



CAHPS: Reference guide for physicians, with best practices

The **Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®)** program is a tool for assessing patients' experiences with their health plan, personal doctor, specialists and healthcare in general. This survey has become the national standard for measuring and reporting on the experiences of consumers with their health plans. CAHPS is a mandated regulatory/accreditation survey sent to a randomly selected number of Medicaid members.

The suggestions below are provided to help you enhance your patients' health care experience.

 CAHPS member survey questions	Industry best-practices for physicians
Getting appointments and care quickly	
When care was needed right away, how often did you get care as soon as you needed it?	Patients who are aware of potential scheduling timelines can plan for time needed and adjust accordingly.
How often did you see the person you came to see within 15 minutes of your appointment time?	Notify patients by text, phone or in the waiting room if there are wait time delays. This helps manage patient expectations.
How often did you get an appointment for your health care at a doctor's office or clinic as soon as you thought you needed?	Advocate for your patient and ask if they have transportation available for their appointment. Resources For Living (RFL), offered by Aetna can put your patients in touch with transportation resources.
Getting needed care	
How often did you get an appointment to see a specialist as soon as you needed?	Patients who understand why types of care, tests or treatments are essential are more likely to adhere to a care plan and seek the care that is recommended and needed.
How often was it easy to get the care, tests, or treatment needed?	Encourage practice staff to provide patients with support in identifying in-network specialist care and services (e.g. labs, imaging, radiology).
How well doctors communicate	
Were things explained to you in a way you could understand?	Effective communication with patients is key to improving patient engagement. Health literacy techniques, such as not using medical jargon and having the patient (or their caregiver) repeat back their plan-of-care instructions in their own words, can break down communication barriers.
How often did your personal doctor spend enough time with you?	Effective communication with patients is key to improving patient engagement. Health literacy techniques, such as not using medical jargon and having the patient (or their caregiver) repeat back their plan-of-care instructions in their own words, can break down communication barriers.

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Coordination of care	
For scheduled appointments, how often did your doctor have your medical records or other information about your care?	<p>Patients report having a more optimal experience when their providers are familiar with their history at the time of their appointments.</p> <p>Offering to walk through registration and use of your patient portal will go a long way in helping patients access their medical records and test results in a timely manner.</p> <p>New and established patients without an appointment in the last year should be encouraged to schedule their Medicaid Annual Wellness Visit and a physical to ensure the conversations about their health, medications, and the care they receive from other providers. This will ensure annual preventive exams are scheduled and care is coordinated on behalf of the patient.</p>
When your doctor ordered a blood test, x-ray, or other test for you, how often did: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • someone from the doctor’s office follow-up to give you those results? • you get results as soon as you needed them? 	
How often did your doctor seem informed and up-to-date about the care you got from specialists?	
How often did you and your doctor talk about the prescription medicines you were taking?	
How often did you get the help that you needed from your doctor’s office to manage your care among different providers and services?	
Overall rating of healthcare quality	
Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst health care possible and 10 is the best health care possible, what number would you use to rate all your health care in the last 6 months?	Patient councils are great for helping clinical practices understand the patient’s experience with the practice’s process-improvement initiatives.
Flu shot	
Have you had a flu shot this year?	Patients who are well informed of the benefits and safety of the flu vaccine are more likely to get the vaccine. Knowing it is protective and won’t make them sick also helps.

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CAHPS member survey questions

Industry best-practices for physicians

Cultural competence

When you needed an interpreter at your doctor's office or clinic, how often did you get one?

Understand language-preference and interpretation needs in advance of appointments to ensure resources are available.