



2026 Surveys on Patient Safety Culture®

Medical Office Database Report

Part I



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Highlights



Surveys on Patient Safety Culture®

Findings from the 2026 Surveys on Patient Safety Culture® (SOPS®) Medical Office Survey Database

The SOPS Medical Office Survey assesses provider and staff perceptions of their organization's patient safety culture. The 2026 SOPS Medical Office Survey Database includes data from:



2,081

Participating Medical Offices



25,040

Provider and Staff Respondents



60%

Average Medical Office Response Rate

Highest Scoring Composite Measures



**Patient Care Tracking/
Followup**

87%

of respondents reported their medical office "always" or "most of the time" reminds patients about appointments, documents how well patients follow treatment plans, and follows up with patients and outside providers.



Teamwork

86%

of respondents "strongly agree" or "agree" their medical office has a culture of teamwork, mutual respect, and close working relationships among providers and staff.

Lowest Scoring Composite Measure



**Work Pressure and
Pace**

41%

of respondents "strongly agree" or "agree" that there are enough providers and staff to handle the patient load, and the office work pace is not hectic.



OTHER FINDINGS

Overall Ratings on Quality

Highest Rated

Equitable 82%

of respondents reported that their medical office is "Excellent" or "Very Good" at providing the same quality of care to all individuals.



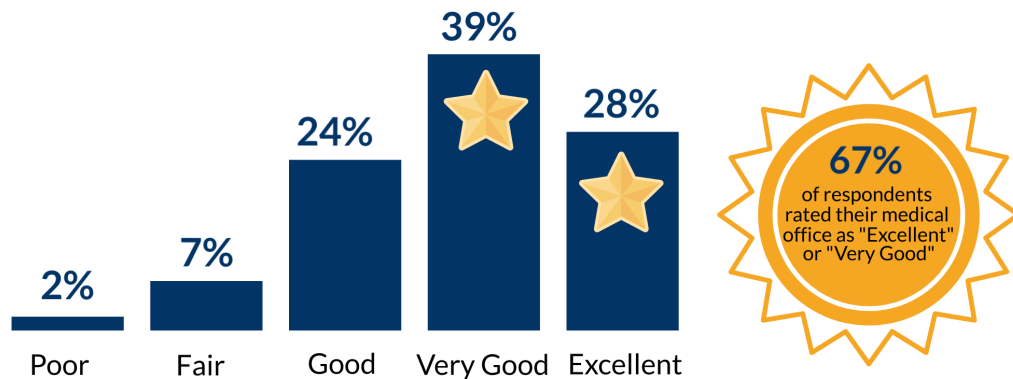
Lowest Rated

Timely 58%

of respondents reported that their medical office is "Excellent" or "Very Good" at minimizing waits and potentially harmful delays.



Overall Rating on Patient Safety



What's Next? Action Planning for Patient Safety Improvement

The *Action Planning Tool for the AHRQ Surveys on Patient Safety Culture* provides step-by-step guidance on how to develop an action plan to improve patient safety culture, available at www.ahrq.gov/sops/resources/planning-tool/index.html



1 Overview

Patient safety culture is the extent to which the beliefs, values, and norms shared by providers and staff support and promote patient safety. Patient safety culture can be measured by determining what is rewarded, supported, expected, and accepted in an organization as it relates to patient safety. It can exist at multiple levels including at the medical office level and at the system level.

In response to requests from medical offices interested in comparing results on the Surveys on Patient Safety Culture® (SOPS®) Medical Office Survey, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) established the SOPS Medical Office Survey Database. This SOPS Database aggregates voluntarily submitted data to facilitate comparisons of SOPS Medical Office Survey results.

This report presents unweighted statistics (averages, standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores, and percentiles) on the patient safety culture composite measures and items from the SOPS Medical Office Survey. The SOPS Medical Office Survey includes 38 items that are organized and aggregated into 10 composite measures. Table 1-1 defines each composite measure.

Table 1-1. SOPS Medical Office Survey Composite Measures and Definitions

SOPS Medical Office Survey Composite Measures	Definition: The Extent to Which...	Number of Items
Communication About Error	Staff are willing to report mistakes they observe and do not feel like their mistakes are held against them, and providers and staff talk openly about office problems and how to prevent errors from happening.	4
Communication Openness	Providers in the office are open to staff ideas about how to improve office processes, and staff are encouraged to express alternative viewpoints and do not find it difficult to voice disagreement.	4
Office Processes and Standardization	The office is organized, has an effective workflow, has standardized processes for completing tasks, and has good procedures for checking the accuracy of work performed.	4
Organizational Learning	The office has a learning culture that facilitates making changes in office processes to improve the quality of patient care and evaluates changes for effectiveness.	3
Overall Perceptions of Patient Safety and Quality	The quality of patient care is more important than getting more work done, office processes are good at preventing mistakes, and mistakes do not happen more than they should.	4
Owner/Managing Partner/Leadership Support for Patient Safety	Office leadership actively supports quality and patient safety, places a high priority on improving patient care processes, does not overlook mistakes, and makes decisions based on what is best for patients.	4

SOPS Medical Office Survey Composite Measures	Definition: The Extent to Which...	Number of Items
Patient Care Tracking/Followup	The office reminds patients about appointments, documents how well patients follow treatment plans, follows up with patients who need monitoring, and follows up when reports from an outside provider are not received.	4
Staff Training	The office provides staff with effective on-the-job training, trains staff on new processes, and does not assign staff tasks they have not been trained to perform.	3
Teamwork	The office has a culture of teamwork, mutual respect, and close working relationships among providers and staff.	4
Work Pressure and Pace	There are enough providers and staff to handle the patient load, and the office work pace is not hectic.	4

In addition to the items that make up these composite measures, the survey includes single-item measures on patient safety and quality issues, information exchange with other settings, and overall ratings on quality and patient safety. Respondents are also asked to provide answers to three background questions about their tenure in the medical office, hours worked per week in the medical office, and staff position.

Response Statistics for 2026 Database Medical Offices

Table 1-2 shows response rate information for the 2,081 participating medical offices. Table 1-3 shows response rates by survey administration modes. Participating medical offices administered the survey from October 2023 through September 2025.

Table 1-2. Response Statistics

Overall Response Information	Statistic
Number of medical offices	2,081
Number of respondents	25,040
Number of surveys distributed	51,630
Overall response rate	49%
Average Response Information	Average (SD)
Average number of respondents per medical office (range: 3 to 272)	12 (13)
Average number of surveys distributed per medical office (range: 5 to 544)	25 (33)
Average medical office response rate (range: 4% to 100%)	60% (27%)

Note: The standard deviation (SD) is displayed in parentheses and measures the spread or variability of medical office scores around the average.

Table 1-3. Survey Administration Mode Statistics

Survey Administration Mode	Medical Offices		Respondents		Average Response Rate
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent (SD)
Paper only	29	1%	441	2%	65% (21%)
Web only	2,026	97%	24,319	97%	60% (27%)
Mixed mode (paper and web)	26	1%	280	1%	67% (14%)
Total	2,081	100%	25,040	100%	--

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. The standard deviation (SD) is displayed in parentheses and measures the spread or variability of medical office scores around the average.

Characteristics of 2026 Database Medical Offices and Respondents

Database Medical Offices



35%

of medical offices have 3–5 providers per week.



90%

of medical offices are owned by a hospital or health system.



87%

of medical offices are single-specialty.

Database Respondents



32%

of respondents are other clinical staff or clinical support staff.



28%

of respondents have worked in their medical office for 1 year to less than 3 years.

Part II of this report (Appendixes A and B) presents more detailed information and results by medical office and respondent characteristics.

Appendix A: Results by Medical Office Characteristics

- Number of Providers
- Single-Specialty vs. Multispecialty
- Specialty
- Ownership
- Geographic Region

Appendix B: Results by Respondent Characteristics

- Staff Position
- Tenure in Medical Office

The appendixes in Part II are available online at www.ahrq.gov/sops/databases/medical-office.



2 Overall Results

This chapter presents average percent positive responses for each survey composite measure and item from the 2026 SOPS Medical Office Survey Database. The methods for calculating the percent positive scores are described in the Explanation of Calculations and Data Limitations chapter.

When comparing your medical office's results with the database results, note that the database provides only *relative* comparisons. Although your medical office's survey results may have higher percent positive scores, there may still be room for improvement within your medical office in an *absolute* sense.

The most positive-scoring composite measure was Patient Care Tracking/Followup (87%), which was 46 percentage points higher than Work Pressure and Pace (41%), the lowest-scoring composite measure.

Highlights

Highest Scoring Composite Measure: Patient Care Tracking/Followup



87%

of respondents reported that their office reminds patients about appointments, documents how well patients follow treatment plans, and follows up with patients and outside providers.

Lowest Scoring Composite Measure: Work Pressure and Pace



41%

of respondents reported there are enough providers and staff to handle the patient load, and the office work pace is not hectic.

Overall Rating on Patient Safety



67%

of respondents gave their medical office an overall patient safety rating of "Excellent" or "Very Good."

