

Hospice CAHPS® Survey and Star Ratings

November 2021

DISCLAIMER

The contents of this document are current as of this date and for informational purposes only. This is provided for informational purposes and is not intended to serve as a legal guidance. For specific agency practices, consult your legal and compliance teams for guidance. This should not be viewed as official policy of CMS. It is always the provider's responsibility to determine and comply with applicable CMS requirements.

CMS regularly updates information about the Hospice CAHPS on the [Hospice CAHPS home webpage](#). Providers need to monitor this webpage and the HQRP website frequently.

Hospice CAHPS® Fast Facts¹

- The hospice CAHPS® Survey assesses the experiences of patients and their primary informal caregivers after the patient's death. The survey treats the patient and caregiver as a single unit of care. Its purpose is to:
 - Provide a source of information on patient/caregiver experiences that can be publicly reported to beneficiaries and their family members to help them select a hospice program,
 - Support hospices with their internal quality improvement efforts and external benchmarking with other facilities, and
 - Provide the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) with information for monitoring the care provided by hospices. The survey contains 47 questions and is administered to eligible decedents/caregivers from all payer sources.
- The CAHPS® Hospice Survey is designed to be administered to the person most knowledgeable about the care the decedent received while under hospice care. Staff members or employees in care settings in which the patient received care should not be considered primary informal caregivers.
- Data collection for sampled decedents/caregivers must be initiated two months following the month of patient death.

¹ The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Hospice CAHPS. Retrieved on 11/16/2021 at: <https://hospicecahpsurvey.org/en/general-information/#GeneralInformation>

Hospice Provider Communication with Patients, Families, And Caregivers²

1. Allowable Communication

- CAHPS Hospice Survey guidelines allow hospices to communicate about the CAHPS Hospice Survey with patients and/or their caregivers prior to administration of the survey.
 - For example, hospices may inform caregivers during the hospice admission process that they may receive the CAHPS Hospice Survey.
- If a hospice wants to let caregivers know that they may receive a survey and encourage them to complete it, the hospice must inform all caregivers.
- Examples of statements that comply with CAHPS Hospice Survey protocols include:
 - “We are looking for ways to improve your family member’s stay. Please share your comments with us.”
 - “What can we do to improve your family member’s care?”
 - “We want to hear from you, please share your experience with us.”
 - “Please let us know if you have any questions about your family member’s treatment plan.”
 - “Let us know if your family member’s room is not comfortable.”

2. Non-Allowable Communication

- Certain types of communications with patients, families, and caregivers are **not permitted** because they may introduce bias in the survey results. Hospice providers may not:
 - ask any CAHPS Hospice Survey or CAHPS Hospice Survey-like questions of caregivers prior to administration of the survey
 - attempt to influence or encourage caregivers to answer CAHPS Hospice Survey questions in a particular way
 - imply that the hospice, its personnel, or agents will be rewarded or gain benefits for positive feedback from caregivers by asking caregivers to choose certain responses, or indicate that the hospice is hoping for a given response, such as a “10,” “Definitely yes” or an “Always”
 - indicate that the hospice’s goal is for all caregivers to rate them as a “10,” “Definitely yes,” or an “Always”
 - offer incentives of any kind for participation in the survey — invite or ask the caregiver if they want to participate in a survey or suggest they can “opt out” of the survey
 - show or provide the CAHPS Hospice Survey or cover letters to caregivers while they are in the hospice or at any time prior to the administration of the survey
 - mail or distribute any pre-notification letters or postcards after patient death to inform caregivers about the CAHPS Hospice Survey
 - share any responses that would identify a particular decedent/caregiver with direct care staff

² The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. (2020, Sep). CAHPS® hospice survey quality assurance guidelines version 7.0. Retrieved on 11/16/2021 at: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/cahps-hospice-survey-quality-assurance-guideline-v70-september-2020.pdf>

- invite or ask the caregiver if they want to participate in the survey or ask if they want to opt out of the survey

3. Post Survey Communication

- CAHPS survey results are intended to be used for quality improvement purposes.
- Any responses that would identify a particular decedent/caregiver case must not be shared with direct care staff.
- Hospices may not contact the caregiver to discuss survey responses.

