

# CAHPS for PQRS Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines V2

## Summary of Updates and Emphasis

This document is a reference tool that highlights the major changes from the *CAHPS for PQRS Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines V1.0 to V2*. This document is not a substitute for reviewing the *CAHPS for PQRS Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines V2* in its entirety. The *CAHPS for PQRS Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines V2* manual is effective upon its release in July 2016. General format and minor wording revisions have occurred throughout the manual and are not included in this change matrix. Please contact CAHPS for PQRS Survey Technical Assistance for any specific questions.

Section of the QAG V2	Summary of Key Changes in V2
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ V1.0 changed to V2</li> <li>○ Revised dates as necessary, i.e., 2015 to 2016</li> <li>○ Updated quality reporting period 2015 to 2016</li> <li>○ Replaced “Original Medicare beneficiaries” with “fee-for-service Medicare beneficiaries” throughout</li> <li>○ Updated vendor authorization process from submitting a vendor authorization form to completing web-based survey vendor authorization tool</li> <li>○ Relabeled appendices throughout due to removal of Vendor Authorization Form (previously Appendix B)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>I. Reader’s Guide</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>
<b>II. Introduction and Overview</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Revised years for payment adjustment</li> <li>○ 2016 survey administration GPRO registration date updated to June 30, 2016</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Under <i>Administration of the CAHPS for PQRS Survey</i>, added “Group practices bear the cost of survey administration.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>III. Program Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added two bullets regarding what is not permitted under <i>Communicating with Beneficiaries About the CAHPS for PQRS Survey</i></li> <li>○ Under <i>Survey Vendor Roles and Responsibilities</i>, added four sub-bullets related to the DUA</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated language that survey vendors must maintain an active group practice client contract for “at least one of two consecutive survey cycles” instead of “each of two”</li> <li>○ Added requirement for vendors to provide information on how the sample and/or survey data are transferred between subcontractor and survey vendor, if applicable, in <i>Develop Survey Vendor CAHPS for PQRS Survey Quality Assurance Plan</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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<b>IV. Technical Assistance and Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>
<b>V. Sampling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Under <i>Sample Preparation</i>, added “Where possible, CMS will also provide a beneficiary phone number as of October 2016”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>VI. Data Collection Protocol</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated the Data Collection Schedule with new dates</li> <li>○ Under <i>Pre-notification Letter</i>, added “If a group practice would like to administer the survey in one of the optional languages, survey vendors may print the pre-notification letter with English on one side and the optional language on the reverse”</li> <li>○ Added a bullet regarding implementing the survey in one of the optional languages and including an insert with the pre-notification letter and first survey mailing that details instructions for requesting a survey in the optional language and sub-bullet regarding an additional option for administering the survey in one of the optional languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “In place of an individual insert, a language specific note may be placed at the bottom of the first survey mailing cover letter providing beneficiaries with instructions for requesting a survey in that language. This option can be exercised if only one non-English survey language is being offered by the group practice.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Added note regarding placement of pre-codes on mail surveys</li> <li>○ Added text that survey vendors must make all attempts to process any returned surveys to be included in the interim data submission file</li> <li>○ Under <i>Phone Attempts</i>, added clarification of “on the same day” after “three consecutive phone attempts”</li> <li>○ Added a note that if additional numbers are dialed (after the original number is determined to be disconnected, non-working or a wrong number), each additional number may receive up to six call attempts</li> <li>○ Added approved use of neutral acknowledgement words by interviewers during the phone interview</li> <li>○ Added text indicating the survey status section of the data record layout must include the procedure(s) used to administer the survey in the optional languages</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added text that data must be processed and data entered or scanned within 3 business days</li> <li>○ Clarified that any mail surveys received after the cutoff date should also be stored in a secure and environmentally controlled location for a minimum of three years</li> <li>○ Added verbiage that it is strongly recommended that recipients