Chart 2-1. Composite Measure Results—Average Percent Positive Response

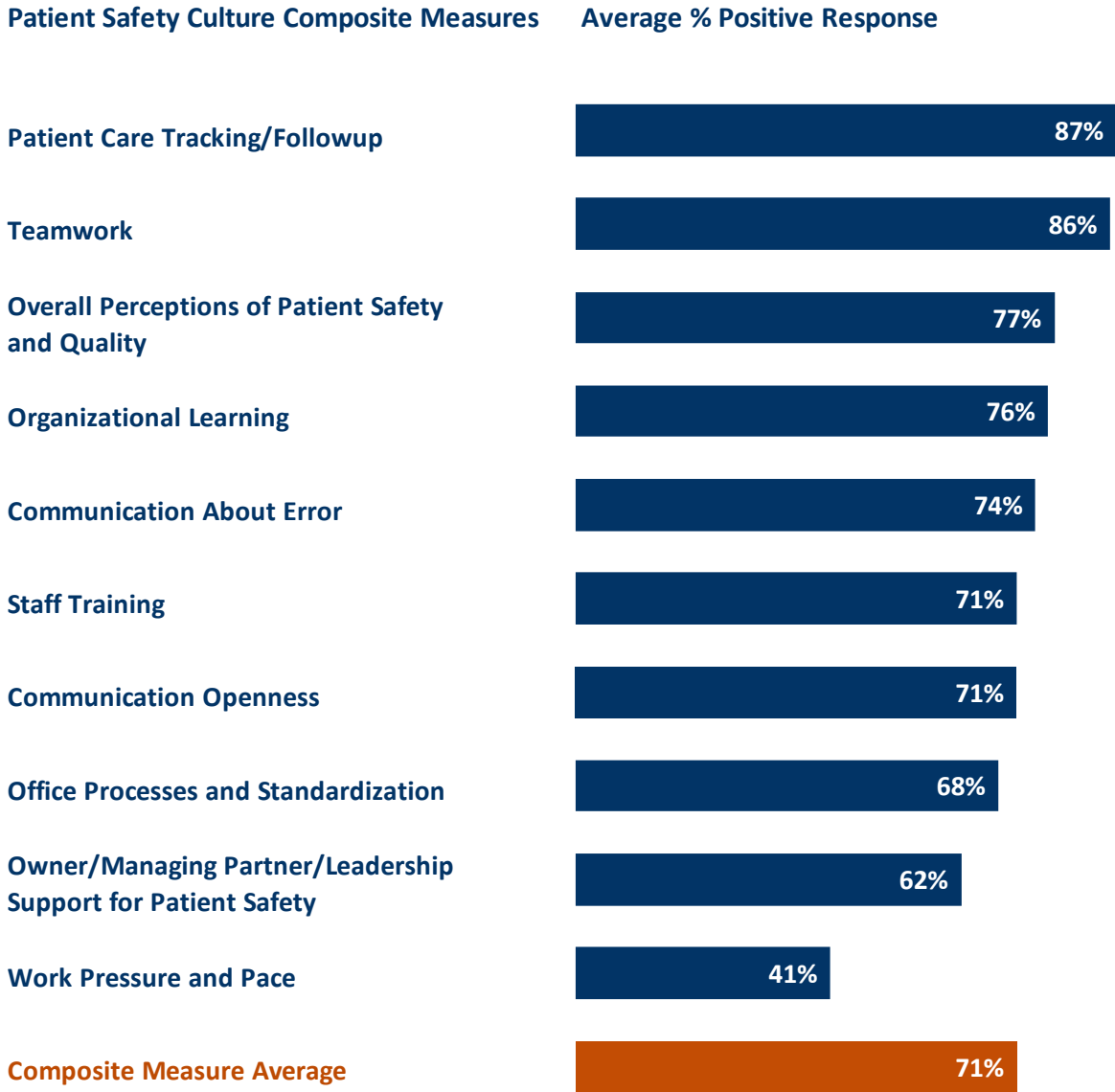
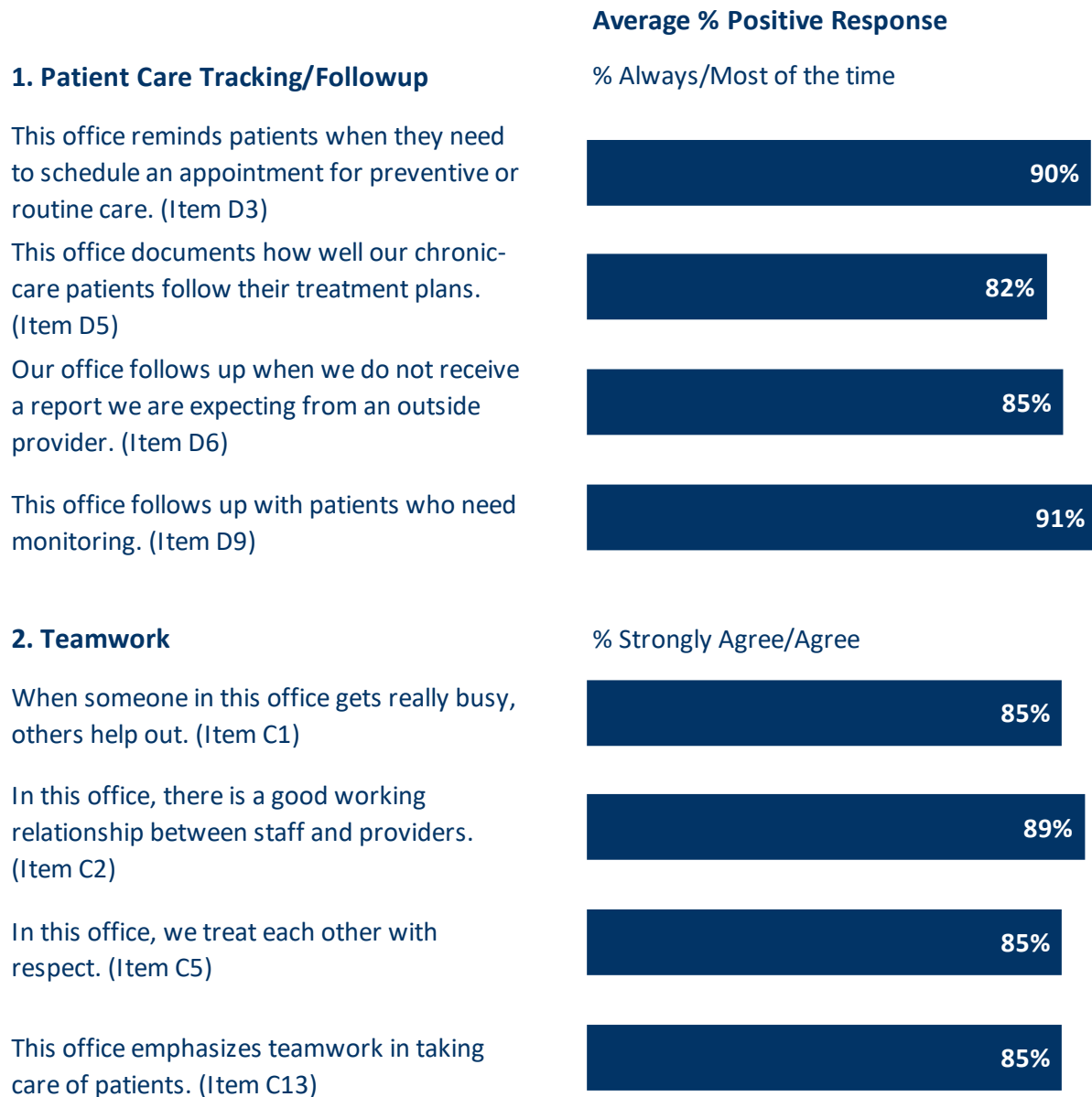
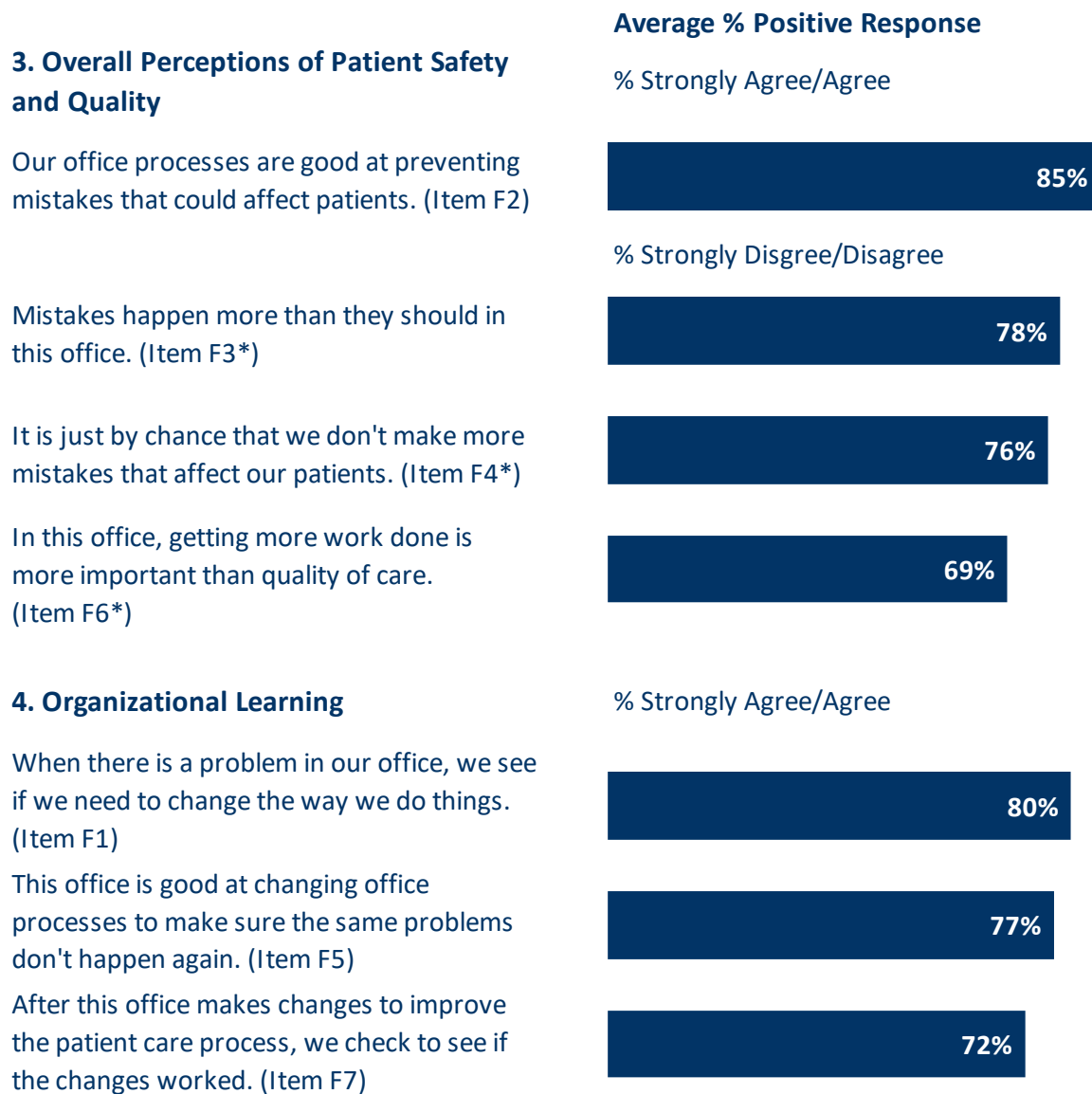


Chart 2-2. Item Results—Average Percent Positive Response (Page 1 of 5)



Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in sections C-F, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered Strongly Disagree/Disagree or Never/Rarely.

Chart 2-2. Item Results—Average Percent Positive Response (Page 2 of 5)



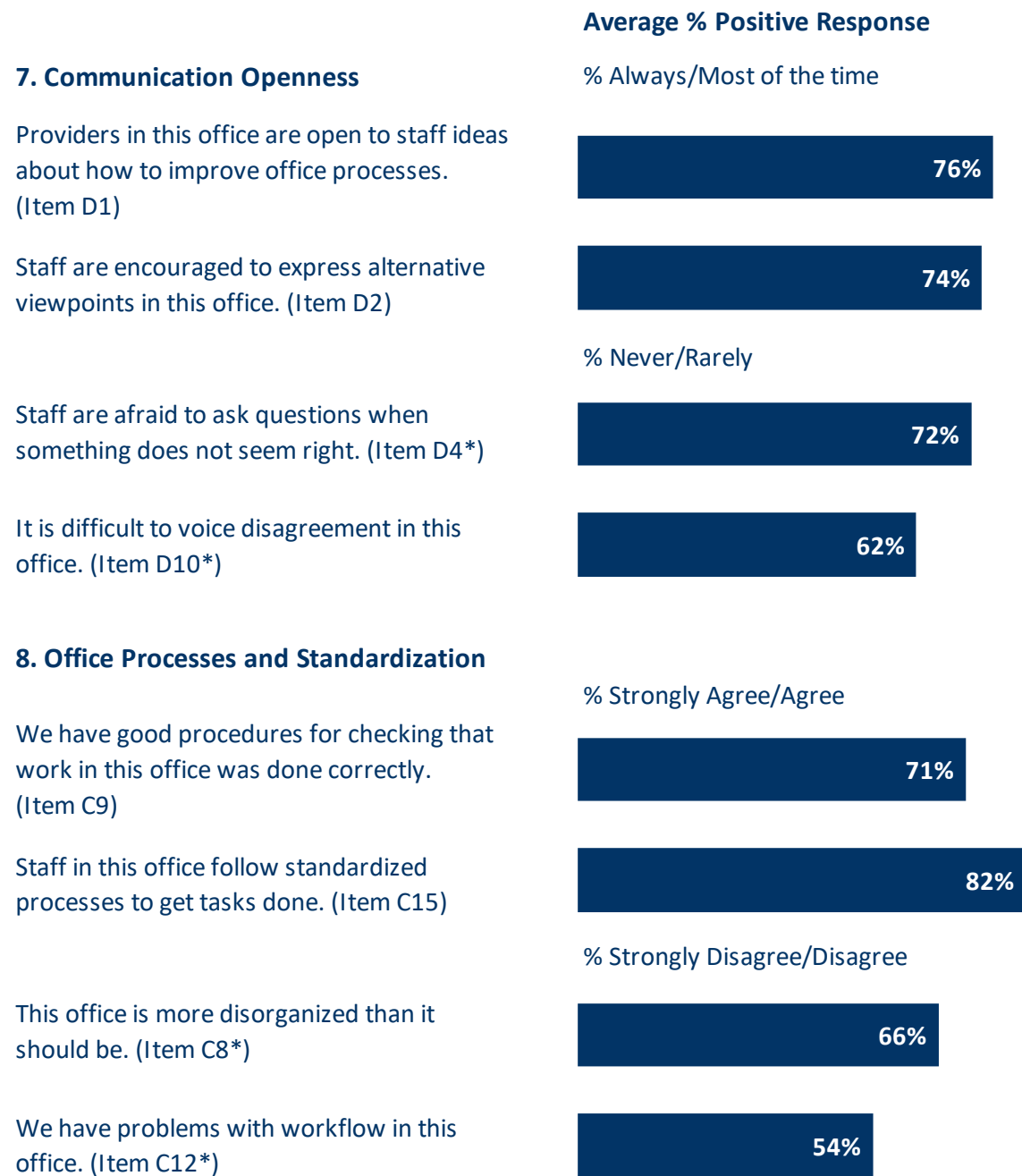
Note: The item's survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in sections C-F, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered Strongly Disagree/Disagree or Never/Rarely.

Chart 2-2. Item Results—Average Percent Positive Response (Page 3 of 5)



Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in sections C-F, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered Strongly Disagree/Disagree or Never/Rarely.

Chart 2-2. Item Results—Average Percent Positive Response (Page 4 of 5)



Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in sections C-F, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered Strongly Disagree/Disagree or Never/Rarely.

