



## RESEARCH SUMMARY

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# The Maintenance and Updating of CAHPS® Survey Instruments

### The Aim

CAHPS surveys measure aspects of the health care experience for which consumers and patients are the best and/or only source of information and focus on topics that consumers and patients identify as important. Given rapid changes in the delivery of health care and the growing use of new technologies, the CAHPS team recognizes the need to regularly review and update the CAHPS surveys to keep them relevant and useful.

### Anticipated Benefits

Regular reviews and updates to CAHPS surveys ensure that the topics they cover continue to represent the expected standards of care, capture new modes of care delivery, and reflect the elements of health care that consumers and patients perceive as most central to their experience. The process of content review also provides an opportunity for the CAHPS team to reach out to stakeholders and the general public to seek input on the surveys.

### Our Approach

The CAHPS team has developed a standard evidence-based approach to reviewing and updating CAHPS survey instruments. The approach includes the following types of steps, tailored to meet the needs of the specific development or update task:

- Review existing literature, measurement tools, and relevant data as applicable.
- Seek input from subject matter experts, which could include a technical expert panel.
- Seek input from the general public by publishing a notice in the Federal Register.
- Conduct focus groups with patients and consumers to better understand what is most important to them in their health care experiences.
- Prepare draft survey items to assess consumer or patient experience with those aspects of the health care experience that are measurable, and that are attributable to the facility or provider of care.
- Conduct cognitive testing of survey items and revise them as needed to maximize the understandability and usability of survey items.
- Conduct field testing to assess the psychometric properties of survey items and groups of items. Our goal is to endorse only those items that meet high levels of reliability and validity and are therefore appropriate for reporting, quality improvement, and reimbursement purposes.
- Prepare documentation to support users in successfully and uniformly fielding CAHPS instruments.



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### Example of the Updating Process: The 3.0 Version of the Clinician & Group Survey

In 2014 and 2015, the CAHPS team devoted substantial effort to updating the CAHPS Clinician & Group (CG-CAHPS) Survey. Based on feedback from experts and the general public, a review of existing data, and item testing, the CG-CAHPS Survey was revised in the following ways:

- Use of a 6-month reference time period rather than a 12-month reference period.
- Modified composite measure for “Access.”
- Modified composite measure for “Communication.”
- New composite measure for “Care Coordination.”
- Minor changes to item wording.

The 3.0 version of the survey was released in 2015. For more information about this survey, visit <https://cahps.ahrq.gov/surveys-guidance/cg/about/index.html>.

### Next Steps

The CAHPS team will continue to update and expand the family of CAHPS surveys to ensure that consumer and patient experience data are collected, reported, and used to improve the quality of health care delivered across the Nation. Current areas of focus include supplemental items developed for use with the CG-CAHPS Survey and the CAHPS Health Plan Surveys as well as a revised set of items for measuring patient experience with behavioral health care.



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