

HCAHPS Training Announcement

January 6, 2006

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will begin to offer training for the CAHPS® Hospital Survey in early February.

The CAHPS® Hospital Survey, also known as Hospital CAHPS or HCAHPS, was created to uniformly measure and publicly report patients' perspectives of their inpatient care. It is being implemented nationally as part of the work of the Hospital Quality Alliance (HQA), a partnership of federal agencies, hospital organizations, consumer and employer groups, clinicians, and other key national groups interested in quality measurement and public transparency. HCAHPS will provide a national standard and mechanism for collecting and reporting patient perspectives on care information and complement the efforts currently underway by many hospitals. A random sample of patients from each hospital will be asked to take the survey. And by having this information available on www.HospitalCompare.hhs.gov, consumers and others will be able to make more informed assessments of the hospitals serving their communities. Participation in HCAHPS is voluntary.

The first step toward implementation is to train those who will actually collect the patient responses. Survey vendors and those hospitals or health systems that wish to conduct HCAHPS on their own (without assistance from a survey vendor) must become familiar with the HCAHPS protocols. CMS will be providing training covering all aspects of survey implementation and submission procedures. The dates for this training and information on how to register are provided below. Hospitals that are planning to participate in HCAHPS by using a survey vendor do not need to participate in the training, but should verify that their survey vendor will be participating. Training will be quickly followed by a short "dry run" of HCAHPS that will allow hospitals to gain first-hand experience using the survey -- without their results being publicly reported. All hospitals that intend to participate in HCAHPS in Fall 2006 must first take part in a dry run. Following the dry run, the HQA will begin implementation of HCAHPS for public reporting. Results from the first nine months of the survey will be publicly reported in late 2007.

Registration for HCAHPS Training

In order to participate in HCAHPS, vendors that administer the survey for their hospital clients, and hospitals that conduct the survey on their own, must attend the training. A hospital that engages a vendor to collect its HCAHPS data does not have to attend training, but its vendor must. To register on-line for training, please visit the HCAHPS web site at: www.hcahpsonline.org.

Vendors that administer HCAHPS for their hospital clients, and hospitals that conduct the survey on their own, must attend either a one-day training session at CMS headquarters in Baltimore (February 2nd or 3rd), or participate in two half-day, internet-based Webinar

training sessions (February 6th to 10th). No fees will be charged for training. Please note: Training registration will close on January 27, 2006.

Dry Run of HCAHPS

A short “dry run” of the survey will be implemented following training. The dry run will give hospitals/vendors first-hand experience in collecting and transmitting HCAHPS data -- without public reporting of results. Using the official survey instrument, approved survey modes, and data collection protocols, hospitals/vendors will collect HCAHPS data and report it to CMS. All hospitals that intend to participate in the national implementation of HCAHPS in Fall 2006 must take part in a dry run.

National Implementation of HCAHPS

National implementation of the survey for public reporting purposes will follow the dry run. In its initial phase, HCAHPS data will be collected for nine months. Aggregate hospital results will be publicly reported in late 2007 on the Hospital Compare website, which can be found at www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov, or through a link on www.medicare.gov. After this initial phase, HCAHPS data will be updated quarterly.

For Registration

To register for HCAHPS training, visit:

- www.hcahponline.org