



Home Health CAHPS: Five Keys to an Improved Response Rate

Whether you have a home health or hospice organization, success depends on improved patient outcomes. With value-based purchasing, the Home Health Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HHCAHPS) survey impacts 30% of scoring of each certified home health organization. In an era of survey fatigue, you may want to consider strategies to improve your organization's response rate. In reviewing the Home Health Care CAHPS Survey Protocols and Guidelines Manual and the CAHPS Hospice Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines, the following keys meet compliance requirements and are proven to increase response rates:

Educate All Staff: No matter the role in the organization, allowing staff the opportunity to read and respond to HHCAHPS questions will provide each team member with an understanding of the survey. This internal activity helps team members appropriately answer any client questions regarding the survey. While questions cannot be answered for the patient or caregiver, communication can be structured with the patient or caregiver so that when the survey is received, the topics reviewed will be familiar to the recipient.

Ensure the Contact Information is Correct: Responses cannot be obtained with incorrect information.

From Intake to Discharge:

- Be sure to identify the survey recipients correctly.
- Verify correct mailing addresses, emails and telephone numbers.

Educate Your Clients: CMS allows organizations to notify patients that they will receive the HHCAHPS survey within 60 days of discharge. It's important to alert the recipient of the importance of responding so that the home care team can learn how to improve care quality and where care exceeded expectations. This reminder should be part of every visit by every discipline.

Use the Tools: As a CAHPS vendor, Axxess provides each client with our logo and cover letter. These printable tools will alert clients that they will receive a survey in the mail from Axxess. You should also consider including survey reminders in admission packets. Include magnets that say: "Survey Says: We care about your feedback"; and provide a copy of the survey envelope with logo no later than the discharge visit.

Script the Communication: You should mention the survey frequently, once during the initial visit, at each subsequent visit while the patient is active, and again at discharge.

Incorporate key phrases like:

- You are going to get a survey in the mail. We hope you will **fill it out and return it** – it won't cost anything to mail.
- The survey will you to tell us **what we do well** and **what we can do to improve**.
- Our goal is to **always** provide **excellent care** to our patients, and your answers will help us do that.

Anhang Price R, Quigley DD, Hargraves JL, Sorra J, Becerra-Ornelas AU, Hays RD, Cleary PD, Brown J, Elliott MN. A Systematic Review of Strategies to Enhance Response Rates and Representativeness of Patient Experience Surveys. Med Care. 2022 Dec 1;60(12):910-918.

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