Chart 2-2. Item Results—Average Percent Positive Response (Page 5 of 5)



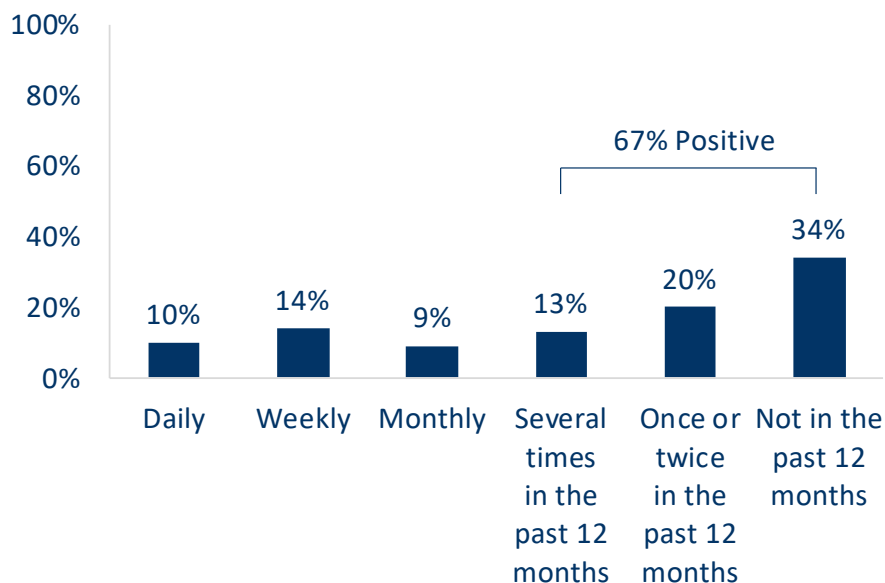
Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in sections C-F, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered Strongly Disagree/Disagree or Never/Rarely. Owner/Managing Partner/Leadership Support for Patient Safety results only include those respondents who answered “No” to being an owner, a managing partner, or in a leadership position with responsibility for making financial decisions in the medical office.

Chart 2-3. Item Results—Average Percent Response on Patient Safety and Quality Issues (Page 1 of 5)

The following items describe things that can happen in medical offices that **negatively** affect patient safety and quality of care. **In your best estimate, how often did the following things happen in your medical office OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS?**

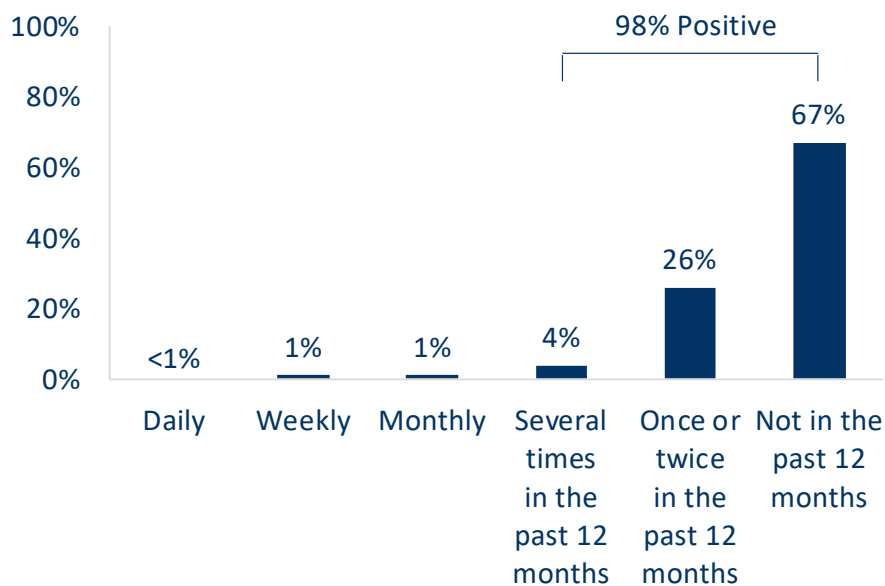
Access to Care

A patient was unable to get an appointment within 48 hours for an acute/serious problem. (Item A1*)



Patient Identification

The wrong chart/medical record was used for a patient. (Item A2*)



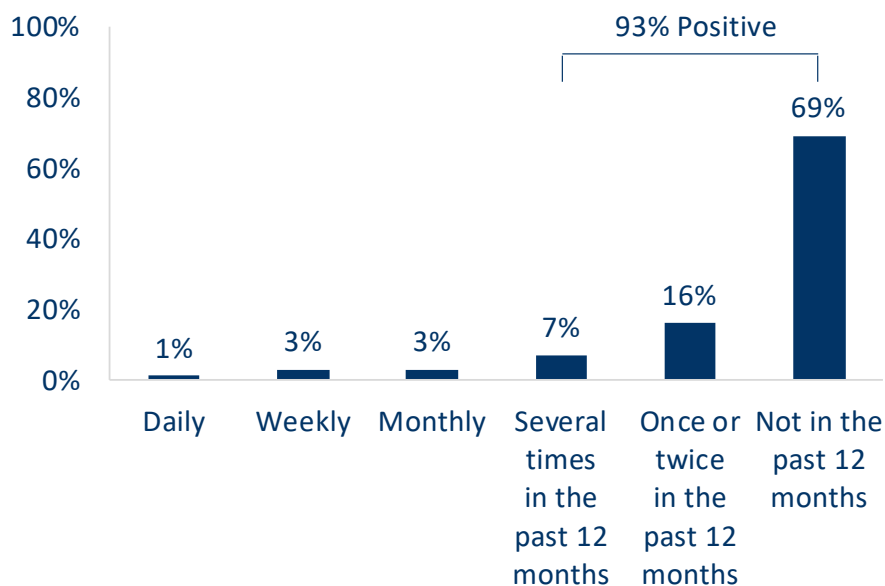
Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in section A, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered, “Several times in the past 12 months,” “Once or twice in the past 12 months,” or “Not in the past 12 months.” Percentages indicate the database average percent response for each response option. The percent positive displayed might not equal the sum of the separate response option percentages and the total for all responses might not add to 100 due to rounding.

Chart 2-3. Item Results—Average Percent Response on Patient Safety and Quality Issues (Page 2 of 5)

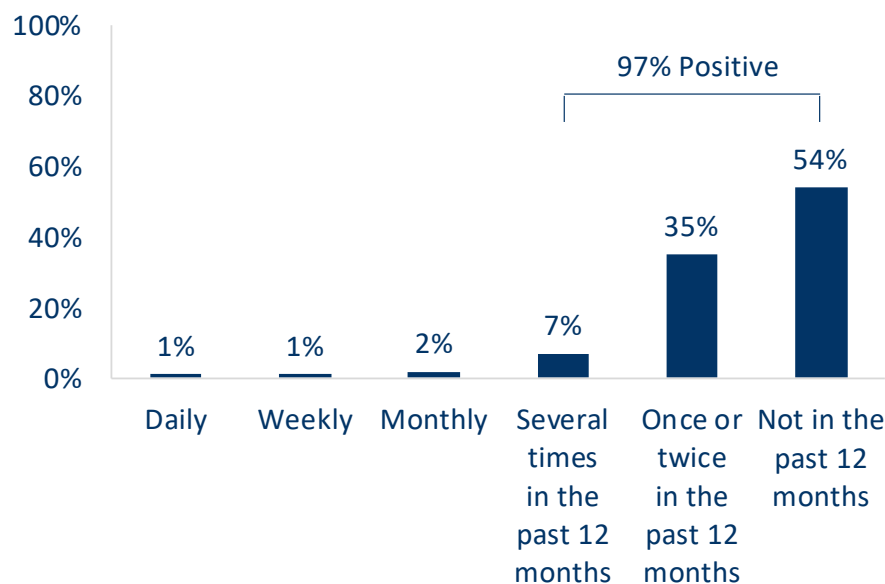
The following items describe things that can happen in medical offices that **negatively** affect patient safety and quality of care. **In your best estimate, how often did the following things happen in your medical office OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS?**

Charts/Medical Records

A patient's chart/medical record was not available when needed. (Item A3*)



Medical information was filed, scanned, or entered into the wrong patient's chart/medical record. (Item A4*)



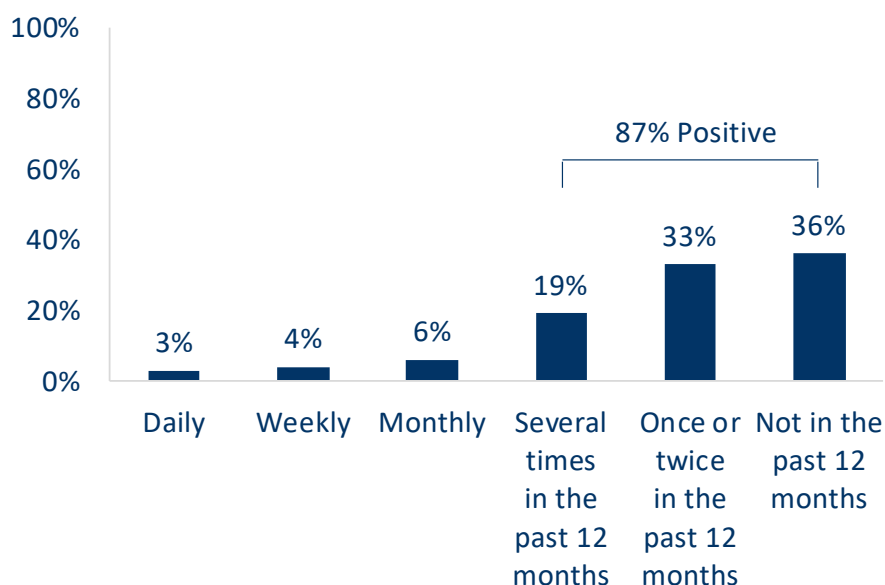
Note: The item's survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in section A, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered, "Several times in the past 12 months," "Once or twice in the past 12 months," or "Not in the past 12 months." Percentages indicate the database average percent response for each response option. The percent positive displayed might not equal the sum of the separate response option percentages and the total for all responses might not add to 100 due to rounding.

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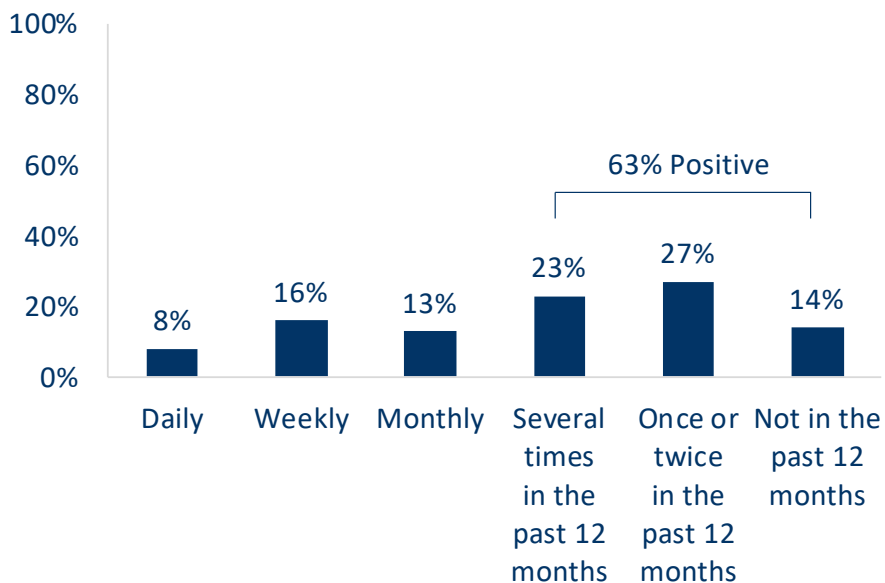
Medical Equipment

Medical equipment was not working properly or was in need of repair or replacement. (Item A5*)



Medication

A pharmacy contacted our office to clarify or correct a prescription. (Item A6*)



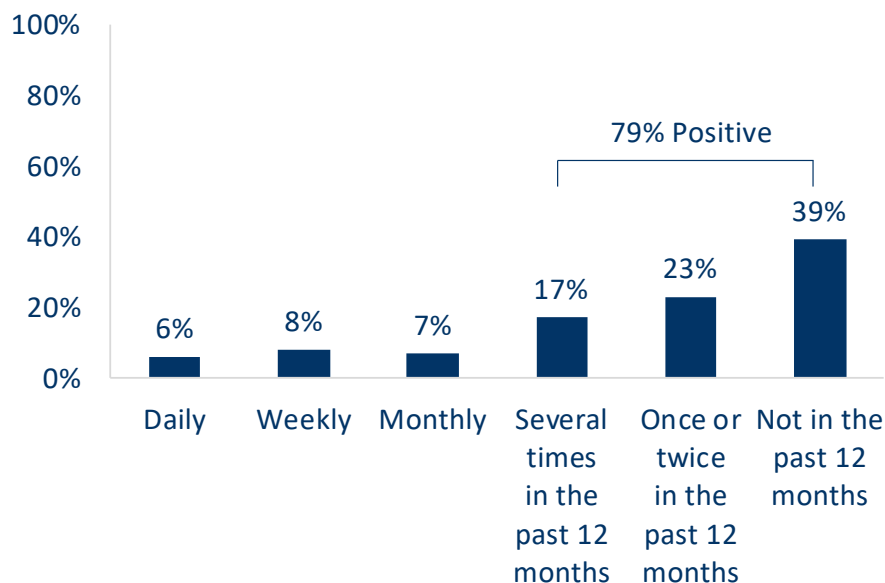
Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in section A, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered, “Several times in the past 12 months,” “Once or twice in the past 12 months,” or “Not in the past 12 months.” Percentages indicate the database average percent response for each response option. The percent positive displayed might not equal the sum of the separate response option percentages and the total for all responses might not add to 100 due to rounding.