Current Hospice CAHPS® Measures³

Measure name	Questions from the survey
Communication with family	<p>Family caregivers reported how often the hospice team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kept them informed about when they would arrive to care for their family member • Explained things in a way that was easy to understand • Listened carefully to them when they talked about problems with their family member’s hospice care • Kept them informed about the family member’s condition • Listened carefully to them • Gave them confusing or contradictory information about their family member’s condition or care
Getting timely help	<p>Family caregivers reported how often:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They got help as soon as they needed it, when they asked the hospice team for help • They got the help they needed from the hospice team during evenings, weekends, or holidays
Treating patient with respect	<p>Family caregivers reported how often:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hospice team treated their family member with dignity and respect • They felt the hospice team really cared about their family member

³ The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. (2021, Sep 24). Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) Survey. Retrieved on 11/16/2021 at: <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/Hospice-Quality-Reporting/CAHPS%C2%AE-Hospice-Survey>

Measure name	Questions from the survey
Emotional and spiritual support	<p>Family caregivers reported about how much:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional support they got from the hospice team while their family member was in hospice care • Emotional support they got from the hospice team in the weeks after their family member died • Support they got for their religious or spiritual beliefs
Help for pain and symptoms	<p>Family caregivers reported whether their family member got as much help with pain as needed, and how often their family member got needed help for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain • Trouble breathing • Trouble with constipation • Feelings of anxiety or sadness
Training family to care for patient	<p>Family caregivers reported whether the hospice team gave them the training they needed about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side effects to watch for from pain medicine • If and when to give more pain medicine • How to help if their family member had trouble breathing • How to help if their family member became restless or agitated
Rating of this hospice	<p>Family caregivers rated this agency on a scale of 0 (worst possible) to 10 (best possible)</p>
Willing to recommend this hospice	<p>Family caregivers reported how likely they would be to recommend this agency to other friends or family</p>

CMS created CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings to provide consumers with a quick and easy way to assess the family caregiver experience of care information that is provided on the Care Compare Web site. Star Ratings also allow consumers to compare hospices more easily.

1. Calculation of Star Ratings:

- CMS calculates a Star Rating for each of the eight CAHPS Hospice Survey quality measures, as well as a summary Star Rating, known as the Family Caregiver Survey Rating, which is a weighted average of the Star Ratings for each of the quality measures.
- In keeping with the CAHPS Hospice Survey measure scores currently reported on Care Compare, Star Ratings are calculated using:
 - Top-box scores, which reflect the proportion of respondents who gave the most positive response(s)
 - Adjustments for case mix and mode of survey administration
- The stars will range from one star (worst) to five stars (best) like other post-acute provider types.
 - Cut-points between stars are constructed using statistical clustering procedures that: – Minimize score differences within a star category – Maximize differences across star categories.
 - A five-star rating denotes the highest category of hospice performance; not all hospices with above average CAHPS Hospice Survey scores will attain this designation.
- The distribution of hospices across the Star Rating categories changes each time Star Ratings are calculated, as the oldest two quarters of data are removed, and the newest two quarters of data are added.
- Since the cut points used to determine stars are recomputed every other quarter (i.e., every six months), the scores that designate each Star Rating cluster may change. Thus, a hospice that achieved the same measure scores over time could find itself assigned to a different star category when new Star Ratings are calculated if the distribution of hospices overall resulted in more hospices with higher or lower overall measure scores.
- An overall summary Star Rating is calculated for each hospice
 - The calculation will average the Star Ratings across the current 8 CAHPS® measures per the table below.
 - Scoring weights will be rounded to a whole number.
 - Summary star is referred to as the “Family Caregiver Survey Rating”
 - Calculation of the summary CAHPS Hospice Survey star
 - Star Ratings for each of the eight measures are averaged

⁴ The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. (2021, Nov 8). CAHPS hospice survey star ratings overview - open door forum presentation. Retrieved on 11/16/2021 at: <https://hospicecahpsurvey.org/globalassets/hospice-cahps/star-ratings/cahps-hospice-survey-star-rating-methods-overview-november-2021.pdf>

⁵ The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. (2021, Nov). Frequently asked questions about the CAHPS® hospice survey star ratings. Retrieved on 11/16/2021 at: <https://hospicecahpsurvey.org/globalassets/hospice-cahps/star-ratings/cahps-hospice-star-ratings-faqs-november-2021.pdf>

