

# Improve Patient Experience and Quality of Care

*Patients who have a positive experience are more likely to stay engaged with their health care.<sup>1</sup> Use these tips to help guide your patient engagement approach and improve CAHPS scores.*



| Patient experience matters                              |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Strengthen patient loyalty</b>                       | A high-quality relationship between patient and provider can greatly affect patient loyalty to your practice.   |
| <b>Improve patient engagement and clinical outcomes</b> | Positive patient experience led to higher adherence to medical advice and treatment plans. <sup>1</sup> Engaged patients are more likely to take charge of their care plan and stay up-to-date with their care. |
| <b>Uphold reputation</b>                                | Satisfied and content patients are likely to share their experience with others. Positive reviews can also lead to new patient referrals to your practice.  |

## What is the CAHPS survey?

- The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey is an annual health care experience survey that:
  - Asks patients to evaluate their experience with their providers and health plan (i.e. access to care, provider communication, customer service, ease of getting Rx)
  - Includes select Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) quality measures<sup>2</sup>
  - Impacts various Rating Systems (Medicare STARS, Quality Rating Systems, Office of the Patient Advocate)
- Administered annually each spring via mail and phone.
- Results help identify opportunities for patient experience improvement.

*(continued)*

## Focus areas

| CAHPS measure                                | Survey questions  | Tips and best practices   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Provider communication<sup>3</sup></b>    | <p>How often did your personal doctor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain things in a way that was easy to understand?</li> <li>• Listen carefully to you?</li> <li>• Show respect for what you had to say?</li> <li>• Spend enough time with you?</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all staff are trained to handle sensitive situations.</li> <li>• Treat patients with empathy and respect. Make eye contact, listen carefully and express understanding.</li> <li>• Visit <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/culture.html">www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/culture.html</a> for cultural competency and health literacy tools and resources that promote effective communication.</li> <li>• No-cost interpreter services can be requested for your patients. Contact Member Services at the phone number on the member's identification (ID) card or by calling the Provider Services Center.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Getting needed care</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How often did you get an appointment to see a specialist as soon as you needed?</li> <li>• How often was it easy to get the care, test or treatment you needed?</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set expectations with patients by informing them of any timeframes and/or turnaround times for scheduling routine appointments, prior authorization and/or referral approvals.</li> <li>• Review authorization and referral processes to remove patient barriers to access care.</li> <li>• Continue offering telehealth appointments as a convenient option for patients.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Getting appointments and care quickly</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you needed care right away, how often did you get care as soon as you needed?</li> <li>• How often did you get an appointment for a checkup or routine care as soon as you needed?</li> <li>• How often did you see the person you came to see within 15 minutes of your appointment time?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set aside time slots each day to accommodate urgent visits.</li> <li>• Offer early morning and/or evening appointment slots one day each week.</li> <li>• Offer appointments with a nurse or physician assistant for urgent issues.</li> <li>• If applicable, offer a telehealth appointment.</li> <li>• Provide patients with the addresses and phone numbers of local urgent care centers.</li> </ul>  |

(continued)

| CAHPS measure             | Survey questions  | Tips and best practices   |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Care coordination</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you visited your personal doctor for a scheduled appointment, how often did he or she have your medical records or other information about your care?</li> <li>• When your personal doctor ordered a blood test, X-ray or other test for you, how often did someone from your personal doctor’s office follow up to give you those results?</li> <li>• When your personal doctor ordered a blood test, X-ray or other test for you, how often did you get those results as soon as you needed them?</li> <li>• How often did you and your personal doctor talk about all the prescription medicines you were taking?</li> <li>• Did you get the help you needed from your personal doctor’s office to manage your care among these different providers and services?</li> <li>• How often did your personal doctor seem informed and up-to-date about the care you got from specialists?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have medication list and medical history, including appointments with specialists, at hand to review during patient office visits.</li> <li>• Ask patients if they have seen any other medical providers since their last visit with you. Discuss any visits and/or treatment plans with them.</li> <li>• Set expectations by informing patients of when they can expect to get their test results back.</li> <li>• Implement processes for patients to easily and securely access test results.</li> <li>• Ask patients how they prefer to receive test results: phone call, email, etc.</li> <li>• Share test results/medical history with all of the patient’s applicable providers.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Annual flu vaccine</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you had a flu shot since July 1 of the prior year?</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage existing appointments by offering a flu shot to all patients who come into the office.</li> <li>• Have flu clinics where patients can get the vaccine without an office visit.</li> <li>• Visit <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/flu-vaccine-recommendation.htm">www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/flu-vaccine-recommendation.htm</a> for techniques on how to talk to your patients about the flu vaccine and make a strong recommendation; address misconceptions for those who refuse.</li> </ul>   |



### Questions?

Email the Quality Improvement CAHPS Team for more tools: [Program\\_Accreditation@healthnet.com](mailto:Program_Accreditation@healthnet.com)

<sup>1</sup>Why Improve Patient Experience? Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). [www.ahrq.gov/cahps/quality-improvement/improvement-guide/2-why-improve/index.html](http://www.ahrq.gov/cahps/quality-improvement/improvement-guide/2-why-improve/index.html)

<sup>2</sup>HEDIS measures performance in health care where improvements can make a meaningful difference in people’s lives. [www.ncqa.org/hedis/using-hedis-measures/](http://www.ncqa.org/hedis/using-hedis-measures/)

<sup>3</sup>This CAHPS composite measure is not a Star measure but is a top driver of members’ perception of overall ease of getting care.

\*Health Net of California, Inc., Health Net Community Solutions, Inc. and Health Net Life Insurance Company are subsidiaries of Health Net, LLC and Centene Corporation. Health Net is a registered service mark of Health Net, LLC. All other identified trademarks/service marks remain the property of their respective companies. All rights reserved.