What Is Patient Experience and How Does CAHPS Measure It?

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“Patient experience encompasses the range of interactions that patients have with the health care system, including their care from health plans, and from doctors, nurses, and staff in hospitals, physician practices, and other health care facilities. As an integral component of health care quality, patient experience includes several aspects of health care delivery that patients value highly when they seek and receive care, such as getting timely appointments, easy access to information, and good communication with health care providers.”

Experience vs. Satisfaction

- **Patient Experience**
  - Focus on patient reports
  - Whether something that should happen actually did happen, and how often it happened
  - Frequency scales
  - Objective assessment

- **Patient Satisfaction**
  - Focus on patient ratings
  - Whether patients’ expectations were met and how they felt about their care
  - Likert (rating) scales
  - Subjective assessment
Core CAHPS Survey Principles

• Focus on topics for which patients are the best or only source of information

• Base survey items on rigorous scientific development and testing, as well as extensive stakeholder input

• Include patient reports and ratings of experiences (not satisfaction)

• All surveys and services are in the public domain
Patient Experience Is Strongly Correlated with Other Key Outcomes

• Health Outcomes:
  ▪ Patient adherence
  ▪ Process of care measures
  ▪ Clinical outcomes

• Business Outcomes:
  ▪ Malpractice risk
  ▪ Employee satisfaction
  ▪ Financial performance

Patient experience matters because it matters to patients and families.
CAHPS Survey Content

CAHPS Core Questionnaire + CAHPS Supplemental Items = Customized CAHPS Survey
CAHPS Core Questionnaires

Core domains include:

- Access to care
- Communication with provider or health care team
- Coordination of care
- Customer service
- Overall rating
CAHPS Supplemental Items

Common Domains:

- Shared Decision-Making
- Health Literacy
- Interpreter Services
- Health Information Technology
- Narrative Elicitation
- Many others
CAHPS Core Surveys: Some Examples

• **Provider:** Clinician & Group, Home Health, Hospice

• **Condition-specific:** Cancer care, Surgical care

• **Facility:** Hospital, Nursing Home, Ambulatory Surgery, In-Center Hemodialysis

• **Health Plan:** Medicare, Medicaid, Commercial, Behavioral Health (ECHO®)

• **Program:** Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS)

*Versions include: adult & child (for many); Spanish and some other translations*
Surveys Available From AHRQ

For the following surveys, you can download formatted instruments and instructions on administering the survey and analyzing and using the results.

- Health Plan
- Clinician & Group
- Cancer Care
- Surgical Care
- Child Hospital
- Dental Plan
- Experience of Care and Health Outcomes (ECHO)
- American Indian
- Nursing Home

Surveys Administered by CMS

For surveys administered by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), no documentation is available on the AHRQ site. The following pages provide links to the CMS sites with survey instruments and instructions.

- Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) participating in Medicare initiatives
- Adult Hospital
- Group practices participating in the Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS)
- Home and Community-Based Services
- Home Health Care
- Hospice
- In-Center Hemodialysis
- Outpatient and Ambulatory Surgery