

July  
2023

# ICH CAHPS® Coordination Team Semiannual Review

## Message From the ICH CAHPS Team

Welcome to the July 2023 issue of the In-Center Hemodialysis CAHPS (ICH CAHPS) Coordination Team (CT) Semiannual Review! These newsletters are posted on the ICH CAHPS website under the General Information Tab. Please visit the ICH CAHPS website for more information on the items mentioned in this newsletter: <https://ichcahps.org>

### Hear (or Read) All About It!

- The initial analyses for the ICH CAHPS Survey Mode Experiment, which ran concurrently with the 2022 Fall Survey, are complete and have been shared with CMS.
  - The purpose of this mode experiment was to (1) test a shorter ICH CAHPS Survey and (2) test the feasibility of a web mode for the ICH CAHPS Survey protocol.
  - We are next convening a Technical Expert Panel in October 2023 to discuss the results and obtain thoughts from ESRD stakeholders.
  - The final results of the mode experiment and potential changes to the ICH CAHPS Survey will be shared with vendors and facilities once CMS makes final decisions.
- As part of our efforts to increase response rates, we have revised both the prenotification letter and the cover letter 1, adding information about the importance of repeat participation. The new letters will be sent to vendors prior to the 2023 Fall Survey.
- We continue to conduct both virtual site visits and offsite site visits with vendors, completing visits with four vendors in June. We appreciate the effort of all vendors to make sure these visits are successful!

### Reminders for ICH facilities!

- To reach our sample, vendors rely on patient contact information provided to them from EQRS data. We encourage facilities to enter and update, as needed, patient contact information (including email addresses for the future!) when updating clinical data for the sample months of April, May, and June.
- If having the ICH CAHPS Survey translated into a different language would be beneficial to your facility, please reach out: [ichcahps@rti.org](mailto:ichcahps@rti.org)
- We continue to look for ways to improve response rates. Repeat participation is critical to understanding how care may change over time, but also for data to be publicly reported. We ask facilities to offer any suggestions that they may have!

### Upcoming 2023 Deadlines & Reminders

- 7/14—Data collection for the 2023 Spring Survey ends
- 7/26 at 5:00pm ET—Deadline for vendors to submit their 2023 Spring XML data file to the Data Center
- 8/4—Deadline for submitting new facility-specific questions for the 2023 Fall Survey
- 8/3—Deadline for vendors to submit a Facility Closing Attestation on behalf of closed client facilities
- 8/31—Deadline for facilities to authorize a new or change a survey vendor for the 2023 Fall Survey
- 9/1—Deadline for vendors to review the Vendor Authorization Report and notify the Coordination Team of any authorization issues
- 9/4—RTI will be closed for Labor Day

### Tentative Data Collection Schedule 2023 Fall\*

Activity	Date
Sampling window	4/1/2023-6/30/2023
Sample files uploaded on ICH CAHPS website	9/29/2023
Vendors attest to receipt of sample file	10/3/2023
Mail prenotification letter	10/20/2023
Mail first survey (mail-only and mixed mode)/begin telephone data collection (phone-only mode)	11/3/2023
Mail second survey (mail-only nonrespondents)/begin phone follow-up with mixed-mode nonrespondents	12/1/2023
Data collection ends	1/12/2024
Vendors clean/process final data and construct XML File	01/12/2024-01/31/2024
Deadline for submitting XML data file to ICH CAHPS data center	1/31/2024

\*Please note that these dates are subject to change

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## Important Steps that *Vendors and Facilities* Should Take for A Successful Data Collection This Fall


As noted in previous newsletters, the ICH CAHPS Survey response rates continue to decline with each survey period. Therefore, to increase awareness and boost participation among patients, the Coordination Team developed a few new tools for vendors and facilities to use to help with this effort. Below are the steps that are required (and some optional, but strongly encouraged) for vendors and facilities to take to improve response rates for this upcoming survey period.

### Steps Vendors Should Take

#### All vendors must do the following:


- ✓ Verify that the sample file contains a sample for all ICH facility clients.
- ✓ Check the sample against their Vendor Authorization and Facility Non-Participation Form reports and inform the CT of any discrepancies.
- ✓ Submit Facility Closing Attestation Forms for any closed client facilities by the deadline.
- ✓ Verify *each* mailing address/telephone number provided using a commercial address update service.
- ✓ Follow the printed mail materials guidelines as in the [ICH CAHPS specifications manual](#). 
- ✓ Attempt to contact every patient in the sample, including up to 10 telephone attempts (phone-only or mixed mode) unless the patient refuses or is ineligible.
- ✓ Use the updated prenotification and cover letters with language added to indicate that sample patients may be asked to participate multiple times a year.

#### Optional, but encouraged, for vendors:


- ✓ Request that client ICH facilities provide updated contact (and preferred language) information for *all* patients treated during the sampling window.
- ✓ Encourage ICH facility clients to post patient-facing materials (i.e., [new waiting room FAQs and poster/flyer](#) ) to increase awareness of the ICH CAHPS Survey. Provide facilities with a copy of the envelope used and the number that patients may see on their caller ID.

### Steps Facilities Should Take

#### ICH facilities must do the following:

- ✓ Have a formal contract with their survey vendor before the vendor is permitted to receive a sample for the facility.
- ✓ Ensure that patient contact information is correct in EQRS. When updating monthly clinical data, we suggest using this opportunity to update patient contact information as well!
- ✓ Follow the guidelines in the [ICH CAHPS specifications manual](#)  for adding any ICH CAHPS supplemental questions or their own facility-specific questions. Submit for approval by the deadline.
- ✓ Make sure the Survey Administrator is up to date on the ICH CAHPS website.

#### Optional, but encouraged, for facilities:

- ✓ Provide their ICH CAHPS Survey vendor with patient contact (and preferred language) information for *all* patients treated during the sampling window.
- ✓ Provide the facility's preferred name to vendor so that patients recognize the name that appears in the survey materials (if different than what may be in EQRS data).
- ✓ Refrain from fielding additional surveys 1 week before the prenote letter until 1 week after the second survey packet is mailed/telephone follow-up begins.
- ✓ Post/distribute patient-facing materials (i.e., [new waiting room FAQs and poster/flyer](#) ) in the facility. Share the envelope used by the vendor and the number that patients may see on their caller ID. Make sure patients understand the fundamentals (and importance!) of the ICH CAHPS Survey.