

CAHPS Hospital Survey Podcast Series—Transcript

New Administrative Data Element: Total Inpatient Discharges

Note: The information covered in this podcast was current at the time of posting. CMS will occasionally update guidelines and calculations.

Slide 1-New Administrative Data Element: Total Inpatient Discharges

Welcome to the HCAHPS Podcast on a new variable that has been added to the required file formats.

During this podcast, we will review the new administrative data element, total inpatient discharges.

Slide 2-Overview

First, we will define total inpatient discharges and review the familiar pie charts from the Sampling Protocol chapter in the HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines, or QAG.

Then, we will provide an example of monthly patient counts that will highlight the new variable.

We will next review the required file formats for submission of total inpatient discharges.

Submission of total inpatient discharges will begin with Q3 2020 discharges.

Slide 3-Motivation for Update

It is important for CMS to be able to understand changes in hospital counts that may occur between quarters, specifically changes in total ineligibility and exclusions.

By adding this new variable, oversight activities with survey vendors and self-administering hospitals will be enhanced as the project team will be better able to track record counts in the discharge files.

Also, this change will more closely align HCAHPS with other CMS CAHPS projects.

Slide 4-Definition: Total Inpatient Discharges

The definition for total inpatient discharges is simply all inpatients discharged from the hospital for a given month; that is, all inpatient discharges before removal for ineligibility or exclusion reasons.

Based on this definition, it follows that the file of total inpatient discharges may contain patients less than 18 years old at admission, patients without an overnight stay, patients with excluded admission source or discharge codes, or patients that meet any of the other HCAHPS ineligibility or exclusion criteria.

A complete list of HCAHPS eligibility and exclusion criteria can be found on pages 60-63 of the QAG V15.0 – the most recent version at the time of this podcast.

Slide 5-Refresher: Sampling Protocol Illustration Flowchart (QAG 15.0)

Next, we see the familiar pie charts from the Sampling Protocol chapter in the HCAHPS QAG.

The category of all inpatient discharges is shown in purple. The purple circle can be sliced as follows: sampled patients (in gray), eligible patients not sampled (in blue), ineligible patients (in red), excluded patients (in yellow), and de-duplicated patients (in green).

Slide 6-Example: Total Inpatient Discharges

On this slide, we will review an example of key HCAHPS patient counts, including total inpatient discharges.

For Hospital X in this example, there were 500 total inpatient discharges for a given discharge month.

Notice that Hospital X also had 100 ineligible, 15 exclusions, and 5 de-duplicated patients.

After subtracting the above counts from 500, this left 380 discharges for the HCAHPS sample frame, of which, 300 were sampled.

Note that the column for HCAHPS Data Submission illustrates which patient counts are submitted to the HCAHPS data warehouse in the hospital Header record.

Total inpatient discharges is a new required variable for HCAHPS data submission.

Slide 7-Example in Sampling Protocol Illustration Flowchart

Now, looking back to the pie charts, here we see the 500 total inpatient discharges for Hospital X represented with the unsliced purple pie chart.

Slide 8-Example in Sampling Protocol Illustration Flowchart (continued)

Continuing with the pie chart for Hospital X, we see the actual patient counts that were noted in the table on slide 6.

Recall, Hospital X had 380 eligible discharges and sampled 300 of them, shown in the gray slice.

Therefore, there were 80 leftover eligible patients that were not sampled, shown in the blue slice.

Hospital X had 100 ineligible patients, shown in red.

Exclusions and de-duplications are also shown, in yellow and green, respectively.

Notice the counts for these slices add up to 500, which represents the value of the new submission variable, total inpatient discharges.

Slide 9-Data File Structure (V4.3) Update for Total Inpatient Discharges

Now we will go over the details for data submission of the new variable for total inpatient discharges.

This slide shows a screenshot of the new Data File Structure for the Header Record.

The updated Data File Structure is version 4.3 and can be found in Appendix Q of the HCAHPS QAG, version 15.0.

Note the new field name shown in the first column will correspond to the new data entry field for self-administering hospitals using the Online Tool for data submission.

Slide 10-XML File Format Update for Total Inpatient Discharges

This slide shows the corresponding update to XML data file preparation; and therefore, applies only to HCAHPS survey vendors.

Note the XML tag for total inpatient discharges follows a similar naming convention as other count variables.

Total inpatient discharges must precede the eligible discharges variable in the XML file layout, as shown in this screenshot.

Slide 11-Additional File Updates for Total Inpatient Discharges

Hospitals using DSRS sampling will submit the new variable, total inpatient discharges, for each stratum, identical to the current process for the strata header variables of sample size and eligible discharge size.

All updates to file formats and specifications can be found in appendices P and Q in the QAG, version 15.0.

As briefly mentioned earlier, self-administering hospitals using the Online Tool for data submission must submit a new field for Q3 2020 in the header record section to capture total inpatient discharges, with a tag name as shown in red on this slide.

Slide 12-Summary

In summary, CMS is requiring the monthly count of total inpatient discharges for official HCAHPS data submission beginning with July 1st, 2020 discharges.

All requirements for submitting total inpatient discharges are contained in the QAG, version 15.0, and the file specifications version 4.3.

Slide 13-Resources

Thank you for your time and attention, and we hope this podcast has been of assistance in understanding how to calculate this new file variable.

Please contact HCAHPS Technical Support for any questions you might have using the email address or telephone number displayed on this slide.