

HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines V16.0

Change Matrix: Updates and Emphasis

This document is a reference tool that highlights the major changes from the HCAHPS *Quality Assurance Guidelines V15.0 to V16.0*. The HCAHPS *Quality Assurance Guidelines V16.0* (QAG) is effective with **July 1, 2021 patient discharges and forward**. This document is not a substitute for reviewing the QAG in its entirety. General format and minor wording revisions have occurred throughout the manual and are not included in this change matrix. Please contact HCAHPS Technical Assistance at hcahps@hsag.com for any specific questions.

QAG V16.0 Section	Summary of Key Changes
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revised V15.0 to V16.0 ○ Revised dates as necessary (e.g., 2020 to 2021) ○ Updated references to V.38 and V.39 MS-DRG codes ○ Updated to HCAHPS File Specifications Version 4.4 ○ Added references to Hospital Quality Reporting (HQR) system (https://hqr.cms.gov/), formerly the QualityNet Secure Portal ○ Updated references to Care Compare, formerly Hospital Compare ○ Updated web site links ○ Updated with minor wording revisions throughout the manual
Acknowledgements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated Official UB-04, Data Specifications Manual by permission, Copyright to reflect 2020 reference
I. Reader’s Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included reference to “New for 2021” sections added throughout the QAG V16.0 ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
II. Introduction and Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included “New for 2021” section highlighting the revisions to the HCAHPS Cover Letters and Telephone/IVR Scripts ○ Added HCAHPS Mode Experiment V information ○ Updated the HCAHPS Development, Data Collection and Public Reporting Timeline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Added CMS granting of exceptions for hospitals participating in quality reporting programs in response to COVID-19 (March 2020) ▪ Updated with two HCAHPS Podcasts release date (July 2020) ▪ Added launch of Care Compare (September 2020) ▪ Added FY 2021 IPPS Final Rule (September 2020) ▪ Updated with HCAHPS Training (March 2021) and public reporting dates (July and October 2021) ○ Updated with minor wording revisions

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III. Program Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added specification that the “United States Department of Health and Human Services” sponsorship must also be removed when the HCAHPS Survey and the questions that comprise it are used outside of official HCAHPS purposes ○ Revised quality control procedures to achieve at least 300 completed HCAHPS Surveys in a rolling four-quarter period ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
IV. Communications and Technical Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added references to Hospital Quality Reporting (HQR) system (https://hqr.cms.gov/), formerly the QualityNet Secure Portal
V. Survey Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added requirement to notify the HCAHPS Project Team within 24 hours upon discovery of a data breach that potentially affects HCAHPS Survey administration within their organization or at a client hospital ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
VI. Sampling Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated Table of MS-DRG Codes and Service Line Categories to V.38 (effective October 1, 2020 patient discharges), and added reference to V.39 MS-DRG codes (effective October 1, 2021 patient discharges) ○ Updated with minor wording revisions

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<p>VII. Mail Only Survey Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included “New for 2021” section highlighting that beginning with July1, 2021 discharges, there will be one version of the HCAHPS Cover letters (Appendices A through G), previously the Optional Modified version with revisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Added new cover letter requirements to including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Questions 1-29 in the survey are sponsored by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and should take about 7 minutes to complete.” • “Your participation is voluntary, and your answers will be kept private.” • “Your responses will help improve the quality of hospital care and help other people make more informed choices about their care. You can see current survey results and find hospital ratings on the Care Compare Web site (www.medicare.gov/care-compare).” • Must be in a readable font (i.e., Arial or Times New Roman) with a font size of 12-point at a minimum ○ Added optional use of reply-by date on the follow-up cover letter. Updated Example Patient 1, 2 and 3 and included guidance on calculating the reply-by date and placement on the follow-up cover letter ○ Updated with minor wording revisions • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarified that the cover letters are preferred to be printed on the hospital letterhead ○ Clarified that the OMB language must appear verbatim and that it is preferred to appear on the questionnaire ○ Clarified that the language indicating the purpose of the unique identifier is preferred to appear on the questionnaire ○ Clarified that the outgoing envelope may be printed with the banner “Important – Open Immediately.” No other banners may be used on the outgoing or return envelopes.
<p>VIII. Telephone Only Survey Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included “New for 2021” section highlighting that beginning with July1, 2021 discharges, there will be one version of the HCAHPS Telephone Script (Appendices H through K), previously the Optional Modified version with revisions ○ Updated with minor wording revisions • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarified that the mandatory transition statement for supplemental questions and the copyright statement are located in Appendices H through K

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IX. Mixed Mode Survey Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included “New for 2021” section highlighting that beginning with July 1, 2021 discharges, there will be one version of the HCAHPS Cover Letters (Appendices A through D) and Telephone Script (Appendices H through K), previously the Optional Modified version with revisions ○ See Mail Only and Telephone Only Survey Administration ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
X. Active Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Survey Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included “New for 2021” section highlighting that beginning with July 1, 2021 discharges, there will be one version of the HCAHPS Active IVR Script (Appendices L and M), previously the Optional Modified version with revisions ○ Updated with minor wording revisions • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarified that the mandatory transition statement for supplemental questions and the copyright statement are located in Appendices L and M
XI. Data Specifications and Coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added coding guidelines for mail surveys for Question 28 when a respondent writes “Caucasian” ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
XII. Data Preparation and Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Content in this chapter has changed for HCAHPS Data Submission via the Hospital Quality Reporting (HQR) system, formerly the QualityNet Secure Portal, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Registration for Data Submission via HQR ▪ HQR Security Administrator and HQR Basic User Access ▪ HCAHPS Survey Vendor Authorization Process ▪ HCAHPS Data Submission Reports and HCAHPS Warehouse Feedback Reports ▪ XML Data File Submission and HCAHPS Data Form Submission, formerly the Online Data Entry Tool
XIII. Oversight Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
XIV. Data Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated anticipated public reporting table of HCAHPS Survey results ○ Updated with minor wording revisions

