

# CAHPS Insider

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**SEPTEMBER 2017**

INSIGHTS AND UPDATES FOR  
EFFECTIVE COMPLIANCE



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# Extraordinary Circumstances Extension/Exception (ECE)

Due to the devastating impact of Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria, CMS is granting exceptions under certain Medicare quality reporting and value-based purchasing programs to acute care hospitals, PPS-exempt cancer hospitals, inpatient psychiatric facilities, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, inpatient rehabilitation facilities, Renal Dialysis Facilities, long-term care hospitals, and ambulatory surgical centers. These providers will be granted exceptions without having to submit an extraordinary exception request if they are located in one of the Texas, Florida, or Georgia counties, Louisiana parishes, Puerto Rico Municipios or U.S. Virgin Island County-Equivalents listed below. All of these have been designated by FEMA as a major disaster county.

Texas Counties			Georgia Counties	Louisiana Parishes	Florida Counties	Puerto Rico Municipios	U.S. Virgin Islands County-Equivalents
Aransas	Hardin	Sabine	All 159 counties in Georgia are within the FEMA designated areas	Beauregard	All 67 counties in Florida are within the FEMA designated areas	All 78 municipios in Puerto Rico are within the FEMA designated areas.	All 3 county-equivalents in the U.S. Virgin Islands are within the FEMA designated areas.
Bee	Harris	San Jacinto		Calcasieu			
Bexar	Jackson	San Patricio		Cameron			
Brazoria	Jasper	Tarrant		Jefferson			
Calhoun	Kleberg	Travis		Davis			
Chambers	Liberty	Victoria		Vermilion			
Colorado	Matagorda	Waller					
Dallas	Montgomery	Wharton					
Fayette	Newton						
Fort Bend	Nueces						
Galveston	Orange						
Goliad	Refugio						

For the Hospital, Hospice, and Home Health Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS/Hospice CAHPS/HHCAHPS) Survey, submission of Quarter 2 and Quarter 3, 2017 data is covered under this exemption. You can find additional details and materials on the CMS [Hurricane webpage](#).

If you are located within one of the FEMA designated areas, you should have received an email from the NRC Health Corporate Compliance Team. If you did not receive an email or have additional questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Compliance Team at [compliance@nrchealth.com](mailto:compliance@nrchealth.com)

**CMS Citation:**

<http://www.cms.gov/> Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Baltimore, MD. September 18, 2017



***Feedback Request: QualityNet Secure Portal***

Are you an active user of the QualityNet Secure Portal? If your answer is “yes”, CMS is investing in changes to the QualityNet Secure Portal, and the team is interested in your feedback. Hospitals and their vendors submit data and review measure and payment feedback reports using the QualityNet Secure Portal.

As CMS begins to work on the QualityNet Secure Portal, they believe it is important to hear from the people who are active users. They want to know what works and what is challenging. They are also asking for help testing out what the Team is working on before it is finalized.

Interested in participating? Feedback sessions generally consist of a 30-60 minute call or visit with CMS where they will ask about how you work with and submit data to the system and, at times, they will ask you to take a test drive of possible updates. CMS will use the feedback from these sessions to improve their process. The goal is to ensure you receive the most benefit from the QualityNet Secure Portal system.

If you are interested in participating or have questions, please email [HQRResearch@bellese.hcgis.org](mailto:HQRResearch@bellese.hcgis.org).

If you reached out to the Research Team at [HQRResearch@bellese.hcgis.org](mailto:HQRResearch@bellese.hcgis.org) between 9/1/2017-9/6/2017 to participate in a feedback session and have not heard back, please try to reach out again. There was a glitch in their email server and emails were not received by the HQR Research Team.

## **UPDATE – Hospital Compare Refresh**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will not update the Overall Hospital Quality Star Ratings for October 2017, as previously scheduled. CMS decided not to proceed with the October update to continue its examination of potential changes to the Star Rating methodology based on public feedback. The Star Ratings released in December 2016 will remain on Hospital Compare until the next update.