of the seeded mailing be CAHPS for PQRS Survey vendor staff at an address other than the vendor’s business address</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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<p><b>VII. Data Coding and Data Preparation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Update:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Under <i>Survey Skip Patterns</i>, added the sub-bullet “Respondents should skip items only when they actually choose a response that causes a skip. If a screener item is left blank, it does not trigger a skip. An error in the skip pattern will occur if a respondent left a screener item missing then skipped subsequent dependent items. Counting dependent items when there is no direct evidence that a skip has been triggered is preferable to inferring a respondent’s intentions based on an unanswered item.”</li> <li>○ Revised code 33 criteria from “No response collected either by mail or by phone when there is no indication of bad address or bad phone number” to “No response collected either by mail or by phone when there is no indication of bad address <u>and</u> bad phone number”</li> <li>○ Revised code 35 description and criteria from “Unable to obtain a viable address and/or phone number” to “Unable to obtain a viable address <u>and</u> phone number”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clarified that survey vendors are required to submit one record for each sampled beneficiary included in the original sample file</li> <li>○ Specified mail and phone follow-up after receipt of a blank or incomplete survey <i>by mail</i> must start “from scratch”</li> <li>○ Revised the Final Survey Disposition Codes Table as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Added “Appropriately skipped items don’t count as a response” to the <i>Criteria</i> column of the final disposition code of Partially Completed Survey</li> <li>▪ Revised code 33 criteria from “No response collected either by mail or by phone when there is no indication of bad address or bad phone number” to “No response collected either by mail or by phone when there is no indication of bad address and bad phone number”</li> <li>▪ Revised code 35 description and criteria from “Unable to obtain a viable address and/or phone number” to “Unable to obtain a viable address and phone number”</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>VIII. Data Submission</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Revised vendor authorization process to reflect web-based vendor authorization process</li> <li>○ Updated the survey file submission naming convention, description bullets and example</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added a note about the timeframe for the final data submission</li> <li>○ Clarified that survey vendor’s primary and backup data administrators will be granted read and write access to the PQRS Data Warehouse (created by the CAHPS for PQRS Survey data coordination team) and the vendor project manager will be granted read only access to the PQRS Data Warehouse</li> <li>○ Added the RAND Corporation Server email address (<a href="mailto:RANDManagedFileXferSvc@rand.org">RANDManagedFileXferSvc@rand.org</a>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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<b>IX. Data Analysis and Public Reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated survey results for the 2016 quality reporting period will be available to group practices by Fall 2017</li> <li>○ Reworded the paragraph about <i>Use of SSMS</i> under the <i>CMS Analysis of CAHPS for PQRS Survey Data</i> section</li> <li>○ Clarified text regarding criteria of survey items with low reliability</li> <li>○ Clarified note regarding scores publically reported on Physician Compare to add “fewer than 20 respondents”</li> <li>○ Added paragraph under <i>Survey Vendor Analysis of CAHPS for PQRS Survey Data</i> that survey vendors must obtain written CMS approval to append data from the group practice to the sample data or survey data</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Revised sub-header from <i>Scoring the Survey</i> to <i>Contribution of the CAHPS for PQRS Survey to the Value Modifier</i> and reworded paragraph under this section</li> <li>○ Specified that all reports provided to the group practices must include a statement on each page that vendor results are unofficial and are for the practices’ internal quality improvement purposes only</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>X. Oversight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Under the <i>CAHPS for PQRS Survey Quality Assurance Plan</i>, the following items were added: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bullet regarding identifying and handling breaches of confidential data</li> <li>▪ Text to clarify those survey vendors who submit a revised QAP should submit an updated QAP in a “track change” version</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added “Note: Depending on the issues identified during the QAP and survey material review, survey vendors may be required to submit a revised QAP and revised survey materials for review and final approval. Vendors remain responsible for meeting all deadlines regardless of when the project team provides notification of the outcome of review of revised materials.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>XI. Discrepancy Reports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>

