



CAHPS® Provider Resource Guide

CAHPS (Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems)



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Every year, a random sample of Iowa Total Care members are surveyed about their experience with their doctors, services, and health plan. It is an important component of ensuring that patients are satisfied, not only with their health outcomes but also with their healthcare experience.

CAHPS surveys allow patients to evaluate the aspects of care delivery that matter the most to them. At Iowa Total Care, we are committed to partnering with our providers to deliver an outstanding patient experience.

As a provider, you are the most critical component of that experience. We want to ensure that you know exactly how your patients are evaluating your care. Please take a moment to review and to familiarize yourself with some of the key topics included in the survey.

CAHPS MEASURE: GETTING NEEDED CARE

The *Getting Needed Care* measure assesses the ease with which patients received the care, tests, or treatment they needed. It also assesses how often they were able to get a specialist appointment scheduled when needed.

Incorporate the following into your daily practice:

- Office staff should help **coordinate specialty appointments** for urgent cases
- Encourage patients and caregivers to view results on the **patient portal** when available
- Inform patients of what to do if care is needed **after hours**
- Offer appointments or refills via **text and/or email**

CAHPS MEASURE: GETTING CARE QUICKLY

The *Getting Care Quickly* measure assesses how often patients got the care they needed as soon as they needed it and how often appointment wait times exceeded 15 minutes.

Incorporate the following into your daily practice:

- Ensure a **few appointments each day** are available to accommodate urgent visits
- Offer appointments with a **nurse practitioner or physician assistant** for short notice appointments
- Maintain an **effective triage system** to ensure that frail and/or very sick patients are seen right away or provided alternate care via phone and urgent care
- Keep patients informed if there is a longer wait time than expected and give them an **option to reschedule**

CAHPS MEASURE: CARE COORDINATION

The *Care Coordination* measure assesses providers' assistance with managing the disparate and confusing healthcare system, including access to medical records, timely follow-up on test results, and education on prescription medications.

Incorporate the following into your daily practice:

- Ensure there are open appointments for **patients recently discharged** from a facility
- Integrate PCP and specialty practices through **EMR or fax** to get reports promptly
- Ask patients if they have seen any other providers; **discuss visits to specialty care** as needed
- Encourage patients to **bring in their medications** to each visit

CAHPS MEASURE: HOW WELL DOCTORS COMMUNICATE

The *How Well Doctors Communicate* measure assesses patients' perception of the quality of communication with their doctor. Consider using the Teach-Back Method to ensure patients understand their health information.

What is Teach-Back?

- A way to ensure you—the healthcare provider—explained information clearly. It is not a test or quiz of patients.
- Asking a patient (or family member) to explain in their own words what they need to know or do, in a caring way
- A way to check for understanding and, if needed, re-explain and check again
- A research-based health literacy intervention that improves patient-provider communication and patient health outcomes

CAHPS MEASURE: RATING OF HEALTHCARE QUALITY

Incorporate the following into your daily practice:

- Encourage patients to make their **routine appointments** for checkups or follow-up visits as soon as they can—weeks or even months in advance
- Ensure that **open care gaps** are addressed during each patient visit
- Make use of the [Provider Portal](#) when requesting prior authorizations

The CAHPS survey asks patients to rate the overall quality of their healthcare on a 0-10 scale.



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1-833-404-1061 (TTY: 711)
