

July
2026

ICH CAHPS® Coordination Team Annual Review

Message From the ICH CAHPS Team

Welcome to the 2026 issue of the In-Center Hemodialysis CAHPS (ICH CAHPS) Coordination Team (CT) Annual Review! These newsletters are posted on the ICH CAHPS website under the General Information Tab and are now annual, published only in July. Please visit the [ICH CAHPS website](#) for more information on the items mentioned in this newsletter.

Hear (or Read) All About It!

- **UPDATE ON THE REVISED ICH CAHPS SURVEY:**
 - The revised ICH CAHPS Survey was implemented beginning with the 2026 Spring Survey!
 - We look forward to hearing from vendors, facilities, and sample patients...please share any and all feedback!
- **FOR OUR ICH FACILITY FRIENDS:**
 - Your survey vendor relies on patient contact information from EQRS data to reach sample patients. We encourage facilities to update patient mailing addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses (for a future web-based mode experiment!) in EQRS during routine data updates to support survey administration and help ensure your vendor can reach your patients to complete the survey! Also talk to your survey vendor about providing patient contact information directly to your vendor (for all patients served).
 - As a reminder, increasing patient awareness of the ICH CAHPS Survey remains critical. Facilities are encouraged to display official ICH CAHPS Survey materials, including posters/flyers and Waiting Room FAQs, to help patients recognize and trust the survey. See the next page for more information!
- **FOR OUR ICH CAHPS VENDOR PARTNERS:**
 - Due to the survey revisions in 2026 Spring, vendors were encouraged to perform early and ongoing quality control checks throughout the data collection period, to ensure systems are accurately capturing responses. Please contact us as soon as possible if you run into data submission issues for the 2026 Spring Survey!
 - Remember...for any patient notes/comments that appear to be a serious patient complaint and might need to be escalated to CMS, alert the Coordination Team for guidance on next steps.

Upcoming 2026 Deadlines & Reminders

- 7/10 —2026 Spring Survey data collection ends
- 7/29 at 5:00pm ET — Deadline for vendors to submit their 2026 Spring XML data file to the Data Center
- 8/7 — Deadline for vendors to submit new facility-specific questions for the 2026 Fall Survey
- 8/31 — Deadline for facilities to authorize a new or change a survey vendor for the 2026 Fall Survey
- 8/31 — Deadline for vendors to submit *Facility Closing Attestation Forms*
- 9/1 — Deadline for vendors to review the *Vendor Authorization Report* and notify the Coordination Team of any authorization issues
- 9/7 — RTI will be closed for Labor Day

Tentative Data Collection Schedule 2026 Fall*

Activity	Date
Sampling window	4/1/26 – 6/30/26
Sample files uploaded on ICH CAHPS website	9/25/26
Vendors attest to receipt of sample file	9/29/26
Mail prenotification letter	10/16/26
Mail first survey (mail-only & mixed mode)/begin telephone data collection (phone-only mode)	10/30/26
Mail second survey (mail-only nonrespondents)/begin phone follow-up with mixed mode nonrespondents**	11/27/26 OR 12/2/26
Data collection ends	1/8/27
Vendors clean/process final data and construct XML File	1/8/27 – 1/27/27
Deadline for submitting XML data file to ICH CAHPS data center	1/27/27

*Please note that these dates are subject to change; if so, an email will be sent to vendors.

**In 2026, the Thanksgiving holiday falls on 11/26/2026; therefore, vendors may start the 2026 Fall second wave of ICH CAHPS data collection on 11/27/2026 or 12/2/2026.

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Boosting Response Rates: What Works

Even with a shorter revised survey, patient awareness and engagement remain key drivers of participation.

Facilities can support response rates by:

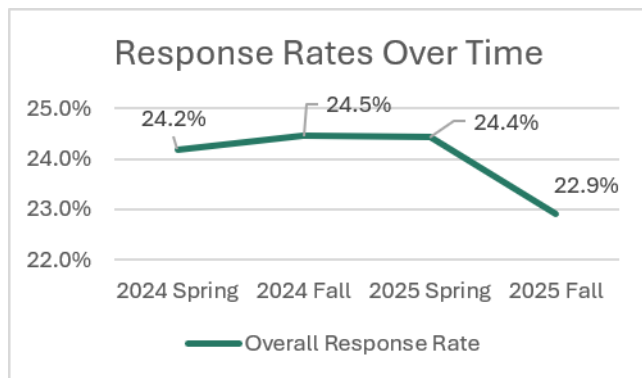
Promoting survey participation by displaying ICH CAHPS materials, reminding patients that the survey is **legitimate and confidential**, and ensuring patient contact information in EQRS is **accurate and up to date**.

Vendors can support response rates by:

Monitoring response patterns, reinforcing survey administration protocols, and working with facilities to **promote survey awareness** throughout data collection.

These small actions by facilities and vendors can make a meaningful difference!

A Closer Look: Response Rate Trends



What this shows: Response rates have remained relatively stable but dipped in the most recent fall cycle, highlighting the continued importance of patient awareness and engagement. We hope the revised survey will help response rates bounce back up!

Common Missed Opportunities

- Patients may ignore outreach if they don't recognize the survey.
- Incomplete contact information in EQRS can prevent patients from being reached.
- Limited visibility of materials within a facility may reduce patient trust.

Quick Tips for Better Survey Outcomes

Survey Success Checklist for Facilities:

- Replace outdated posters/flyers and Waiting Room FAQs with current materials (remember, if you want to edit the official ICH versions, please obtain approval from the Coordination Team!)
- Confirm patient contact information is up to date in EQRS (or provide it directly to your vendor!)
- Ensure that staff are knowledgeable about the survey and can accurately promote it to your patients (without assisting patients with completing the survey or telling patients how to answer!)

Help Patients Recognize the Survey Before It Arrives

A familiar survey is more likely to be opened and completed.

The poster/flyer can be customized with your facility's name, logo, and vendor contact information.

The Waiting Room FAQs answer common questions and reassure patients that the survey is legitimate, confidential, and valuable.

(Both available on the [Survey and Protocols web page](#).)

The Dialysis Patients Page on the ICH CAHPS website can help answer questions and lend legitimacy.

Your vendor's outgoing envelope (and phone number that calls will be made from) can be provided by your vendor so that patients know how to recognize the survey.

Did you know...?

Patients often ask their care team about mailings or phone calls they don't recognize. These resources can help patients **understand the survey, trust the process, and feel confident participating.**

Upcoming Care Compare on Medicare.gov

Survey Periods of Combined Data	Care Compare Refresh on Medicare.gov
2025 Spring and 2025 Fall	October 2026
2025 Fall and 2026 Spring	April 2027