- A weight of ½ is assigned for the two global rating measures and a weight of 1 is assigned for each of the other measures
- Normal rounding rules are applied – No half-stars are assigned

Measure name	Scoring weight
Communication with family	1
Getting timely help	1
Treating patient with respect	1
Emotional and spiritual support	1
Help for pain and symptoms	1
Training family to care for patient	1
Rating of this hospice	1/2
Willing to recommend this hospice	1/2

- **CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings Technical Notes (Nov 8, 2021)**

A detailed description of the methods used to calculate CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings is available [here](#).

2. Public Reporting on Care Compare^{6,7}

- CMS will display overall Hospice CAHPS® Star ratings on public reporting ([Care Compare](#)) in **August 2022** and ratings will be updated every other quarter.
- Only the Family Caregiver Survey Rating will be publicly reported on Care Compare.
- First Star Rating report on Care Compare:
 - The first public reporting of the CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings in August 2022 will be based on data for decedents who received hospice care between April 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019, and July 1, 2020, and September 30, 2021 (excluding data from January through June 2020 due to the public health emergency).
- Hospice providers must have at least 75 completed surveys over the eight applicable quarters to be assigned a Star Rating.
 - A Family Caregiver Survey Rating summary star based on fewer than 75 respondents does not have the required statistical reliability to distinguish between hospices' performance.
- Dry run of Star Ratings:
 - Dry Run of Star Ratings Will Begin with November 2021 Provider Preview Reports.
 - Hospice Survey Provider Preview Reports include both quality measure scores and Star Ratings.
 - Preview reports will be available to providers prior to each update of CAHPS® on Care Compare.

⁶ The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. (2021, Nov 8). CAHPS hospice survey star ratings overview - open door forum presentation. Retrieved on 11/16/2021 at: <https://hospicecahpsurvey.org/globalassets/hospice-cahps/star-ratings/cahps-hospice-survey-star-rating-methods-overview-november-2021.pdf>

⁷ The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. (2021, Nov). Frequently asked questions about the CAHPS® hospice survey star ratings. Retrieved on 11/16/2021 at: <https://hospicecahpsurvey.org/globalassets/hospice-cahps/star-ratings/cahps-hospice-star-ratings-fags-november-2021.pdf>

- The reporting period for the dry run is October 1, 2018 – December 31, 2019; July 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021.

Example of CAHPS® Preview data

CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings

Reporting Period:	Number of Quarters of Data Included:	Number of Completed Surveys Included:
mm/dd/yyyy – mm/dd/yyyy; mm/dd/yyyy – mm/dd/yyyy	5	862

The following table displays a preview of CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings for your hospice based on the Star Rating reporting period above. Note that this reporting period may be different than the reporting period for the quality measure scores presented on page 1 of this report. Please review. If you have questions or concerns about your CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings, please email our technical assistance team at hospicecahpsurvey@hsag.com.

	Your Hospice's Star Rating
Family Caregiver Survey Rating	4
Star rating for each CAHPS Hospice Survey quality measure	
Communication with family	4
Getting timely help	3
Treating patient with respect	4
Emotional and spiritual support	5
Help for pain and symptoms	5
Training family to care for patient	4
Rating of this hospice	3
Willing to recommend this hospice	4

Information source: CMS [CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings Overview - Open Door Forum Presentation](#) (Nov 8, 2021)

CMS Resources:

- [Information for hospices](#)
- [CAHPS® FAQs](#)
- **Introduction to the CAHPS® Hospice Survey Training** slides are available [HERE](#). (PDF 2020)
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. (2021, Aug 4). Medicare Program; FY 2022 Hospice Wage Index and Payment Rate Update, Hospice Conditions of Participation Updates, Hospice and Home Health Quality Reporting Program Requirements. Retrieved on 10/4/2021 from: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-08-04/pdf/2021-16311.pdf>
- [CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings Overview - Open Door Forum Presentation](#) (Nov 8, 2021)
- A description of the Star Rating methodology and answers to frequently asked questions are posted on the CAHPS® Hospice Survey Web site at: www.hospicecahpsurvey.org/en/star-ratings/