



#### Special points to remember:

- The government intends to use the results of the HCAHPS survey to determine the level of funds it will reimburse hospitals for services provided to Medicare patients.
- Generally, hospitals with better clinical and patient satisfaction results will receive more money. This gives hospitals a big incentive to pay close attention to the survey results and make improvements as necessary.

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How do you think your patients would rate their satisfaction with your care?

# A HCAHPS Fact Sheet

Just for You from In the Know!



## WHAT IN THE WORLD IS HCAHPS?

Have you heard people at work talking about something called H-Caps? They are referring to the **H**ospital **C**onsumer **A**ssessment of **H**ealthcare **P**roviders and **S**ystems—or HCAHPS, for short. It is a new government standardized survey used to measure how patients feel about hospital care.

Your hospital may have been doing patient satisfaction surveys for year. But, for the first time, thanks to HCAHPS, patient satisfaction information for hospitals across America will be collected and compared. This means, for example, that a small, rural hospital in Iowa

can see how it stacks up against a similar hospital in Oregon or Virginia. And, consumers can view the results to see how their local hospitals measure up to each other.

The HCAHPS results provide an objective view of what patients think about the care they receive at hospitals across the country and gives hospital staff an idea of where improvements need to be made. Although all hospitals in the United States must participate in the HCAHPS survey, each hospital can decide whether or not its data is made public.

## HOW DOES THE SURVEY WORK?

The HCAHPS survey is given to a random sampling of patients anywhere from 48 hours to six weeks after they have been discharged from the hospital. The survey can be conducted on the telephone or through the mail. It is available in a variety of languages, including Spanish, Chinese and Russian.

The survey asks 27 questions of at least 300 patients per year. The questions are all about

their hospital experience, covering such issues as communication with doctors and nurses, the responsiveness of the hospital staff, the hospital environment, pain management, communication about medicines and discharge information.

The survey also asks for an overall rating of the hospital and whether or not the patient would recommend it to friends and family. The results of the HCAHPS surveys are published quarterly.

## MORE ABOUT THE SURVEY QUESTIONS

To get an overview of each patient's experience, the HCAHPS survey includes questions like these:

- How often did nurses treat you with courtesy and respect?
- How often did nurses listen carefully to you?
- How often did doctors explain things in a way that you could understand?
- During your hospital stay, after you pressed the call button, how often did you get help as soon as you wanted it?
- How often did you get help in getting to the bathroom or in using a bedpan as soon as you wanted it?
- How often was your pain well-controlled?
- How often did hospital staff describe possible medication side effects in a way you could understand?
- How often were your room and bathroom kept clean?
- How often was the area around your room quiet at night?
- Did hospital staff talk with you about whether you would have the help you needed when you left the hospital?
- Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst hospital possible and 10 is the best hospital possible, what number would you use to rate this hospital during your stay?
- Would you recommend this hospital to your friends and family?

Put yourself in your patients' shoes. If you had to spend a few days as a patient in your hospital, how do you think you would answer these questions?

**You can check out the HCAHPS survey results on the web:**  
**[www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov)**

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO IMPROVE PATIENT SATISFACTION?

- Have a fresh approach to each of your patients—because everyone is an individual!
- Continue to find new and better ways to do your job.
- Work to solve problems as soon as they come up.
- Keep a positive attitude, even when you're having a bad day.
- Remember that each patient deserves to feel like the only one—at least for a few minutes! When you are with a patient, give that person your full attention.
- Be quick to listen...and slow to speak!
- Be grateful for complaints. They give you an opportunity to clear up misunderstandings and to learn from your mistakes.



***Treat your patients like you would want to be treated if you were in their shoes.***

- Don't make promises that you can't keep. Be sure to say what you mean and mean what you say!
- Thank your patients for trusting you to take care of them and tell them that you enjoy having them as a patient. People like to feel appreciated!