

CAHPS® Hospice Survey

Fact Sheet

January 2026

Overview

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) implemented the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®¹) Hospice Survey to measure the experiences that patients and their caregivers have with hospice care. The survey was developed to (1) provide a source of information from which selected measures could be publicly reported to beneficiaries and their family members as a decision aid for selection of a hospice program, (2) aid hospices with their internal quality improvement efforts and external benchmarking with other facilities, and (3) provide CMS with information for monitoring the care provided.

To comply with CMS' quality reporting requirements, all eligible hospices are required to contract with an approved survey vendor to collect data using the CAHPS Hospice Survey on an ongoing monthly basis. Participation in the CAHPS Hospice Survey is required to meet the pay for reporting requirement of the Hospice Quality Reporting Program (HQRP) for the associated fiscal year (FY) annual payment update (APU). Survey data collected in calendar year (CY) 2025 will impact APU payments for FY 2027. Survey data collected in CY 2026 will impact APU payments for FY 2028. National implementation of the CAHPS Hospice Survey began in January 1, 2015.

CAHPS Hospice Survey Development, Testing and Endorsement

Beginning in 2012, CMS partnered with the RAND Corporation to design and field-test the Hospice Experience of Care Survey, referred to now as the CAHPS Hospice Survey. CMS developed the CAHPS Hospice Survey with input from many stakeholders, including other government agencies, industry stakeholders, consumer groups and other key individuals, and organizations involved in hospice care.

In 2015, CMS conducted a mode experiment to examine whether mode of survey administration affected survey responses and to develop needed mode adjustments. In 2021, CMS conducted another mode experiment to test a web-based mode of survey administration, as well as revisions to survey instrument content and administration procedures designed to improve overall response rates.

Since 2014, the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has given approval for the national implementation of the CAHPS Hospice Survey instrument.

CAHPS Hospice Survey Content and Administration

Beginning with April 2025 decedents, the CAHPS Hospice Survey consists of 38 questions. It is administered to the primary informal caregiver of the decedent who died while receiving hospice care. CAHPS Hospice Survey materials (mail, phone, web) are available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Polish, and Korean. The Chinese survey is provided in both traditional and simplified characters and targets both Mandarin and Cantonese speakers.

The CAHPS Hospice Survey is administered using four modes: Mail Only, Phone Only, Mail Phone mode (mail with phone follow-up), and Web Mail mode (web with mail follow-up). CAHPS Hospice Survey administration begins two months following the month of patient death. The data collection process must be completed within 49 calendar days after initial contact. Submission of the data to the CAHPS Hospice Survey Data Warehouse occurs quarterly.

¹ CAHPS® is a registered trademark of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, a U.S. Government agency.

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Fact Sheet

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CAHPS Hospice Survey Measures

The standardized CAHPS Hospice Survey instrument includes nine quality measures, including six composite (multi-item) measures and three single-item measures (including two global measures). Combining questions with similar attributes into composite measures allows consumers to quickly review the caregiver's experience with hospice care. The six composite measures summarize how well the hospice team communicates, timeliness of the decedent's access to care, how often the hospice team treated the decedent with respect, how much emotional and religious support was provided by the hospice team, how well the hospice team provided help for various symptoms, and how well the hospice respected the family's care preferences. One single-item measure assesses how well the hospice team taught family members to care for the patient at home. The two global measures elicit a 0-10 overall rating of hospice care and if the caregiver would recommend the hospice to others, respectively.

Official CAHPS Hospice Survey scores are publicly reported four times each year on the Care Compare Web site (<https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare>). Scheduled refreshes for CAHPS Hospice Survey data occur in February, May, August, and November. Public reporting of CAHPS Hospice Survey results are comprised of a rolling eight quarters of survey data, with data submitted quarterly by survey vendors via the CAHPS Hospice Survey Data Warehouse.

CAHPS Hospice Survey Quality Measures and Constituent Items

Composite Measures

Communication with Family

- How often did the hospice team let you know when they would arrive to care for your family member?
- How often did the hospice team explain things in a way that was easy to understand?
- How often did the hospice team listen carefully to you when you talked with them about problems with your family member's hospice care?
- How often did the hospice team keep you informed about your family member's condition?
- While your family member was in hospice care, how often did the hospice team listen carefully to you?

Getting Timely Help

- When you or your family member asked for help from the hospice team, how often did you get help as soon as you needed it?
- How often did you get the help you needed from the hospice team during evenings, weekends, or holidays?

Treating Patient with Respect

- How often did the hospice team treat your family member with dignity and respect?
- How often did you feel that the hospice team really cared about your family member?

CAHPS® Hospice Survey

Fact Sheet

January 2026

CAHPS Hospice Survey Quality Measures and Constituent Items (Cont'd)

Emotional and Spiritual Support

- While your family member was in hospice care, how much emotional support did you get from the hospice team?
- In the weeks after your family member died, how much emotional support did you get from the hospice team?
- Support for religious, spiritual, or cultural beliefs may include talking, praying, quiet time, or respecting traditions. While your family member was in hospice care, how much support for your religious, spiritual, or cultural beliefs did you get from the hospice team?

Help for Pain and Symptoms

- Did your family member get as much help with pain as he or she needed?
- How often did your family member get the help they needed for trouble breathing?
- How often did your family member get the help they needed for trouble with constipation?
- How often did your family member get the help they needed from the hospice team for feelings of anxiety or sadness?

Care Preferences

- Did the hospice team provide care that respected your family member's wishes?
- Did the hospice team make an effort to listen to the things that mattered most to you or your family member?

Training Family to Care for Patient

- Hospice teams may teach you how to care for family members who need pain medicine, have trouble breathing, are restless or agitated, or have other care needs. Did the hospice team teach you how to care for your family member?

Rating of Hospice

- Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst hospice care possible and 10 is the best hospice care possible, what number would you use to rate your family member's hospice care?

Willingness to Recommend this Hospice

- Would you recommend this hospice to your friends and family?

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Fact Sheet

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CAHPS Hospice Survey Vendor Participation

Survey vendors must be approved by CMS in order to administer the CAHPS Hospice Survey and submit CAHPS Hospice Survey data to the CAHPS Hospice Survey Data Warehouse. The survey vendor must submit a CAHPS Hospice Survey Participation Form to the CAHPS Hospice Survey Project Team for approval, meet all of the CAHPS Hospice Survey Minimum Business Requirements at the time the participation form is submitted, and be in compliance with the protocols in the most current version of the *CAHPS Hospice Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines*. In addition, survey vendors must participate in all CAHPS Hospice Survey Training sessions and successfully complete a post-training quiz.

At a minimum, the survey vendor's Project Manager must attend the CAHPS Hospice Survey Training sessions. In addition, subcontractors that are responsible for major functions of CAHPS Hospice Survey administration must attend CAHPS Hospice Survey Training sessions.

For More Information

To learn more about the CAHPS Hospice Survey, including background information, policy updates, survey administration protocols and procedures, training opportunities, and how to participate in the survey, please visit the CAHPS Hospice Survey Web site at www.hospiceahpssurvey.org.

To Provide Comments or Ask Questions

For information and technical assistance, contact the CAHPS Hospice Survey Project Team via email at hospiceahpssurvey@hsag.com or by calling toll-free at 1-844-472-4621.

To communicate with CMS staff about implementation issues, please email: hospicesurvey@cms.hhs.gov.