

Frequently Asked Questions About the CAHPS[®] Hospice Survey Star Ratings

General

- **What is the purpose of CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings?**

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 more easily compare hospices.

- **Will CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings replace any of the CAHPS Hospice Survey data currently reported on Care Compare?**

No. All of the CAHPS Hospice Survey information currently displayed on the Care Compare Web site and the downloadable database will continue to be available when the CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings are added to the Web site.

- **Which data are used to calculate CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings?**

CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings are calculated using data from the CAHPS Hospice Survey, a 47-item survey completed by family caregivers of patients who received hospice care before they died. For more information on the CAHPS Hospice Survey, see <https://hospicecahpsurvey.org/#AboutTheSurvey>.

In keeping with the scoring approach used to calculate CAHPS Hospice Survey quality measure scores for public reporting, CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings are calculated using top-box scores, which represent the proportion of respondents who give the most favorable response(s) for each measure.

- **Which CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings will be publicly reported?**

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. Only the Family Caregiver Survey Rating will be publicly reported on Care Compare.

- **When will hospices first see their CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings?**

Hospices will have the opportunity to see their CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings for each of the eight individual quality measures and the Family Caregiver Survey Rating summary star in their official CMS Preview Report during the provider preview period prior to each update of Care Compare. Hospices will first see their Star Ratings in their Preview Reports during the preview periods for the February 2022 and May 2022 updates

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of Care Compare. This will be a “dry run.” CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings will not be publicly reported in February or May 2022. CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings will be publicly reported for the first time in August 2022.

- **How often will CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings be updated?**

CMS plans to update CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings every other quarter (i.e., every six months). 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). CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings, including the cut points between stars, will be recalculated every other quarter rather than every quarter to allow for stable estimation of the cut points.

Hospice Eligibility

- **For which hospices will the Family Caregiver Survey Rating summary star be publicly reported?**
- A Family Caregiver Summary Rating summary star will be publicly reported only for those hospices that are eligible for public reporting on the Care Compare Web site. In addition, a hospice must have at least 75 respondents (completed questionnaires) in the eight-quarter Star Rating reporting period to receive a Star Rating for that reporting period. Star Ratings will not be calculated or publicly reported for hospices with fewer than 75 respondents; however, their measure scores may be used to determine Star Ratings cut points and may be publicly reported on Care Compare.
- **Why is it necessary to have at least 75 respondents to receive a Family Caregiver Survey 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.

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Methodology of CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings

- **How are CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings assigned?**

Calculating CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings is a multistep process.

1. CAHPS Hospice Survey responses are converted to top-box scores (scores that reflect the proportion of respondents who gave the most favorable response(s)) and then adjusted for case mix and mode of survey administration.
2. The eight quarters of data are split into four six-month (or two-quarter) periods of time. Within each six-month period:
 - a. Hospice-level measure scores are calculated as the weighted average of scores in each included quarter.
 - b. For each measure:
 - i. Cut points between adjacent star ratings one to five are assigned based on a clustering algorithm. Only hospices meeting a minimum sample size criterion are used in the clustering algorithm for stability.
 - ii. An adjustment factor is calculated that accounts for the difference in mean scores between these larger hospices and all hospices projected to have publicly reported measure scores.
3. The cut points and adjustment factors are averaged across the four six-month periods, and the mean adjustment factor is used to adjust the mean cut points. The adjusted cut points are applied to the eight-quarter CAHPS Hospice Survey measure scores to determine Star Ratings for each of the eight CAHPS Hospice Survey quality measures.
4. A summary Star Rating, known as the Family Caregiver Survey Rating, is calculated as a weighted average of the Star Ratings for each of the eight CAHPS Hospice Survey quality measures.

For more details, and examples of these calculations, please see the Technical Notes for CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings available at <https://hospicecahpsurvey.org/en/star-ratings>.

- **Why does the number of hospices receiving five stars differ from one Star Rating reporting period to the next?**

CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings are assigned in a way that minimizes differences *within* star groups and maximizes differences *between* star groups. The clustering algorithm empirically determines the number of hospices in each Star Rating category. CMS does not force a certain percentage or number of hospices into a specified Star Rating category.

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- **If our hospice's CAHPS Hospice Survey measure scores are higher than the national average, why is our Family Caregiver Survey Rating not equal to five?**

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.

- **Could our hospice's Family Caregiver Survey Rating change from one public reporting period to the next even if our CAHPS Hospice Survey measure scores don't change?**

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.

CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings and Hospice Quality Reporting Program Annual Payment Update

- **Will CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings impact our hospice's Annual Payment Update (APU)?**

CAHPS Hospice Survey Star Ratings are not used in the determination of a hospice's compliance with the annual payment update requirements.