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# eternalHealth CAHPS & HOS Survey Provider Newsletter Special Edition 2024

## Together, We Can Promote a Positive Patient Experience

Our shared mission is to ensure that your patients, as well as our valued eternalHealth members, are able to thrive in good health and live their lives to the fullest. Through our dedication and commitment, we strive to provide personalized care that is tailored to meet the unique and individual needs of each patient and member. This includes the implementation of comprehensive preventive measures and the effective management of chronic conditions, all with the ultimate goal of promoting optimal health and overall well-being. Our unwavering commitment is to empower individuals to truly thrive and live their lives to the fullest by delivering the essential care and support they rightfully deserve.

To achieve our goals, we use industry-standard HOS and CAHPS quality measures to determine how well we work together towards improving your patients' health outcomes and healthcare experiences.

We have created this comprehensive guide to assist you in gaining a deeper understanding of the two surveys that Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) sends to our health plan members:

- Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS)
- Healthcare Outcomes Surveys (HOS)

# Why Should You Care About CAHPS and HOS?

These surveys are a tool used by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to enhance patient experience in healthcare systems. CMS administers surveys to gather insights on patient experience. The data collected from these surveys plays a vital role in determining Medicare Star Ratings. As a healthcare provider, you hold a key position in the performance of CAHPS and HOS, shaping how your patients perceive their well-being, the quality of care they receive, and their overall clinical outcomes. It is essential for us to keep you informed about your patients' assessments of your care.



**CAHPS Surveys are conducted from March to June, to a random selection of Medicare members assessing individuals' healthcare system encounters and experiences, including:**

- Access to doctors and specialists within the last 6 months
- Healthcare quality
- Coordination of care

**HOS surveys are conducted between July and November, to a random selection of Medicare members to evaluate outcomes. The survey aims to assess their:**

- Bladder control
- Physical activity
- Fall risk

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Is it mandatory for my patients to complete the survey?**

No, it is not required. Selected patients will receive a mail notification before receiving the survey. If not returned, the survey company will make multiple phone attempts.

### **Is the survey anonymous?**

Yes, the survey is anonymous and eternalHealth will not see the results.

### **How do providers have an impact?**

Patients' views of their well-being are frequently shaped by their interactions with their care team.

### **Where are the results of the surveys located?**

Results from the Medicare CAHPS surveys are published in the Medicare & You handbook and on the Medicare Options Compare website ([www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)).



# Did You Know?

In the survey, participants are asked some questions about very specific health issues. Review the questions provided and make sure to discuss these subjects with your patients during their appointment.

## Key Question 1 Exercise

Encouraging regular exercise is pivotal for the well-being of both mental and physical health, which is crucial for Medicare beneficiaries. Initiate conversations with all patients to understand their existing exercise routines and their levels of ability. Assist patients in formulating realistic routines and goals to if they inquire. This proactive approach ensures that individuals receive tailored guidance, empowering them to embark on a journey towards improved health and mobility.

## Key Question 3 Bladder Control

Approach the sensitive topic of bladder control empathetically, ensuring patient comfort. Explain that discussing this is routine and aims to identify and address issues early. Ask about difficulties with urine leakage, suggesting an in-person or pre-visit bladder control assessment, using keywords like "bladder control" or "issues with urine leakage".

## Appointment Conclusion

As you conclude each appointment, be sure that your patient clearly understands any and all treatment plans, prescribed medications, or test results. Go over the discussed treatments with your patients and provide them with a printed document containing all the necessary information for their next steps. Clearly outline expectations regarding the timeline and method through which they will receive their test results. This ensures that patients leave with a comprehensive understanding of their care plan and the necessary resources for follow-up actions.

## Key Question 2 Fall Risk

Preventing falls involves a comprehensive approach. Begin your assessment by inquiring about any obstacles within their home that may cause a fall, as well as recommending installing handrails in crucial places like stairwells and bathrooms. Prioritize regular eye checkups with your patients to ensure their eyesight is suitable for safe navigation. Encourage your patients to integrate strength and balance exercises into their routine, such as standing on one leg to enhance stability. Consistently review medications for potential side effects that could cause instability.

## Referral Options

When referring a patient to a specialist, ensure they are accepting new patients. Provide a list of available specialists for the patient to choose from. Contact the specialist promptly for the earliest appointment. Submit prior authorization requests promptly for a streamlined process. Visit our provider directory at [www.eternalhealth.com](http://www.eternalhealth.com) for referral options.

No more than 30 minutes

## Patient Access to Care Standards

Office wait time for appointment; **no more than 30 minutes**

Urgent care visit; **48 hours after visit**

Specialty urgent care visit; **3 to 5 days after visit**

Non-urgent symptomatic care; **7 days after visit**

Routine specialty care; **6 weeks after visit**

Routine PCP or preventive care visit; **30 business days after visit**

# Questions?

Email [ProviderRelations@eternalHealth.com](mailto:ProviderRelations@eternalHealth.com)  
or call **1 (617) 546-5733**.





# Below are some recommendations to improve the overall health care experience for your patients.

A positive patient experience can change the trajectory of care for the better. Patients who have good experiences with their providers are more likely to follow medical advice, stick to treatment plans, and take an active role in their healthcare journey. The following is a set of recommendations that your practice can implement to increase patient experience and to leave your patients feeling heard and empowered.

## Improve Availability of Appointments for Prompt Care

Providing timely access to healthcare is essential for your patients' well-being. Offering flexible options like walk-in availability, early morning, evening, and weekend appointments can ease the burden of securing a timely appointment when your patients need it most. Encouraging patients to schedule their follow-up appointment before leaving ensures regular care, reducing the risk of serious illness.

## Foster Patient Connections

It is important to acknowledge the anxiety some individuals may feel about medical visits, no matter how routine. Strive to build a rapport and connections with your patients to create a welcoming and friendly environment for them. Take the time to understand their concerns, preferences, and medical history. By doing this, you can help to alleviate nervousness and establish a positive doctor-patient relationship.



## Manage Delays with Empathy and Effective Communication

Recognizing the challenges of adhering to schedules, especially when delays occur, is essential. Mitigate patient frustration by engaging them in visit-related activities in a private area while they wait. This can include keeping patients up to date on estimated wait time, explaining causes of extended waiting periods, reviewing medications, discussing upcoming procedures, taking vital signs, or addressing health concerns.

## Don't let Your Patient Ask All of the Questions

An optimal therapeutic relationship is built on mutual engagement, where meaningful questions are posed by both you and your patient. Inquiring about relevant health topics is an effective approach to guarantee both you and your patient get the facts needed to ensure they are getting the care they deserve. These questions can foster a connection with patients, making them feel acknowledged and heard, validate their experiences, and contribute to a comprehensive understanding of their health journey. Wrap up each visit by asking if all their questions and concerns have been addressed.

## Enhance Patient Readiness for Scheduled Visits

Assisting patients in organizing their health information can greatly improve appointment efficiency. Request that your patients put together a list of current health issues, specialists they are seeing, medications they are taking, and any questions they may have. Encourage them to bring this list to their appointment for a more focused discussion and to ensure all their concerns are addressed. To streamline this process for your patients, consider sending a form to gather this information ahead of time via mail or email.