

A Decade of Advancing Patient-Centered Care:  
**The 10th National CAHPS® User Group Meeting**



# Conducting a CAHPS Survey

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**Overview of "Conducting a CAHPS Survey"**



- **Importance of Standardization**
- **How to Find Guidance on CAHPS Standards**
- **General Steps to Conducting a CAHPS Survey**
- **General Examples of Standard Procedures or "Rules of Thumb" for Conducting a CAHPS Survey**

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## Standardization Enables Comparisons

- Point-in-time
- Over time
- National and regional benchmarks
- Contributions to the National CAHPS Benchmarking Database

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## Standardize What?

- Questions
- How asked
- How analyzed
- How reported

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## How to Standardize Data Collection Protocol?

- Consult with the National CAHPS Benchmarking Database
- Consult with experienced CAHPS vendor
- Refer to CAHPS Survey & Reporting Kit
- Refer to CAHPS User Group Web site:  
<https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov>

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■ **User Resources**

- QI Resources
- Reporting Resources
- Project Implementation Resources**
- Translation Resources

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## Project Implementation Resources

- Planning a CAHPS Survey Project
- Managing a CAHPS Survey Project
- Hiring a CAHPS Survey Vendor

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■ **Survey Products**  
Ambulatory Care Surveys  
Facility Surveys  
**Download CAHPS Kits**

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## CAHPS Survey and Reporting Kits

Kits Include:

- Survey instruments
- Protocols and related guidance
- Sample documents to help administer the survey
- Analysis programs
- Instructions for using analysis programs
- Reporting composites

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## You may choose to download a complete Kit, download individual documents, or read a description of the product

Product	Options
Health Plan Survey 3.0	Select one  <hr/> <a href="#">Download Survey Kit</a> <a href="#">Download Individual Documents</a> <a href="#">Read Product Descriptions</a>

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## Develop Sample Design

- **Decide on population to be surveyed**
- **Decide on the sampling unit—health plan/product/care systems**
- **Determine sample size**
- **Set the desired response rate target**

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## Information Needed for Sampling

- **Availability, and *quality*, of list of names and contact information**
- **Whether and how to overcome restrictions to obtain contact information**
- **Number of people on contact list who are likely to be eligible to respond**
- **Acceptability of sampling plan to major stakeholders**

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## Information Needed to Select Mode

- **Type of contact information**
- **Respondent abilities**
- **Availability of mode-compatible form**
- **Costs and resources**

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## Information Needed to Select Questionnaire or Modules

- **Which aspects of health care do you want to know about?**
- **Which units do you want to compare?**
- **Which language(s) do you need?**
- **Which mode(s) will you use?**

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# Rules of Thumb



## Typical Survey Content in Typical Order

- 1. Sample verification**
- 2. Core questions**
- 3. *Any supplemental questions*** (e.g. QI-related)
- 4. Case mix variable** (self-reported health, age, education)
- 5. *Desired stratification variables*** (e.g. ethnicity, utilization, geographic region, type of coverage)

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## Typical Data Collection Protocol



- **No proxy respondents**
- **Mixed mode** (Mail with telephone follow-up)
  - Advance notification letter
  - 1<sup>st</sup> mailing of questionnaire
  - Reminder post card
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> mailing of questionnaire
  - Telephone follow-up (**5 attempts**)
- **3 months in field**
- **Annual**

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## Typical Number of Respondents Required



### Depends on Characteristic of Unit of Analysis

- **Large, heterogeneous units** (plans, hospitals) require **100-300 responses /unit**
- **Smaller, homogenous units** (doctors) require **40-45 responses / unit**

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## Typical Response Rate

**Depends on Protocol, Respondent Interest**

*Mail Only: 30 – 50+ %*  
*Mixed Mode: 40 – 70+ %*

**To be safe, assume 30% when calculating size of sample to contact** (e.g. to get 200 completed surveys, contact 666 potential respondents).

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■ **Overview**

- CAHPS Program
- CAHPS Principles
- Users of CAHPS
- The CAHPS User Network**
- Published Articles

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## The CAHPS User Network



- A Help Line (1-800-492-9261 and [cahps1@ahrq.gov](mailto:cahps1@ahrq.gov)), where you can get one-on-one guidance for your project

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