

July
2024

ICH CAHPS® Coordination Team Semiannual Review

Message From the ICH CAHPS Team

Welcome to the July 2024 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!

- Update on revised (shortened) survey based on 2022 Mode Experiment results:
 - Findings were discussed with the CAHPS Consortium, and additional analyses conducted.
 - The revised survey was submitted for CMS’s Measures Under Consideration (MUC) process and is currently under review.
- Update on implementing a web-based mode on ICH CAHPS:
 - A web mode option was discussed with both a Technical Expert Panel (TEP) and the CAHPS Consortium.
 - CMS plans to conduct additional web mode tests/analyses before deciding.
 - **Reminder to facilities to help with future mode tests: please add email addresses to patient contact data in EQRS!**
- As a reminder, since data for a facility can only be entered into EQRS under one CCN (the primary CCN), a facility does not need to register/authorize multiple CCNs for a single facility on the ICH CAHPS website.
 - Facilities should make sure that the CCN that they enter data under in EQRS is the CCN that is registered and authorized on the ICH CAHPS website.
 - If a facility already has multiple CCNs registered for a facility on our website, no action is needed (unless the facility would like to remove the alternate CCN from the website).
- The next refresh of ICH CAHPS Survey data on Care Compare on Medicare.gov will be October 2024.

Survey Periods of Combined Data	Care Compare Refresh on Medicare.gov
2023 Spring and 2023 Fall	October 2024
2023 Fall and 2024 Spring	April 2025

Upcoming 2024 Deadlines & Reminders

- 7/12 — Data collection for the 2024 Spring Survey ends
- 7/31 at 5:00pm ET — Deadline for vendors to submit their 2024 Spring XML data file to the Data Center
- 8/2 — Deadline for submitting new facility-specific questions for the 2024 Fall Survey
- 8/31 — Deadline for authorizing a new or changing a survey vendor for the 2024 Fall Survey
- 8/31 — Deadline for vendors to submit Facility Closing Attestation Forms
- 9/3 — Deadline for vendors to review the Vendor Authorization Report and notify the Coordination Team of any authorization issues
- 9/2 — RTI will be closed for Labor Day

Tentative Data Collection Schedule 2024 Fall*

Activity	Date
Sampling window	4/1/2024-6/30/2024
Sample files uploaded on ICH CAHPS website	9/27/2024
Vendors attest to receipt of sample file	10/1/2024
Mail prenotification letter	10/18/2024
Mail first survey (mail-only and mixed mode)/ begin telephone data collection (phone-only mode)	11/1/2024
Mail second survey (mail-only nonrespondents)/ begin phone follow-up with mixed mode nonrespondents**	11/29/2024 OR 12/4/2024
Data collection ends	1/10/2025
Vendors clean/process final data and construct XML File	1/10/2025-1/29/2025
Deadline for submitting XML data file to ICH CAHPS data center	1/29/2025

*Please note that these dates are subject to change

**In 2024, the Thanksgiving holiday falls on 11/28/2024;

therefore, vendors may start the 2024 Fall second wave of ICH CAHPS data collection on 11/29/2024 or 12/4/2024.

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Race Questions in the ICH CAHPS Survey

As you know, the race questions in the ICH CAHPS Survey were revised for the 2024 Spring Survey, with response options now appearing in alphabetical order. Given these changes, survey vendors should take extra precautions when conducting quality control (QC) checks on their data as they prepare their XML files.

- The Coordination Team shared suggestions (see announcement on the ICH CAHPS website) to perform additional QC checks on XML files prior to data submission for the 2024 Spring Survey period, [encouraging vendors to initiate these QC checks](#) after Wave 1 data collection activities, which began on May 3rd, and then again after the Wave 2 data collection efforts that began on May 31st.
- We encourage vendors to conduct similar QC checks during the 2024 Fall Survey.

The ICH CAHPS Survey data submission tools (Schema Validation Tool and Data Submission Tool), as well as the XML data layout file, have been updated to reflect the edits made to the race questions in the 2024 Spring Survey. Please refer to the announcement on the ICH CAHPS website [regarding these revised data submission resources and tools](#) for more information.

Vendors may have seen a recent release from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), noting [the results](#) of its review of Statistical Policy Directive No. 15 (SPD 15) and issuance of [updated standards](#) for maintaining, collecting, and presenting race/ethnicity data across federal agencies. This directive means that race questions will change again in the future. At this time, OMB is giving federal agencies five years to implement these new race/ethnicity question; CMS is discussing the timeline for their CAHPS Surveys, and we will update vendors once we know the schedule for making these race question updates.

CAHPS and Patient Experience Resources

Improving Patient Experience

Did you know that the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has a webpage devoted to improving the patient experience, including how CAHPS Surveys can be used to improve the patient experience?

We strongly encourage facilities and vendors alike to take a look!

<https://www.ahrq.gov/cahps/quality-improvement/index.html>

CAHPS Webcasts and Recent Events

In addition, AHRQ has a webpage presenting their webcasts and other events to provide information about CAHPS and related sources.

We encourage you to check this page out too!

<https://www.ahrq.gov/cahps/news-and-events/events/index.html>

Final Thoughts!

The Coordination Team always welcomes feedback from both vendors and facilities! Please think about the following topics and email the Coordination Team with any thoughts you may have:

- Ways to improve response rates for the ICH CAHPS Survey (still a CMS focus!);
- Topics you would like to hear covered in the 2025 trainings; and/or
- Topics of interest you would like to see included in upcoming newsletters.

Remember, the ICH CAHPS Coordination Team is here to help! Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions or feedback.

- ichcahps@rti.org
- 1-866-245-8083