Chart 2-3. Item Results—Average Percent Response on Patient Safety and Quality Issues (Page 4 of 5)

The following items describe things that can happen in medical offices that **negatively** affect patient safety and quality of care. **In your best estimate, how often did the following things happen in your medical office OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS?**

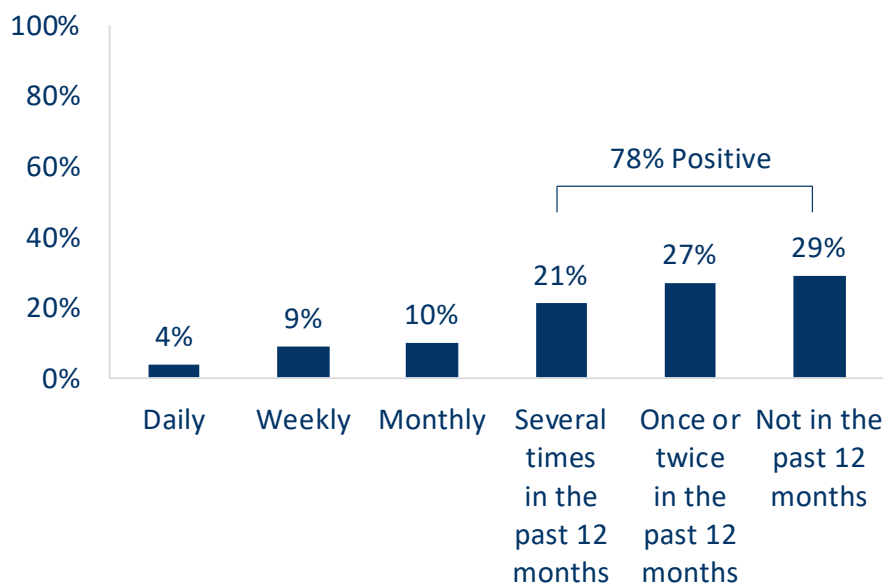
Medication (cont.)

A patient's medication list was not updated during his or her visit. (Item A7*)



Diagnostics & Tests

The results from a lab or imaging test were not available when needed. (Item A8*)



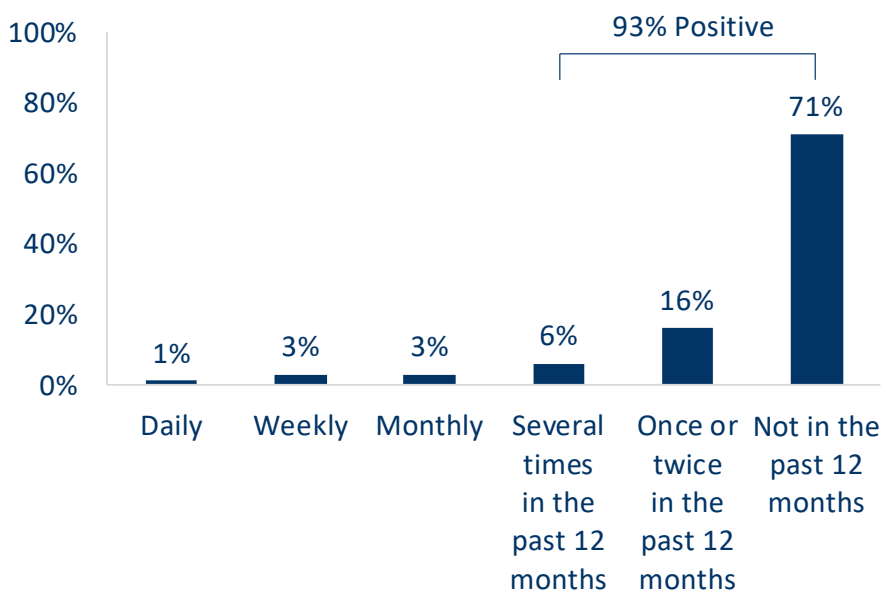
Note: The item's survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in section A, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered, "Several times in the past 12 months," "Once or twice in the past 12 months," or "Not in the past 12 months." Percentages indicate the database average percent response for each response option. The percent positive displayed might not equal the sum of the separate response option percentages and the total for all responses might not add to 100 due to rounding.

Chart 2-3. Item Results—Average Percent Response on Patient Safety and Quality Issues (Page 5 of 5)

The following items describe things that can happen in medical offices that **negatively** affect patient safety and quality of care. **In your best estimate, how often did the following things happen in your medical office OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS?**

Diagnostics & Tests (cont.)

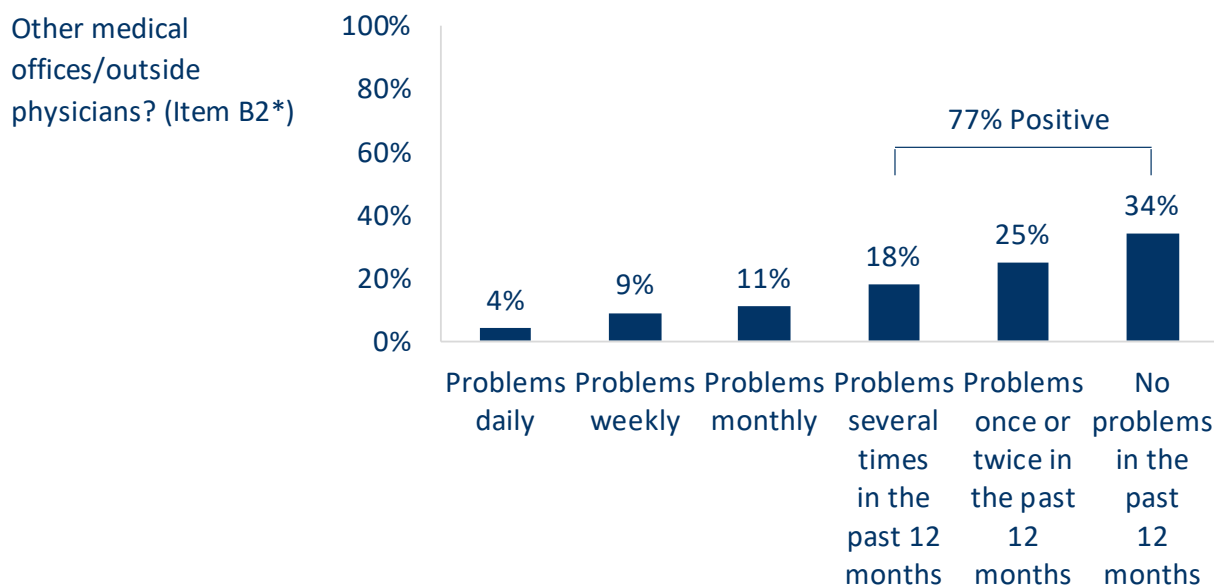
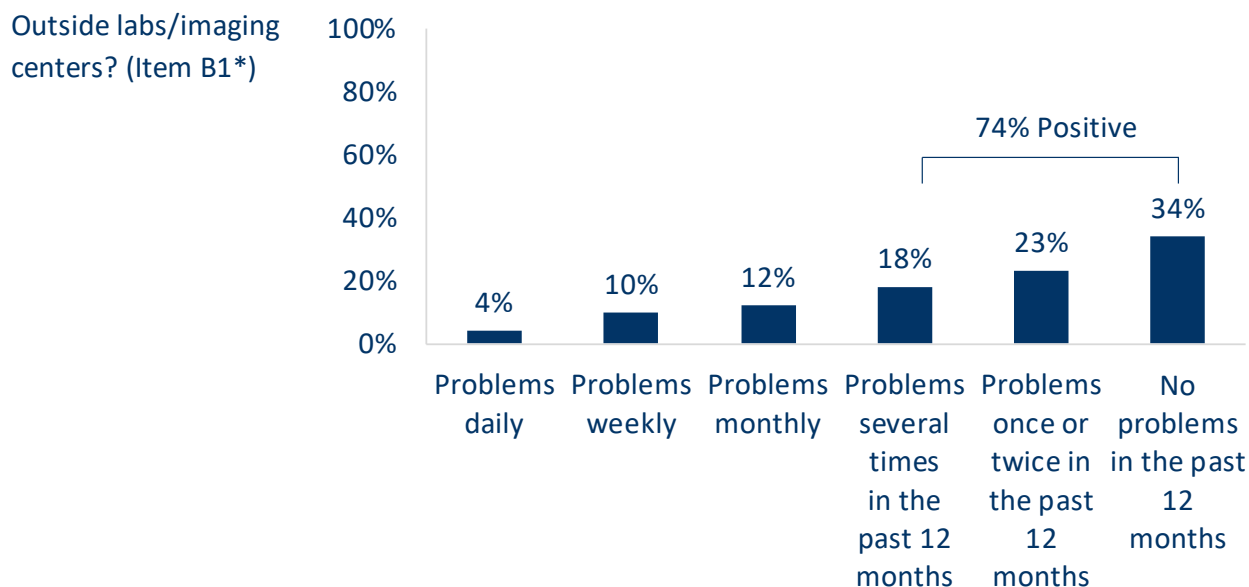
A critical abnormal result from a lab or imaging test was not followed up within 1 business day. (Item A9*)



Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in section A, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered, “Several times in the past 12 months,” “Once or twice in the past 12 months,” or “Not in the past 12 months.” Percentages indicate the database average percent response for each response option. The percent positive displayed might not equal the sum of the separate response option percentages and the total for all responses might not add to 100 due to rounding.

Chart 2-4. Item Results—Average Percent Response on Information Exchange With Other Settings (Page 1 of 2)

