

# Overview of the CAHPS® In-Center Hemodialysis Survey

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## Introduction

The CAHPS<sup>1</sup> In-Center Hemodialysis Survey is designed to assess the experiences of hemodialysis patients who receive care from dialysis facilities. It is intended to serve as a tool that both facilities and End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Networks (known simply as Networks) can use to measure and improve the patient-centeredness of their care.

This survey is a product of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's (AHRQ's) CAHPS program. It is part of a family of instruments for gathering and reporting information on patients' experiences with both ambulatory and facility-based care. For more information, go to [www.cahps.ahrq.gov](http://www.cahps.ahrq.gov).

## Available Instruments

The *CAHPS In-Center Hemodialysis Survey and Reporting Kit* provides one instrument for adults only (aged 18 and over). This instrument is available in both English and Spanish and includes a set of supplemental items that sponsors of the survey may add to the instruments. Exhibit 1 lists the topics covered by the core items in the instrument, while Exhibit 2 lists the topics covered by the supplemental items.

## Impetus for This Survey

As a result of legislation passed in 1972, Medicare pays for more than two-thirds of the expenditures for care for patients with ESRD. To help ensure that these patients are receiving quality care, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has been reporting comparative clinical information at the facility level since January 2001 on its Dialysis Facility Compare Web site. However, patient survey results are noticeably absent from the current set of quality measures for ESRD care. In recent years, both the U.S. Office of the Inspector General and MedPac's 2003 Report to Congress noted the need to evaluate the experience of care for ESRD patients.

In late 2002, CMS requested that AHRQ and the CAHPS grantees produce a patient survey for in-center hemodialysis patients. This request was part of CMS's broader quality agenda for its ESRD program. The CAHPS Consortium first conducted preliminary research on the feasibility of such an instrument. Based on its findings, it then undertook the research and development process that resulted in an instrument released in fall 2006.

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<sup>1</sup> CAHPS stands for Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems.

## Development of the Survey

The development of the CAHPS In-Center Hemodialysis Survey involved several phases:

- A review of existing surveys and relevant literature about quality of care for ESRD patients.
- A scientific assessment of potential items for the survey.
- The convening of a Technical Expert Panel composed of nephrologists and other renal clinicians, ESRD Network executives, facility administrators and staff (including Large Dialysis Organizations), patients, patient advocacy groups, and public policy representatives.
- The solicitation of public input through *Federal Register* notices requesting existing ESRD measures as well as comments on the draft survey and pilot test plan.
- Three rounds of cognitive testing of the draft survey in English and Spanish with dialysis patients.
- Pilot testing with 30 facilities representing different regions and unit size.
- A year-and-a-half-long initiative with seven dialysis facilities and four Networks to test the use of the survey as a quality improvement tool.

All of these steps contributed to the development and refinement of the questionnaire.

To learn more about the development process, go to [https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/content/products/ICH/PROD\\_ICH\\_Development.asp](https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/content/products/ICH/PROD_ICH_Development.asp).

To learn more about the quality improvement initiative, go to [https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/content/resources/QI/RES\\_QI\\_HemodialysisCare.asp](https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/content/resources/QI/RES_QI_HemodialysisCare.asp).

**Exhibit 1: CAHPS In-Center Hemodialysis Survey: Core Item Topics**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Short Item Title</b>	<b>Questionnaire Item Number</b>
<b>Eligibility questions</b>	Where you get dialysis treatments	1
	How long you have been getting treatment from center	2
<b>Nephrologists' communication and caring</b>	Kidney doctors listened carefully	3
	Kidney doctors explained things clearly	4
	Kidney doctors respected your comments	5
	Kidney doctors spent enough time with you	6
	Kidney doctors cared about you as a person	7
	Kidney doctors seemed up to date about your care from other doctors	9
	<b>Quality of dialysis center care and operations</b>	Dialysis center staff listened carefully
Dialysis center staff explained things clearly		11
Dialysis center staff respected your comments		12
Dialysis center staff spent enough time with you		13
Dialysis center staff cared about you as a person		14
Dialysis center staff made you as comfortable as possible		15
Dialysis center staff kept information about you private		16
You felt comfortable asking dialysis center staff everything you wanted about care		17
Dialysis center staff inserted needle with as little pain as possible		21
Dialysis center staff checked you as closely as you wanted when on the dialysis machine		22
Dialysis center staff were able to manage problems during dialysis		24
Dialysis center staff behaved professionally		25
Dialysis center staff talked about what you should eat and drink		26
Dialysis center staff explained blood test results clearly		27
You were put on dialysis machine within 15 minutes of appointment time		33
Dialysis center as clean as it could be		34
You were satisfied with handling of problems		43

<b>Providing information to patients</b>	Dialysis center staff asked you about how kidney disease affects other parts of your life	18
	You knew how to take care of graft, fistula, or catheter	19
	Dialysis center gave you written information about your rights as a patient	28
	Dialysis center staff reviewed your rights as a patient with you	29
	Dialysis center staff told you how to deal with health problem at home	30
	Dialysis center staff told you how to get off machine in case of an emergency at center	31
	Kidney doctors or dialysis center staff talked to you as much as you wanted about best treatment option	36
	Doctor or dialysis center staff talked to you about ineligibility for kidney transplant	38
	Kidney doctors or dialysis center staff talked to you about peritoneal dialysis	39
	You were involved as much as you wanted in choosing best treatment option	40
<b>Global ratings</b>	Rating of kidney doctors	8
	Rating of dialysis center staff	32
	Rating of dialysis center	35
<b>Complaints</b>	Patient made complaint to a State or Medicare agency	44
<b>Health status</b>	Rate overall health	45
<b>Mental health status</b>	Rate overall mental or emotional health	46
<b>Treatment for conditions</b>	You received treatment for high blood pressure	47
	You received treatment for diabetes or high blood sugar	48
	You received treatment for heart disease or heart problems	49
<b>Demographics</b>	Age	50
	Male or female	51
	Highest grade level completed	52
	Hispanic or Latino	53
	Race	54
	Language spoken at home	55
<b>Proxy respondent</b>	Received help completing survey	56
	Who helped complete the survey	57
	How that person helped you	58

**Exhibit 2: CAHPS In-Center Hemodialysis Survey: Supplemental Item Topics**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Short Item Title</b>	<b>Questionnaire Item Number</b>
<b>Quality improvement</b>	Kidney doctors kept you informed and up to date	S1
	You needed cover or curtain to protect privacy	S2
	Dialysis staff covered you or used a curtain to protect your privacy	S3
	Dialysis center staff responded to problems as soon as you wanted	S4
	Dialysis center staff changed gloves between patients	S5
	Family member or friend involved with dialysis care	S6
	Dialysis center staff included family member or friend as much as you wanted	S7
	Dialysis center as calm and quiet as it could be	S8
	Dialysis center gave you information on making a complaint to a State or Medicare agency	S9
<b>Physical plant, transportation, and access</b>	Temperature at dialysis center comfortable	S10
	Dialysis center kept clean	S11
	You asked center for help with transportation	S12
	Help with transportation met your needs	S13
	You parked at the dialysis center	S14
	You were able to find convenient parking location	S15
<b>Interpreter services</b>	You needed an interpreter to talk to kidney doctors or dialysis center staff	S16
	You had problems because had to wait for interpreter	S17
	Dialysis center provided interpreter when needed	S18
	Who acted as interpreter	S19
	Rate the interpreters provided by dialysis center	S20

*Note: Guidance on placement of supplemental items in the core instrument is provided in the list of supplemental items.*