

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

The CAHPS Hospital Survey, sometimes known as H-CAHPS or Hospital CAHPS, is a standardized survey of the experiences of adult inpatients with hospital care and services. Hospitals across the country are using this survey and voluntarily reporting data to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). CMS began public reporting of the results in March 2008.

Lead Agency:

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

Agency Mission:

The mission of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality is to improve the safety, quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of health care for all Americans.

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Partner Agencies:

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Hospital Quality Alliance (Member organizations include American Hospital Association, Federation of American Hospitals, American Nurses Association, AARP, AFL-CIO, The Disclosure Group, and others).

General Description:

In June 2002, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services asked AHRQ to develop a questionnaire through which hospital patients could rate the care that they receive. They asked AHRQ to perform this work through the Consumer Assessment of Health Providers and Services project (CAHPS®), which at that time was a consortium of three research organizations (RAND, Harvard and the American Institutes of Research) and a contractor (Westat). Though many hospital surveys exist, consumers can't compare hospital performance unless 1) all hospitals use the same survey and 2) survey results are routinely reported to a single organization and 3) these results are easily available to consumers. Development of the CAHPS Hospital Survey and aggregation/publication of the results by CMS has made these three things possible.

Excellence: What makes this project exceptional?

The HCAHPS project developed a rigorously tested, standardized questionnaire through which hospital patients can assess the care they receive in hospitals. To make sure that the survey included questions that people really want the answers to before they select a hospital, we conducted 16 focus groups with a variety of individuals across the country. This led us to develop questions that focused on provider communication skills, communication about medications, pain control, information for care after discharge, and many other areas. The great majority of American hospitals report HCAHPS data to CMS, who then publish the results on their *Hospital Compare* website. In the first week after publication of HCAHPS data, page views of this website increased from 161,000 to 1.4 million, and people are continuing to consult this resource in large numbers. HCAHPS data are especially relevant to older persons since, as we age, the likelihood that we will need hospital care increases. Development of HCAHPS was an exceptional achievement since we faced extreme push-back from the hospital data vendor industry. Because AHRQ and CMS joined forces with the Hospital Quality Alliance, we were able to respond successfully to extreme public scrutiny of the instrument and our data collection methods.