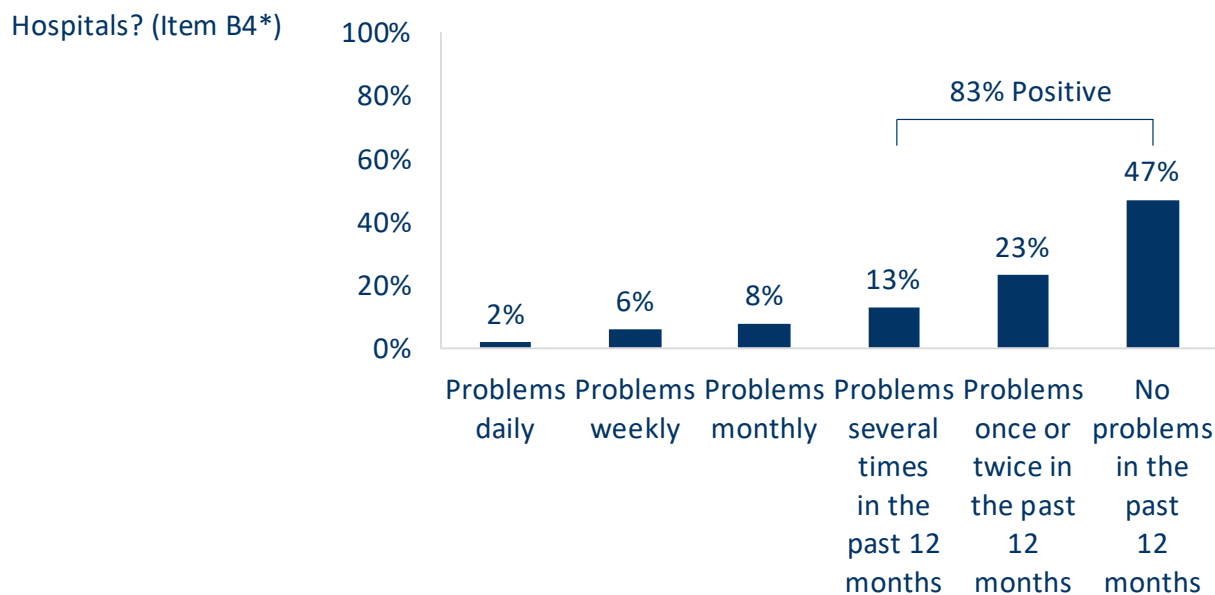
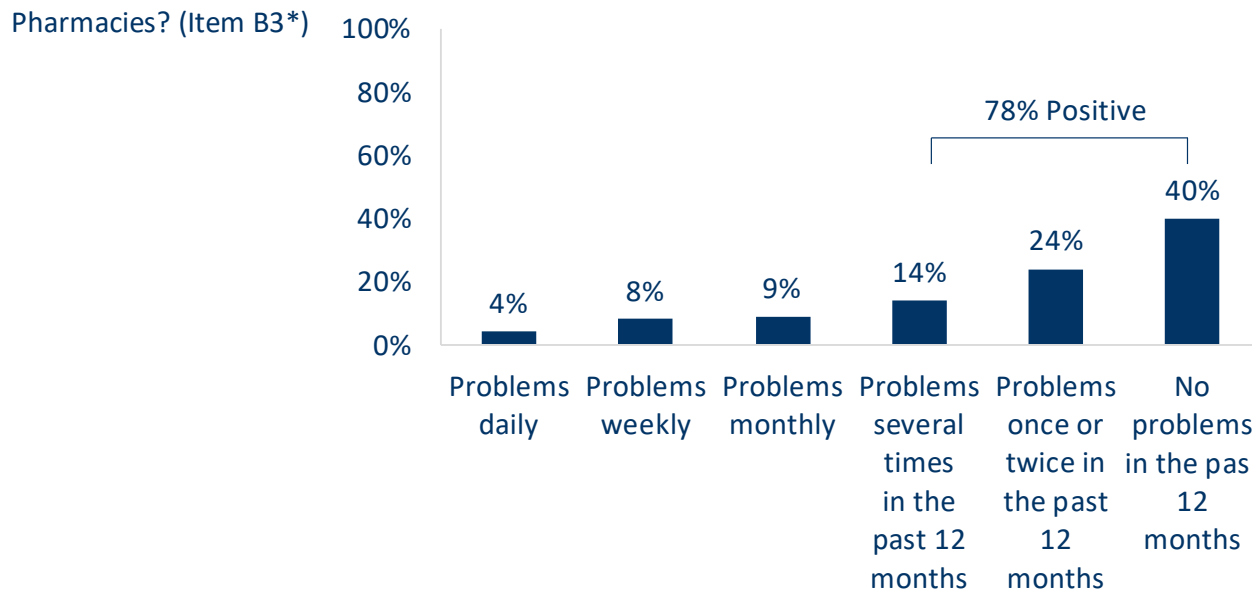
Over the past 12 months, how often has your medical office had *problems exchanging accurate, complete, and timely information with:*



Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in section B, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered, “Problems several times in the past 12 months,” “Problems once or twice in the past 12 months,” or “No problems in the past 12 months.” Percentages indicate the database average percent response for each response option. The percent positive displayed might not equal the sum of the separate response option percentages and the total for all responses might not add to 100 due to rounding.

Chart 2-4. Item Results—Average Percent Response on Information Exchange With Other Settings (Page 2 of 2)

Over the past 12 months, how often has your medical office had *problems exchanging accurate, complete, and timely information with:*



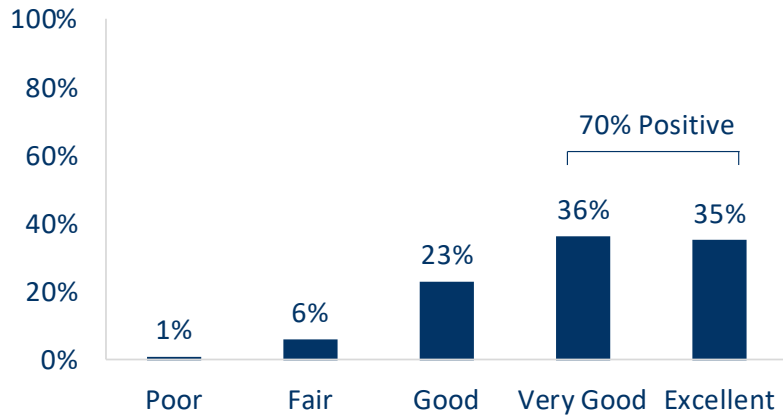
Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in section B, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered, “Problems several times in the past 12 months,” “Problems once or twice in the past 12 months,” or “No problems in the past 12 months.” Percentages indicate the database average percent response for each response option. The percent positive displayed might not equal the sum of the separate response option percentages and the total for all responses might not add to 100 due to rounding.

Chart 2-5. Item Results—Average Percent Response for Overall Ratings on Quality (Page 1 of 3)

Overall, how would you rate your medical office on each of the following areas of health care quality?

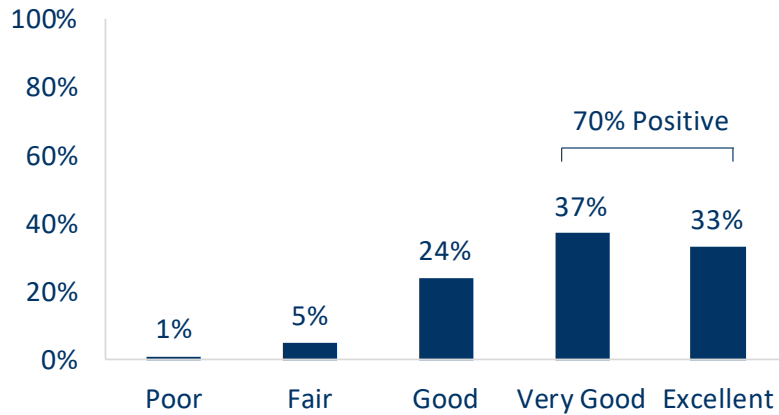
Patient Centered

Is responsive to individual patient preferences, needs, and values. (Item G1A)



Effective

Is based on scientific knowledge. (Item G1B)



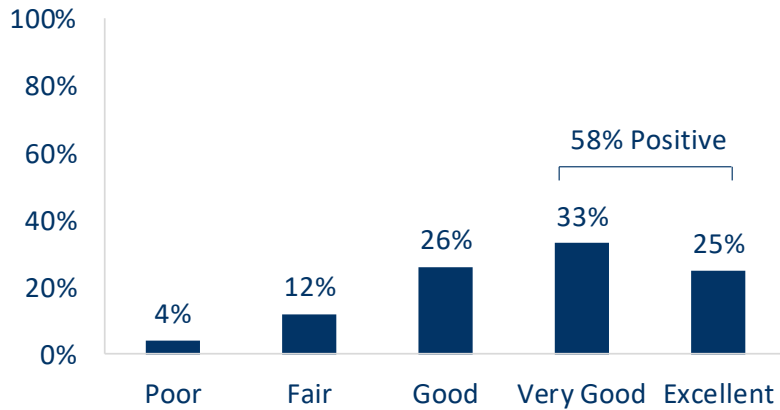
Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. Percentages indicate the database average percent response for each response option. The percent positive displayed might not equal the sum of the separate response option percentages and the total for all responses might not add to 100 due to rounding.

Chart 2-5. Item Results—Average Percent Response for Overall Ratings on Quality (Page 2 of 3)

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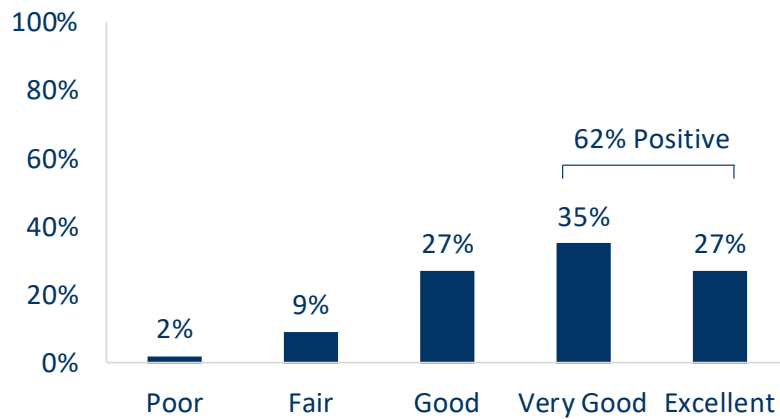
Timely

Minimizes waits and potentially harmful delays. (Item G1C)



Efficient

Ensures cost-effective care (avoids waste, overuse, and misuse of services). (Item G1D)



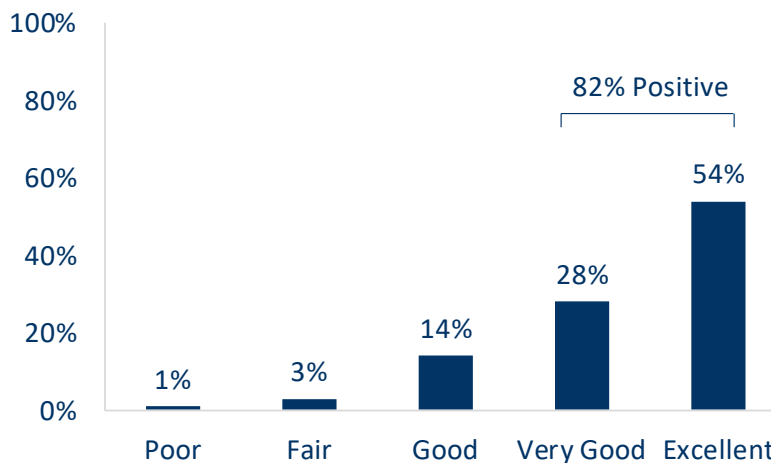
Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. Percentages indicate the database average percent response for each response option. The percent positive displayed might not equal the sum of the separate response option percentages and the total for all responses might not add to 100 due to rounding.

Chart 2-5. Item Results—Average Percent Response for Overall Ratings on Quality (Page 3 of 3)

Overall, how would you rate your medical office on each of the following areas of health care quality?

Equitable

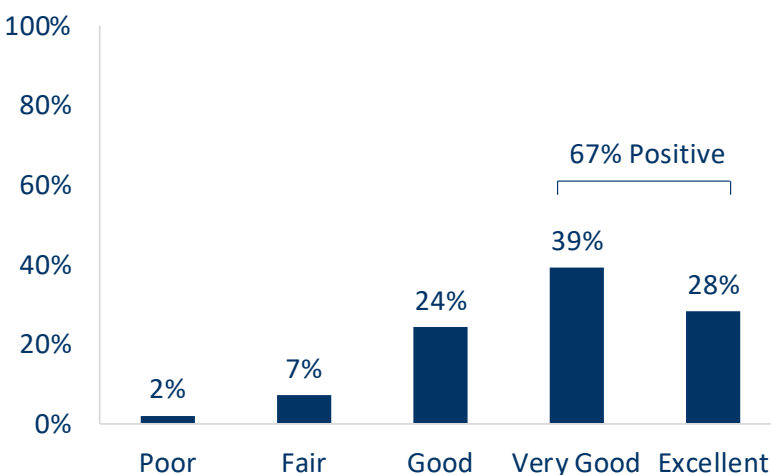
Provides the same quality of care to all individuals regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, etc. (Item G1E)



Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. Percentages indicate the database average percent response for each response option. The percent positive displayed might not equal the sum of the separate response option percentages and the total for all responses might not add to 100 due to rounding.

Chart 2-6. Item Results—Average Percent Response for Overall Rating on Patient Safety

Overall, how would you rate the systems and clinical processes your medical office has in place to prevent, catch, and correct problems that have the potential to affect patients? (Item G2)



Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. Percentages indicate the database average percent response for each response option. The percent positive displayed might not equal the sum of the separate response option percentages and the total for all responses might not add to 100 due to rounding.



3 Database Results Over Time: 2012 to 2026

This chapter presents trends in average percent positive scores for the composite measures in the SOPS Medical Office Survey Databases from 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022, 2024, and 2026. Scores are based on data from medical offices that submitted to the database for any of these given years. The number of medical offices in the database varied by year (Table 3-1).

Changes in composite measure scores from 2012 to 2026 varied by composite measure. Communication About Error improved the most with an increase of 8 percentage points from 2012 to 2026. Owner/Managing Partner/Leadership Support for Patient Safety and Work Pressure and Pace worsened the most with a decrease of 5 percentage points for the same time period.

Highlights

↑ Largest Improvement



Communication About Error improved by 8 percentage points from 2012 to 2026.

