quality improvement activities, including asking patients/family members questions to promote well-being

CAHPS Survey Communication: Cannot Do

- ✗ Invite or ask the caregiver if they want to participate in the survey, or ask if they want to opt out of the survey
- ✗ Show or provide the CAHPS Hospice Survey materials, including envelopes, to caregivers while they are in the hospice or at any time before the administration of the survey
- ✗ Attempt to influence caregivers to answer the survey questions in a particular way
- ✗ Offer incentives of any kind to complete the survey

CAHPS Survey Communication: Cannot Do (cont.)

- ✘ Ask any CAHPS Hospice Survey-like questions or response categories outside of the official CAHPS Hospice Survey administration
- ✘ Contact caregivers directly regarding their survey responses
- ✘ Share any responses that would identify a particular decedent/caregiver with direct care staff

CAHPS Exemptions

Size

- Served **fewer than 50** survey-eligible decedents/ caregivers in a reference period

Newness

- The hospice must have received its CCN on or after the first day of the performance year for the CAHPS Hospice Survey



Get Ready for the Updated CAHPS Survey

- ✓ Collaborate with your survey vendor
- ✓ Understand the updates
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with the new measures
- ✓ Train your staff
- ✓ Implement quality checks
- ✓ Ensure data accuracy

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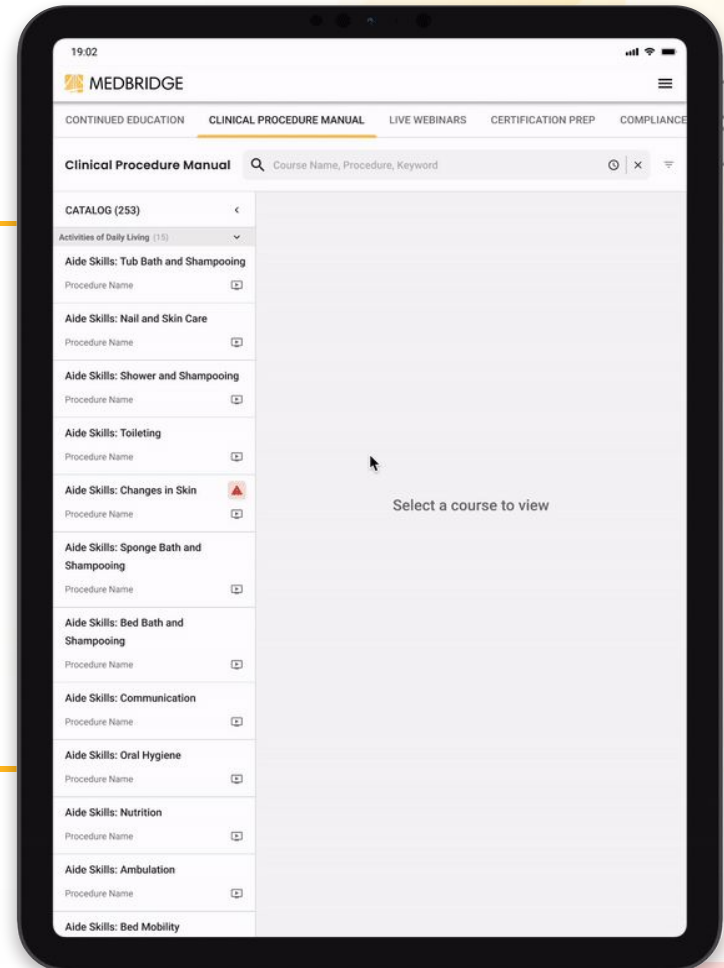
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- 1. Would you like to learn more about our Hospice solution?**
 - a. Yes, I would like to hear from a Medbridge expert**
 - b. No thank you**



Questions?

Thank You

References

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (2024, Jul). *About the CAHPS program and surveys*. <https://www.ahrq.gov/cahps/about-cahps/index.html>

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