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<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix A</b> Minimum Survey Vendor Business Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated number of years in business from a minimum of 3 years to a minimum of 4 years</li> <li>○ Updated “Number of Years Conducting CAHPS Surveys” to “Minimum of 3 years experience conducting CAHPS surveys of individuals; all experience is within the last 5 years”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Defined Mixed-Mode as survey administration that includes mail survey administration followed by survey administration via CATI with non-respondents</li> <li>○ Added fifth bullet in <i>Relevant Survey Experience</i> row, “Demonstrated experience with formatting a flat ASCII file utilizing a standardized data layout and submitting encrypted data to an external data warehouse”</li> <li>○ Added “<i>Note: All applicant vendors must fulfill the above requirements independent of a subcontractor’s experience</i>” to the <i>Relevant Survey Experience</i> row</li> <li>○ Added “at least” to the Experience with Multiple Survey Languages row to state, “Prior experience required in conducting survey administration in both English AND at least one of the following languages”</li> <li>○ Updated text in second bullet in Approval Term row from “...each of two consecutive survey fielding cycles” to “...one of two consecutive survey fielding cycles”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Appendix B</b> Survey Vendor Authorization Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deleted Form</b></li> </ul>
<b>Appendix B</b> Data Use Agreement Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>
<b>Appendix C</b> Vendor Access to PQRS Data Warehouse Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated due date</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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<p><b>Appendix D</b> Model Quality Assurance Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added requirement for vendor to include the length of history used to look up previous address and phone number by the update service</li> <li>○ Added requirement to describe communication processes with subcontractor(s), if applicable</li> <li>○ Added the following documentation must be provided, if applicable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document containing interim disposition codes with a crosswalk to final disposition codes</li> <li>▪ An annual summary outlining the results from previous survey administration quality control activities and any corrective action plan(s) implemented</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Added bullet “Describe the procedures for identifying and handling breaches of confidential data.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added “The QAP must be very detailed and clearly document the survey vendor’s processes in administering the CAHPS for PQRS Survey.”</li> <li>○ Added a note regarding resubmission of a QAP and/or survey materials for re-review</li> <li>○ Added a note indicating survey vendor’s QAP must detail subcontractor oversight</li> <li>○ Added additional detail under <i>Organizational Background and Structure</i>, Section C including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Describe the evaluation of training of personnel</li> <li>▪ Describe the oversight of training of any subcontractor(s) and/or temporary agency staff, if applicable</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Added content regarding the seeded mailing process</li> <li>○ Added requirement to describe how the customer support line will support any of the optional languages, if applicable</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Appendix E</b> Interviewing Guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added a bullet to clarify that the use of “neutral acknowledgement words” is permitted</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added a note permitting survey vendors to indicate emphasis of text in a different manner if the CATI system does not have the capability to indicate emphasis in the preferred styles</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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<b>Appendix F</b> Frequently Asked questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added “<i>Note: Survey vendors should follow their own standard procedures for handling information provided by a beneficiary either by mail or by phone that may suggest a beneficiary’s health or well-being is at risk.</i>” under Overview section</li> <li>○ Added FAQs and responses:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Why did I get a letter from Walter Stone?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>You called my cell phone. Can you call back on this number [BENEFICIARY SPECIFY]?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>How was the provider chosen for my survey?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>How can I answer these questions if I only saw this provider once in the last six months?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>There was no section on the mail survey to write comments about my provider (and/or their staff). Can I leave my comments with you?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>○ <i>The question I never visited this provider/doctor in the last six months. What do I do?</i> was updated to include one response for mail survey administration and one response for telephone administration.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Revised the response for the FAQ <i>I am not able to complete this by myself. Can I have my ___ help me?</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Appendix G</b> Accessing the PQRS Data Warehouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated several screenshots</li> </ul>
<b>Appendix H</b> Sample File Record Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>
<b>Appendix I</b> Survey File Record Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated row, “DISPOSITN,” to indicate Code 33 and Code 35 is bad address <u>and</u> bad telephone number</li> <li>○ Added new row, “LANG_PROT,” to indicate the mode used to deliver non-English mail surveys</li> <li>○ Updated field positions for <i>Beneficiary Response Section</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Appendix J</b> Discrepancy Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>
<b>Appendix K</b> Survey Items Applicable to All Respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>

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<b>Appendix L</b> CAHPS for PQRS Survey Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>
<b>Appendix M</b> Instructions and Survey (English)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>
<b>Appendix N</b> Instructions and CATI Script (English)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added instructions for resuming a telephone survey</li> <li>○ Added a bullet to clarify that the use of “neutral acknowledgement words” is permitted</li> <li>○ Added an Intro1-In and Intro2-In Script for inbound calls received during telephone survey administration</li> <li>○ Added a <i>Resume a Survey</i> Script</li> <li>○ Revised Option 11 from <i>SP IS TOO ILL</i> to <i>SP IS TOO ILL OR FRAIL/PHYSICALLY UNABLE</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added a note permitting survey vendors to indicate emphasis of text in a different manner if the CATI system does not have the capability to indicate emphasis in the preferred styles</li> <li>○ Revised title of Intro1 Script to Intro1-Out Script</li> <li>○ Revised title of Intro2 Script to Intro2-Out Script</li> <li>○ Under Proxy3 Script, revised the Yes response to [GO TO PROXY6] instead of [GO TO INTRO2]</li> </ul> </li> </ul>