↓ Largest Decline



Owner/Managing Partner/Leadership Support for Patient Safety and Work Pressure and Pace worsened by 5 percentage points from 2012 to 2026.

Table 3-1. Participating Medical Offices and Respondents

Database Year	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024	2026
Survey Administration Dates	Nov. 2009 to Oct. 2011	Nov. 2011 to Nov. 2013	Nov. 2013 to Nov. 2015	Dec. 2015 to Sept. 2017	Oct. 2017 to Oct. 2019	Nov. 2019 to Oct. 2021	Nov. 2021 to Sept. 2023	Oct. 2023 to Sept. 2025
Number of Medical Offices	934	935	1,528	2,437	1,475	1,100	1,164	2,081
Number of Respondents	23,679	27,103	25,127	35,523	18,396	13,277	15,449	25,040

Chart 3-1. Highest SOPS Medical Office Survey Composite Measure Results Over Time

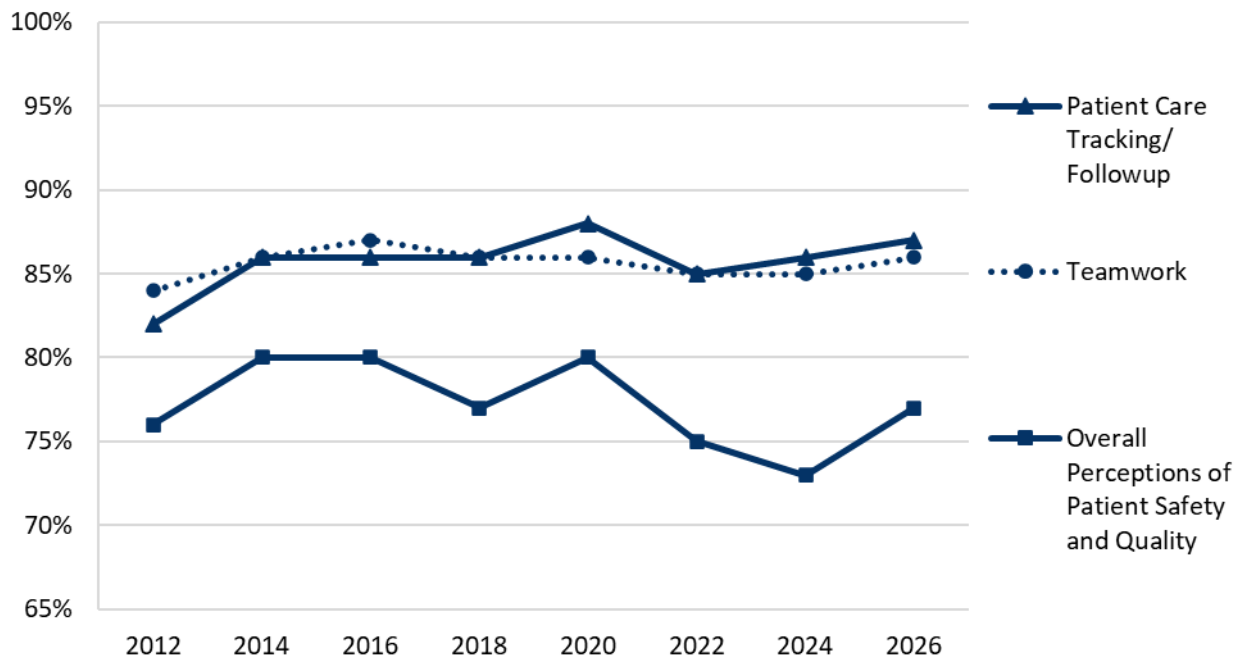


Chart 3-2. Middle SOPS Medical Office Survey Composite Measure Results Over Time

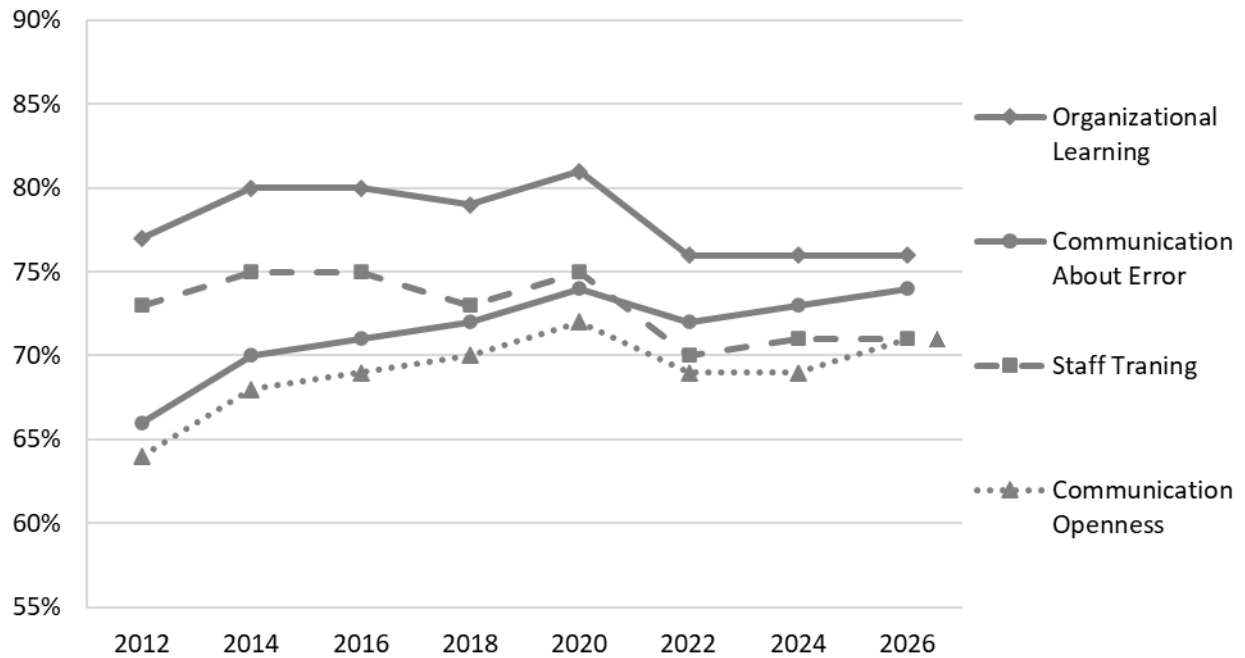


Chart 3-3. Lowest SOPS Medical Office Survey Composite Measure Results Over Time

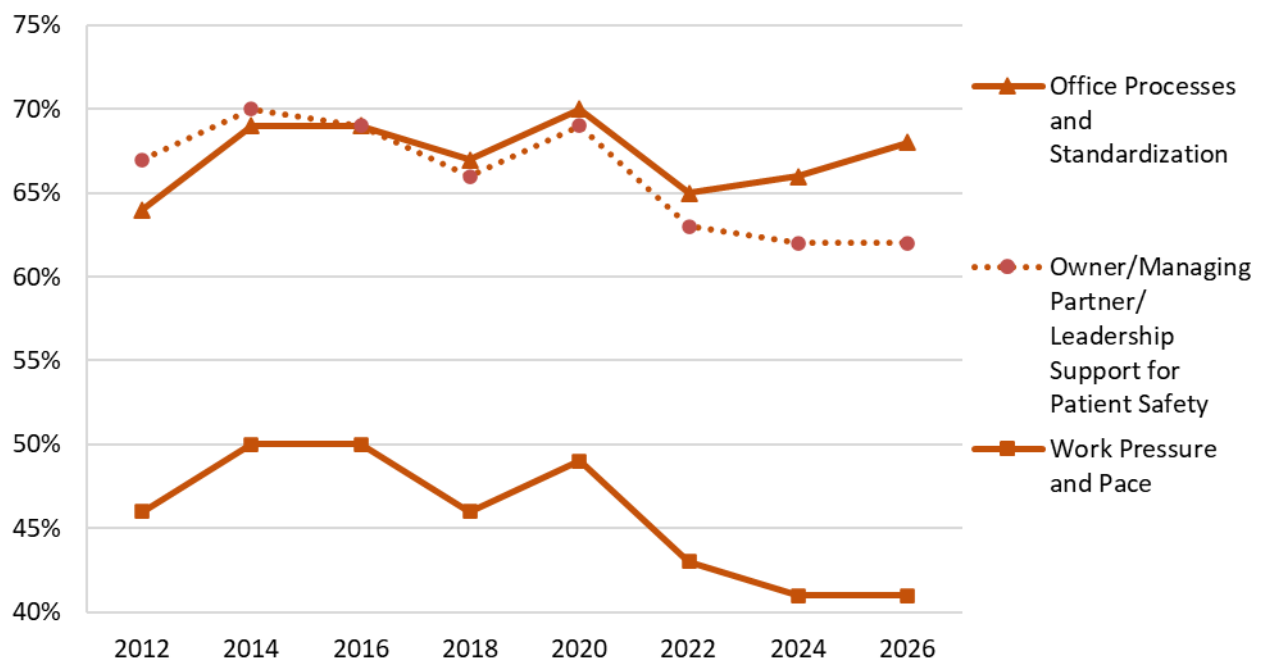


Table 3-2. Database Medical Office Percent Positive Results 2012—2026

Composite Measure	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024	2026	Change 2012 — 2026
Patient Care Tracking/Followup	82%	86%	86%	86%	88%	85%	86%	87%	5%
Teamwork	84%	86%	87%	86%	86%	85%	85%	86%	2%
Overall Perceptions of Patient Safety and Quality	76%	80%	80%	77%	80%	75%	73%	77%	1%
Organizational Learning	77%	80%	80%	79%	81%	76%	76%	76%	-1%
Communication About Error	66%	70%	71%	72%	74%	72%	73%	74%	8%
Staff Training	73%	75%	75%	73%	75%	70%	71%	71%	-2%
Communication Openness	64%	68%	69%	70%	72%	69%	69%	71%	7%
Office Processes and Standardization	64%	69%	69%	67%	70%	65%	66%	68%	4%
Owner/Managing Partner/ Leadership Support for Patient Safety	67%	70%	69%	66%	69%	63%	62%	62%	-5%
Work Pressure and Pace	46%	50%	50%	46%	49%	43%	41%	41%	-5%



4 Results by Percentile

This chapter presents descriptive statistics (average percent positive, standard deviation [SD], minimum and maximum scores, and percentiles) for the composite measures and items. You can compare your facility’s results with the averages and percentile scores for all medical offices in the database. A description of how these statistics were calculated can be found at the end of this report in the Explanation of Calculations and Data Limitations chapter.

Percentiles provide information about the distribution of medical office scores for the database. A specific percentile score shows the percentage of medical offices that scored at or below a particular score. For example, the 75th percentile represents the percent positive score where 75 percent of the medical offices scored the same or lower. The 90th percentile represents the percent positive score where 90 percent of the medical offices scored the same or lower. If your facility scores fall in a high percentile, it means your facility is scoring better than most database medical offices. Table 4-1 shows examples of two facilities scoring above the 75th and 90th percentiles.

Table 4-1. Sample Percentile Statistics

Survey Item	Average % Positive	SD	Survey Item % Positive Response						
			Min	10th %ile	25th %ile	Median/ 50th %ile	75th %ile	90th %ile	Max
Item 1	36%	12.26	8%	10%	25%	35%	49%	62%	96%

If your medical office’s score is 55% positive, your score falls here:

If your medical office’s score is 65% positive, your score falls here:

If your medical office’s score is 55 percent positive, it falls above the 75th percentile (but below the 90th), meaning that your medical office scored higher than at least 75 percent of the medical offices in the database.

If your medical office’s score is 65 percent positive, it falls above the 90th percentile, meaning your medical office scored higher than at least 90 percent of the medical offices in the database.

Table 4-2. Composite Measure Percentiles

SOPS Composite Measures	Average % Positive	SD	Composite Measure % Positive Response						
			Min	10th %ile	25th %ile	Median/ 50th %ile	75th %ile	90th %ile	Max
1. Patient Care Tracking/Followup	87%	12.3%	17%	71%	81%	90%	97%	100%	100%
2. Teamwork	86%	13.8%	13%	67%	79%	89%	96%	100%	100%
3. Overall Perceptions of Patient Safety and Quality	77%	16.4%	0%	55%	68%	79%	89%	96%	100%
4. Organizational Learning	76%	18.0%	0%	51%	67%	79%	90%	100%	100%
5. Communication About Error	74%	15.5%	17%	53%	64%	75%	85%	94%	100%
6. Staff Training	71%	19.3%	0%	44%	59%	74%	87%	94%	100%
7. Communication Openness	71%	17.9%	0%	48%	58%	73%	84%	94%	100%
8. Office Processes and Standardization	68%	18.9%	0%	42%	56%	70%	83%	92%	100%
9. Owner/Managing Partner/Leadership Support for Patient Safety	62%	18.2%	5%	38%	50%	63%	75%	85%	100%
10. Work Pressure and Pace	41%	20.3%	0%	17%	26%	40%	55%	69%	100%
Composite Measure Average	71%	13.2%	13%	53%	63%	73%	81%	87%	98%

Note: Each composite measure score is the average of the unrounded composite measure scores for all medical offices in the database. The Composite Measure Average is the average of the 10 unrounded composite measure scores for each medical office in the database. The standard deviation (SD) measures the spread or variability of medical office scores around the average.