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XV. Exception Request / Discrepancy Report Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated the Determination of Service line categories to include “Other – Approved Exception Request Only” outlining the required documentation ○ Added Survey Materials as Exception Request category ○ Added CMS granting of exceptions for hospitals participating in quality reporting programs in response to COVID-19 (March 2020) ○ Updated with minor wording revisions • Emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarified that the Exception Request approval timeframe is limited to two years unless otherwise specified
XVI. Data Quality Checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No updates
Appendices	
Appendices A - G HCAHPS Mail Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beginning with July 1, 2021 discharges, there will be one version of the HCAHPS Cover Letters, previously the Optional Modified version with revisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Added new cover letter requirements to including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Questions 1-29 in the survey are sponsored by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and should take about 7 minutes to complete.” • “Your participation is voluntary, and your answers will be kept private.” • “Your responses will help improve the quality of hospital care and help other people make more informed choices about their care. You can see current survey results and find hospital ratings on the Care Compare Web site (www.medicare.gov/care-compare).” ○ Added Survey and Cover Letter Required Language section in all official HCAHPS Survey translations, which includes guidance on the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OMB Paperwork Reduction Act Language ▪ Mandatory Transition Statement if Supplemental Items Are Added ▪ Unique Identifier Language ▪ Copyright Statement ▪ Reply-by Date (Optional)

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<p>Appendices H - K HCAHPS Telephone Scripts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beginning with July 1, 2021 discharges, there will be one version of the HCAHPS Telephone Script previously the Optional Modified version with revisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revised the INITIATING CONTACT, OPTIONAL START to include the word, “please” ▪ Revised the INITIATING CONTACT, IF ASKED IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK TO SR. OR JR., adding “Is that person available?” ▪ Revised the CALL BACK TO COMPLETE A PREVIOUSLY STARTED SURVEY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added an OPTIONAL START • Revised the title CONFIRM PATIENT to CONFIRM PATIENT FOR A PREVIOUSLY STARTED SURVEY • Added script to CONFIRM PATIENT FOR A CALL BACK ▪ Revised the SPEAKING WITH SAMPLED PATIENT, INTRO ○ Added coding instructions when a patient replies “Caucasian” to Question 28 ○ Added the mandatory transition statement for use with a single supplemental question and for more than one supplemental question
<p>Appendices L and M HCAHPS Active IVR Scripts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beginning with July 1, 2021 discharges, there will be one version of the HCAHPS Active IVR Script previously the Optional Modified version with revisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revised the INITIATING CONTACT, OPTIONAL START to include the word, “please” ▪ Revised the INITIATING CONTACT, IF ASKED IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK TO SR. OR JR., adding “Is that person available?” ▪ Revised the CALL BACK TO COMPLETE A PREVIOUSLY STARTED SURVEY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added an OPTIONAL START • Revised the title of the CONFIRM PATIENT SCRIPT to CONFIRM PATIENT FOR A PREVIOUSLY STARTED SURVEY • Added script to CONFIRM PATIENT FOR A CALL BACK ▪ Revised the SPEAKING WITH SAMPLED PATIENT, INTRO ○ Added the mandatory transition statement for use with a single supplemental question and for more than one supplemental question
<p>Appendix N Interviewing Guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
<p>Appendix O Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated several responses to reflect more natural language and align with changes made to the HCAHPS Cover Letters and Telephone Script ○ Updated with minor wording revisions

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Appendix P Sample Frame File Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated references to V.38 and V.39 MS-DRG codes ○ Added valid values to the optional <i>Patient Preferred Language</i> data element ○ Added Admission Source code “G - Transfer from a Designated Alternative Care Site (ACS)” ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
Appendix Q Data File Structure Version 4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated references to V.38 and V.39 MS-DRG codes ○ Added Admission Source code G “Transfer from a Designated Alternative Care Site (ACS)” ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
Appendix R XML File Specifications Version 4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated references to V.38 and V.39 MS-DRG codes ○ Added Admission Source code G “Transfer from a Designated Alternative Care Site (ACS)” ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
Appendix S Quality Assurance Plan (QAP) Outline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revised requirements for item 26 to align with survey material changes ○ Updated with minor wording revisions
Appendices T-V Participation Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revised forms to align with updates to Minimum Business Requirements ○ Updated with minor formatting and wording revisions
Appendix W Exception Request Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New Exception Request Form reflecting updates made to the online Exception Request Form available on the HCAHPS Web site
Appendix X Discrepancy Report Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Updates
Appendix Y Attestation Statement Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Updates
Appendix Z Use of HCAHPS with Other Hospital Inpatient Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Updates