Table 4-3. Item Percentiles (Page 1 of 6)

Survey Items by SOPS Composite Measure	Average % Positive	SD	Survey Item % Positive Response						
			Min	10th %ile	25th %ile	Median/ 50th %ile	75th %ile	90th %ile	Max
1. Patient Care Tracking/Followup			% Always/Most of the time						
This office reminds patients when they need to schedule an appointment for preventive or routine care. (Item D3)	90%	14.1%	0%	70%	83%	97%	100%	100%	100%
This office documents how well our chronic-care patients follow their treatment plans. (Item D5)	82%	19.4%	0%	57%	71%	86%	100%	100%	100%
Our office follows up when we do not receive a report we are expecting from an outside provider. (Item D6)	85%	16.6%	0%	64%	75%	89%	100%	100%	100%
This office follows up with patients who need monitoring. (Item D9)	91%	13.2%	0%	74%	83%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2. Teamwork			% Strongly Agree/Agree						
When someone in this office gets really busy, others help out. (Item C1)	85%	17.0%	0%	63%	75%	88%	100%	100%	100%
In this office, there is a good working relationship between staff and providers. (Item C2)	89%	14.7%	0%	68%	83%	94%	100%	100%	100%
In this office, we treat each other with respect. (Item C5)	85%	17.3%	0%	60%	75%	89%	100%	100%	100%
This office emphasizes teamwork in taking care of patients. (Item C13)	85%	17.0%	0%	63%	76%	88%	100%	100%	100%

Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in sections C-F, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered Strongly Disagree/Disagree or Never/Rarely. The standard deviation (SD) measures the spread or variability of medical office scores around the average.

Table 4-3. Item Percentiles (Page 2 of 6)

Survey Items By SOPS Composite Measure	Average % Positive	SD	Survey Item % Positive Response						
			Min	10th %ile	25th %ile	Median/ 50th %ile	75th %ile	90th %ile	Max
3. Overall Perceptions of Patient Safety and Quality			% Strongly Agree/Agree						
Our office processes are good at preventing mistakes that could affect patients. (Item F2)	85%	16.9%	0%	64%	75%	88%	100%	100%	100%
			% Strongly Disagree/Disagree						
Mistakes happen more than they should in this office. (Item F3*)	78%	21.0%	0%	50%	67%	81%	100%	100%	100%
It is just by chance that we don't make more mistakes that affect our patients. (Item F4*)	76%	20.0%	0%	50%	67%	79%	90%	100%	100%
In this office, getting more work done is more important than quality of care. (Item F6*)	69%	21.7%	0%	40%	55%	70%	84%	100%	100%
4. Organizational Learning			% Strongly Agree/Agree						
When there is a problem in our office, we see if we need to change the way we do things. (Item F1)	80%	18.9%	0%	50%	67%	83%	100%	100%	100%
This office is good at changing office processes to make sure the same problems don't happen again. (Item F5)	77%	20.4%	0%	50%	67%	80%	100%	100%	100%
After this office makes changes to improve the patient care process, we check to see if the changes worked. (Item F7)	72%	21.7%	0%	43%	60%	75%	88%	100%	100%

Note: The item's survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in sections C-F, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered Strongly Disagree/Disagree or Never/Rarely. The standard deviation (SD) measures the spread or variability of medical office scores around the average.

Table 4-3. Item Percentiles (Page 3 of 6)

Survey Items by SOPS Composite Measure	Average % Positive	SD	Survey Item % Positive Response						
			Min	10th %ile	25th %ile	Median/ 50th %ile	75th %ile	90th %ile	Max
5. Communication About Error			% Always/Most of the time						
Providers and staff talk openly about office problems. (Item D8)	64%	21.9%	0%	33%	50%	67%	80%	100%	100%
In this office, we discuss ways to prevent errors from happening again. (Item D11)	83%	17.5%	0%	60%	73%	86%	100%	100%	100%
Staff are willing to report mistakes they observe in this office. (Item D12)	80%	17.4%	0%	57%	69%	82%	100%	100%	100%
			% Never/Rarely						
Staff feel like their mistakes are held against them. (Item D7*)	68%	23.4%	0%	33%	55%	71%	85%	100%	100%
6. Staff Training			% Strongly Agree/Agree						
This office trains staff when new processes are put into place. (Item C4)	73%	21.6%	0%	43%	60%	75%	89%	100%	100%
This office makes sure staff get the on-the-job training they need. (Item C7)	74%	22.0%	0%	43%	60%	76%	91%	100%	100%
			% Strongly Disagree/Disagree						
Staff in this office are asked to do tasks they haven't been trained to do. (Item C10*)	67%	22.4%	0%	33%	54%	69%	83%	100%	100%

Note: The item's survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in sections C-F, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered Strongly Disagree/Disagree or Never/Rarely. The standard deviation (SD) measures the spread or variability of medical office scores around the average.

Table 4-3. Item Percentiles (Page 4 of 6)

Survey Items By SOPS Composite Measure	Average % Positive	SD	Survey Item % Positive Response						
			Min	10th %ile	25th %ile	Median/ 50th %ile	75th %ile	90th %ile	Max
7. Communication Openness			% Always/Most of the time						
Providers in this office are open to staff ideas about how to improve office processes. (Item D1)	76%	20.7%	0%	50%	63%	78%	93%	100%	100%
Staff are encouraged to express alternative viewpoints in this office. (Item D2)	74%	20.5%	0%	46%	60%	75%	90%	100%	100%
			% Never/Rarely						
Staff are afraid to ask questions when something does not seem right. (Item D4*)	72%	25.2%	0%	40%	61%	76%	90%	100%	100%
It is difficult to voice disagreement in this office. (Item D10*)	62%	23.9%	0%	31%	46%	65%	78%	100%	100%
8. Office Processes and Standardization			% Strongly Agree/Agree						
We have good procedures for checking that work in this office was done correctly. (Item C9)	71%	21.8%	0%	40%	57%	71%	87%	100%	100%
Staff in this office follow standardized processes to get tasks done. (Item C15)	82%	17.9%	0%	57%	71%	84%	100%	100%	100%
			% Strongly Disagree/Disagree						
This office is more disorganized than it should be. (Item C8*)	66%	24.4%	0%	33%	50%	67%	83%	100%	100%
We have problems with workflow in this office. (Item C12*)	54%	25.4%	0%	20%	34%	55%	73%	88%	100%

Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in sections C-F, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered Strongly Disagree/Disagree or Never/Rarely. The standard deviation (SD) measures the spread or variability of medical office scores around the average.

Table 4-3. Item Percentiles (Page 5 of 6)

Survey Items By SOPS Composite Measure	Average % Positive	SD	Survey Item % Positive Response						
			Min	10th %ile	25th %ile	Median/ 50th %ile	75th %ile	90th %ile	Max
9. Owner/Managing Partner/Leadership Support for Patient Safety			% Strongly Agree/Agree						
They place a high priority on improving patient care processes. (Item E3)	74%	21.3%	0%	46%	62%	75%	89%	100%	100%
			% Strongly Disagree/Disagree						
They aren't investing enough resources to improve the quality of care in this office. (Item E1*)	43%	24.4%	0%	13%	25%	40%	60%	75%	100%
They overlook patient care mistakes that happen over and over. (Item E2*)	76%	21.1%	0%	50%	67%	80%	95%	100%	100%
They make decisions too often based on what is best for the office rather than what is best for patients. (Item E4*)	55%	23.5%	0%	25%	40%	57%	71%	86%	100%

Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in sections C-F, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered Strongly Disagree/Disagree or Never/Rarely. The standard deviation (SD) measures the spread or variability of medical office scores around the average. Owner/Managing Partner/Leadership Support for Patient Safety results only include those respondents who answered “No” to being an owner, a managing partner, or in a leadership position with responsibility for making financial decisions in the medical office.

Table 4-3. Item Percentiles (Page 6 of 6)

Survey Items By SOPS Composite Measure	Average % Positive	SD	Survey Item % Positive Response						
			Min	10th %ile	25th %ile	Median/ 50th %ile	75th %ile	90th %ile	Max
10. Work Pressure and Pace			% Strongly Agree/Agree						
We have enough staff to handle our patient load. (Item C11)	45%	28.1%	0%	7%	24%	42%	67%	83%	100%
			% Strongly Disagree/Disagree						
In this office, we often feel rushed when taking care of patients. (Item C3*)	41%	24.3%	0%	11%	25%	40%	58%	75%	100%
We have too many patients for the number of providers in this office. (Item C6*)	40%	27.4%	0%	0%	20%	37%	60%	80%	100%
This office has too many patients to be able to handle everything effectively. (Item C14*)	38%	30.5%	0%	0%	9%	36%	62%	80%	100%

Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in sections C-F, the percent positive response is the percentage of respondents who answered Strongly Disagree/Disagree or Never/Rarely. The standard deviation (SD) measures the spread or variability of medical office scores around the average.

Table 4-4. Item Percentiles For Patient Safety and Quality Issues

Patient Safety and Quality Issues	Average % Positive	SD	Survey Item % Positive Response						
			Min	10th %ile	25th %ile	Median/ 50th %ile	75th %ile	90th %ile	Max
Access to Care									
A patient was unable to get an appointment within 48 hours for an acute/serious problem. (Item A1*)	67%	26.1%	0%	31%	50%	67%	89%	100%	100%
Patient Identification									
The wrong chart/medical record was used for a patient. (Item A2*)	98%	7.1%	33%	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Charts/Medical Records									
A patient’s chart/medical record was not available when needed. (Item A3*)	93%	11.7%	0%	75%	88%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Medical information was filed, scanned, or entered into the wrong patient’s chart/medical record. (Item A4*)	97%	7.6%	33%	88%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Medical Equipment									
Medical equipment was not working properly or was in need of repair or replacement. (Item A5*)	87%	16.3%	0%	67%	80%	92%	100%	100%	100%
Medication									
A pharmacy contacted our office to clarify or correct a prescription. (Item A6*)	63%	24.4%	0%	33%	46%	64%	80%	100%	100%
A patient’s medication list was not updated during his or her visit. (Item A7*)	79%	20.8%	0%	50%	67%	80%	100%	100%	100%
Diagnostics and Tests									
The results from a lab or imaging test were not available when needed. (Item A8*)	78%	21.0%	0%	50%	67%	80%	100%	100%	100%
A critical abnormal result from a lab or imaging test was not followed up within 1 business day. (Item A9*)	93%	11.6%	20%	75%	88%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in section A, the percent positive response is based on those who answered, “Several times in the past 12 months,” “Once or twice in the past 12 months,” or “Not in the past 12 months.” The standard deviation (SD) measures the spread or variability of medical office scores around the average.

Table 4-5. Item Percentiles For Information Exchange With Other Settings

Information Exchange With Other Settings	Average % Positive	SD	Survey Item % Positive Response						
			Min	10th %ile	25th %ile	Median/ 50th %ile	75th %ile	90th %ile	Max
Over the past 12 months, how often has your medical office had <i>problems exchanging accurate, complete, and timely information</i> with:									
Outside labs/imaging centers? (Item B1*)	74%	21.5%	0%	45%	62%	75%	93%	100%	100%
Other medical offices/Outside physicians? (Item B2*)	77%	20.6%	0%	50%	67%	80%	100%	100%	100%
Pharmacies? (Item B3*)	78%	20.9%	0%	50%	67%	80%	100%	100%	100%
Hospitals? (Item B4*)	83%	18.4%	0%	60%	74%	88%	100%	100%	100%

Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. An asterisk (*) denotes a negatively worded item. For negatively worded items in section B, the percent positive response is based on those who answered, “Problems several times in the past 12 months,” “Problems once or twice in the past 12 months,” or “No problems in the past 12 months.” The standard deviation (SD) measures the spread or variability of medical office scores around the average.

Table 4-6. Item Percentiles For Overall Ratings on Quality and Patient Safety

Overall Ratings on Quality	Average % Positive	SD	Survey Item % Positive Response						
			Min	10th %ile	25th %ile	Median/ 50th %ile	75th %ile	90th %ile	Max
Overall, how would you rate your medical office on each of the following areas of health care quality?			% Excellent or Very Good						
Patient Centered – Is responsive to individual patient preferences, needs, and values. (Item G1A)	70%	22.1%	0%	40%	58%	72%	86%	100%	100%
Effective – Is based on scientific knowledge. (Item G1B)	70%	21.1%	0%	42%	58%	71%	85%	100%	100%
Timely – Minimizes waits and potentially harmful delays. (Item G1C)	58%	25.9%	0%	22%	40%	60%	75%	100%	100%
Efficient – Ensures cost-effective care (avoids waste, overuse, and misuse of services). (Item G1D)	62%	23.4%	0%	30%	45%	64%	80%	100%	100%
Equitable – Provides the same quality of care to all individuals regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, etc. (Item G1E)	82%	17.4%	0%	60%	71%	84%	100%	100%	100%
Overall Rating on Patient Safety			% Excellent or Very Good						
Overall, how would you rate the systems and clinical processes your medical office has in place to prevent, catch, and correct problems that have the potential to affect patients? (Item G2)	67%	22.5%	0%	37%	50%	67%	83%	100%	100%

Note: The item’s survey location is shown in parentheses after the item text. The percent positive response is based on those who answered “Excellent” or “Very Good.” The standard deviation (SD) measures the spread or variability of medical office scores around the average.



5 What's Next? Action Planning for Improvement

The AHRQ SOPS Surveys are important sources of information for healthcare organizations striving to improve patient safety. However, administering a SOPS survey is not the end of the improvement process. It is important to develop and implement action plans that use survey results for improvement.

SOPS Action Planning Tool

The [Action Planning Tool for the AHRQ Surveys on Patient Safety Culture](#) is intended for use after administering the survey and analyzing the results. The *Action Planning Tool* offers guidance to help you develop an action plan for your facility. You can use the Action Plan Template at the end of the tool to document your answers to the key questions below.

1. Identifying Areas To Improve:

- a. What areas do you want to focus on for improvement?
- b. What are your “SMART” (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) goals?

2. Planning Your Improvement Initiative:

- a. What initiative will you implement?
- b. What resources will you need?
- c. What are possible barriers and how can you overcome them?
- d. How will you measure progress and success?
- e. Will you pilot test the initiative?
- f. What is the timeline?

3. Communicating Your Action Plan:

- a. How will you share your action plan?
- b. How will you provide progress updates on your action plan?

Improvement for AHRQ Medical Office Survey Users

[Improving Patient Safety in Medical Offices: A Resource List for Users of the AHRQ Medical Office Survey on Patient Safety Culture](#) contains references to websites and other practical resources medical offices can use to improve patient safety culture and patient safety. The resource list is not exhaustive but provides initial guidance to medical offices looking for information about patient safety initiatives.



Explanation of Calculations and Data Limitations

This chapter provides additional details regarding how various statistics presented in this report were calculated, as well as data limitations. Note that all statistics presented are unweighted.

Data Cleaning

Each participating medical office submitted respondent-level survey data. Once the data were submitted, response frequencies were tabulated for each medical office to find out-of-range values, missing values, and other data anomalies. When data outliers or other inconsistencies were found, medical offices were contacted and asked to correct and resubmit their data. In addition, after uploading their survey data, each participating medical office received a copy of their data frequencies to verify the dataset the online submission system received was correct.

Sections C, D, E, and F include both positively and negatively worded items. An example of a positively worded item is D2. *Staff are encouraged to express alternative viewpoints in this office*, and an example of a negatively worded item is D4. *Staff are afraid to ask questions when something does not seem right*. If respondents marked the same answer for all items within a single section C, D, E, or F, those responses were set to missing in that particular section.

Respondents who had missing answers or supplied a “Does Not Apply or Don’t Know” response for all items in sections A, B, C, D, E, and F were removed from the final dataset. Medical offices were included in the database only if they had at least three respondents after all data cleaning steps.

Response Rates

As part of the data submission process, we asked medical offices to provide the number of completed, returned surveys and the total number of surveys distributed. Incomplete surveys are those surveys that were removed as a result of data cleaning as outlined above. We then calculated response rates using the formula below:

$$\text{Response Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of returned surveys} - \text{Incompletes}}{\text{Number of eligible providers and staff who received a survey}}$$

Calculation of Percent Positive Scores

The composite measure items contain a “Does Not Apply or Don’t Know” response option that is not included in the calculation of percent positive scores.

The survey includes both positively worded items and negatively worded items. Calculating the percent positive response for positively worded items is different from calculating the percent positive response for negatively worded items:

- **For positively worded items**, the percent positive response is the combined percentage of respondents within a medical office who answered, “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” or “Always” or “Most of the time,” depending on the response options used for the item.
- **For negatively worded items**, the percent positive response is the combined percentage of respondents within a medical office who answered, “Strongly Disagree” or “Disagree” or “Never” or “Rarely,” depending on the response options used for the item. Keep in mind that a *negative* answer to a negatively worded item indicates a *positive* response.

Composite Measure Percent Positive Response

The 10 SOPS Medical Office Survey composite measures are each composed of three or four survey items. Composite measure scores were calculated for each medical office by averaging the unrounded percent positive response on the items within a composite measure.

If a medical office had data for at least 50 percent of the items within a composite measure, the site would still receive a composite measure score. For example, for a three-item composite measure score, the number of item scores needed to calculate the composite measure is two items. For a four-item composite measure score, the number of item scores needed to calculate the composite measure is two items.

Table 5 shows an example of computing a composite measure score for *Staff Training* in a single medical office. This composite measure has three items. Two are positively worded (items C4 and C7) and one is negatively worded (item C10). Keep in mind that DISAGREEING with a negatively worded item indicates a POSITIVE response.

Table 5. Example of Computing Item and Composite Measure Percent Positive Scores

Staff Training Composite Measure	Calculation of Percent Positive			
	Number of “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” Responses for Positively Worded Items	Number of “Strongly Disagree” or “Disagree” Responses for Negatively Worded Items	Total Number of Responses to the Item (Excluding “Does Not Apply or Don’t Know” and Missing)	Item Percent Positive Response
Item C4—positively worded “This office trains staff when new processes are put into place.”	110	NA*	240	110/240= 45.8%
Item C7—positively worded “This office makes sure staff get the on-the-job training they need.”	142	NA*	250	142/250= 56.8%
Item C10—negatively worded “Staff in this office are asked to do tasks they haven’t been trained to do.”	NA*	125	260	125/260= 48.1%
Composite Measure % Positive Score = (45.8% + 56.8% + 48.1%) / 3 = 50.2%				

*NA = Not applicable for calculating the percent positive response.

This example includes three items, with percent positive response scores of 45.8 percent, 56.8 percent, and 48.1 percent. Averaging the percent positive scores of these three items results in a composite measure percent positive score of 50.2 percent, rounded to 50 percent for the *Staff Training* composite measure.

Single Item Percent Positive Response

For Patient Safety and Quality Issues items, the percent positive scores are the percentage of respondents who answered, “Several times in the past 12 months,” “Once or twice in the past 12 months,” and “Not in the past 12 months.”

For Information Exchange With Other Settings items, the percent positive scores are the percentage of respondents who answered, “Problems several times in the past 12 months,” “Problems once or twice in the past 12 months,” and “No problems in the past 12 months.”

For Overall Ratings on Quality and Patient Safety items, the percent positive scores are the percentage of respondents who answered, “Excellent” or “Very Good.”

Database Item and Composite Measure Percent Positive Scores

The database average percent positive scores were calculated by averaging the unrounded medical office-level percent positive scores of all medical offices with at least three respondents. For the appendixes, average percent positive scores were calculated by averaging the unrounded medical office-level percent positive scores of all medical offices for each facility characteristic (Appendix A) and for each respondent characteristic (Appendix B).

Reporting the average percent positive scores at the medical office level ensures that each medical office's scores receive equal weight, regardless of the medical office's size. We do not report the percentage of positive responses at the individual level, as this approach would give greater weight to medical offices with greater numbers of staff. Reporting the data at the medical office level, rather than the individual level, is important because culture is considered a group characteristic, not an individual characteristic.

Thresholds for Reporting Percent Positive Scores

For the main report and Appendix A, item percent positive scores were calculated only for medical offices with at least three respondents to a given item. If fewer than three respondents answered the item, the medical office's score was set to missing and excluded from the benchmark. In Appendix A, item scores were not shown if fewer than 10 medical offices met the three-respondent threshold for that item.

For Appendix B, the requirements for item percent positive scores differed to retain more data. Item percent positive scores were calculated for medical offices with at least one respondent per respondent characteristic (e.g., physician), recognizing that many medical offices may only have a single respondent in that category. Item scores were not shown if fewer than 10 medical offices had at least one respondent to the item. As a result, a medical office's item average percent positive score may reflect the response of one individual.

Standard Deviation

The standard deviation is a measure of the spread or variability of medical office scores around the average. A low standard deviation indicates that most of the scores are close to the average, while a high standard deviation indicates greater variability around the average.

Margin of Error

The margin of error provided in the appendixes is an estimate of uncertainty around the percent positive score estimates based on the sample data. For example, if the sample percent positive score is 80 percent, and the margin of error is ± 2 percent, we can be 95 percent confident that the true population percent positive score lies within the interval of 78 to 82 percent ($80\% \pm 2\%$). A smaller margin of error means greater precision in the estimate, while a larger margin of error indicates more uncertainty in the estimate. When comparing two percent positive score estimates in the appendixes, consider their respective margins of error. If the ranges defined by

their confidence intervals (score \pm margin of error) overlap, the two percent positive scores are less likely to be significantly different.

Minimum and Maximum Scores

The minimum (lowest) and maximum (highest) percent positive scores are presented for each composite measure and item. When comparing your data with the minimum and maximum scores, keep in mind that these scores may represent medical offices that are extreme outliers (indicated by large differences between the minimum score and the 10th percentile score, or between the 90th percentile score and the maximum score).

Percentiles

Percentile scores represent the percentage of medical offices that scored at or below the percent positive score for a particular item or composite measure. For example, the 50th percentile, also known as the median, is the middle value that divides the lower half from the upper half, so that 50 percent of the medical offices fall below that percent positive score, and 50 percent fall above it. Percentiles range from 0 to 100. Interpret the percentile scores as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Interpretation of Percentile Scores

Percentile Score	Interpretation
10th percentile Represents the lowest scoring medical offices.	10% of the medical offices scored the same or lower. 90% of the medical offices scored higher.
25th percentile Represents lower scoring medical offices.	25% of the medical offices scored the same or lower. 75% of the medical offices scored higher.
50th percentile (or median) Represents the middle of the distribution of medical offices.	50% of the medical offices scored the same or lower. 50% of the medical offices scored higher.
75th percentile Represents higher scoring medical offices.	75% of the medical offices scored the same or lower. 25% of the medical offices scored higher.
90th percentile Represents the highest scoring medical offices.	90% of the medical offices scored the same or lower. 10% of the medical offices scored higher.

Statistically “Significant” Differences Between Scores

You might be interested in determining the statistical significance of differences between your scores and the database scores, or between database scores in various categories (e.g., number of providers per week or geographic region). Statistical significance is greatly influenced by sample size; as the number of observations in comparison groups increases, small differences in scores become statistically significant. While a 1 percentage point difference between percent positive scores might be “statistically” significant (that is, not due to chance), such a small difference of 1 percentage point is not likely to be meaningful or “practically” significant.

Keep in mind that statistically significant differences are not always important, and nonsignificant differences are not always trivial. The average, standard deviation, margin of error, range, and percentile information are provided so that you can compare your data with the database in different ways.

Data Limitations

The survey results presented in this report represent the largest known compilation of publicly available patient safety culture data for medical offices and therefore provide a useful reference. However, these data have several limitations.

First, the database only includes medical offices that were willing to voluntarily submit their data to the database. Estimates based on this self-selected sample may produce biased estimates of the population.

Second, only a small percentage of all medical offices in the United States (less than 1 percent) are represented in the database (see Table 1 in the Appendixes).

Third, medical offices were not required to undergo any training and administered the survey in different ways. Most medical offices administered only web-based surveys, others administered only paper surveys, others used a combination of these two methods. These different survey administration modes could have led to differences in survey responses.

Finally, the data medical offices submitted have been cleaned for out-of-range values, straight-lining, and blank records as noted in the Data Cleaning section. Otherwise, data are presented as submitted. No additional attempts were made to verify or audit the accuracy of the data submitted.



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