NRC Health will continue to provide updates to you as CMS makes updates available.

### **HCAHPS Citation:**

<http://www.hcahpsonline.org> Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Baltimore, MD. September 18, 2017.

<https://www.qualitynet.org> Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Baltimore, MD. September 18, 2017.

### **HCAHPS website:**

<http://www.hcahpsonline.org>

## CAHPS Hospice

### **Reminder: CAHPS Hospice Participation Exemption for Size**

As a reminder, the Participation Exemption for Size Form for the calendar year (CY) 2017 CAHPS Hospice Survey data collection and reporting requirements is available to complete and submit on the CAHPS Hospice Survey [website](#). If you are a Hospice that served **fewer** than 50 survey-eligible decedents/caregivers in CY 2016 (January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016) you are eligible to apply for an exemption from participation in the CAHPS Hospice Survey for CY 2017.

[Click here](#) to access the Participation Exemption for Size Form. The form will be available to complete and submit online until **December 31, 2017**.

Please note, exemptions on the basis of size are active for one year **only**. If you continue to meet the eligibility requirements for this exemption in subsequent years, you will need to complete the exemption request each year.

**CAHPS Hospice Citation:**

<http://www.hospicecahpssurvey.org/en/> Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Baltimore, MD. September 16, 2017.

**CAHPS Hospice website:**

<http://www.hospicecahpssurvey.org/en/>



***ICH CAHPS Fielding Timeline***

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>
Sampling Window	4/1/2017-6/30/2017
Sample Files Uploaded on ICH CAHPS Website	9/29/2017
Vendors Attest to Receipt of Sample File	10/3/2107
Mail Prenotification Letters	10/20/2017
Mail 1 <sup>st</sup> Questionnaire/Begin Telephone Data Collection	11/3/2017
Mail 2 <sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire/Begin Phone Follow-up (Mixed Mode)	12/1/2017
Data Collection Ends	1/12/2018
Vendors Clean/Process Final Data and Construct XML File	1/13/2018-1/30/2018
Deadline for Submitting XML Data File to ICH Data Center	1/31/2018

***Delay in Providing Sample Files for 2017 ICH CAHPS Fall Survey***

Due to a problem with the CROWNWEB files, there will be a delay in providing sample files to survey vendors. As per the Data Collection Schedule for the 2017 ICH CAHPS Fall Survey, the ICH CAHPS Coordination Team was scheduled to upload the sample files on September 29, 2017. CMS and the Coordination Team expect the issue to be resolved soon. NRC Health will notify clients when a new date has been provided by the Coordination Team.

Please reach out to the NRC Health Corporate Compliance team at [compliance@nrchealth.com](mailto:compliance@nrchealth.com) with any questions.

## **ICH CAHPS Questions & Answers**

In May and June 2017 the ICH CAHPS Coordination Team conducted site visits with several ICH CAHPS Survey vendors, including NRC Health. During these site visits, survey vendors were able to ask questions related to the ICH CAHPS Survey. A few of the questions asked during the site visits and the corresponding answers from the ICH CAHPS Coordination Team are provided below for your reference:

1. Is CMS considering administering the ICH CAHPS Survey by web/Internet?  
*A. At this time, CMS does not have any plans to administer the survey by web/Internet*
2. Is CMS considering allowing proxy respondents on the ICH CAHPS Survey?  
*A. CMS is currently reviewing this request. The Coordination Team will alert ICH CAHPS Survey vendors via email and post an announcement on the ICH CAHPS website if the current policy regarding using proxy respondents changes.*
3. Is CMS considering shortening the length of the ICH CAHPS Survey questionnaire?  
*A. Within the next few months CMS and the Coordination Team will be conducting some analyses to determine which, if any, of the core CAHPS® and noncore survey items are possible candidates for removal from the survey.*
4. Is CMS considering administering the ICH CAHPS Survey in the future as an annual survey?  
*A. CMS is taking this into consideration along with other methods to reduce respondent burden, such as shortening the survey. The Coordination Team will alert survey vendors if the current survey design and periodicity changes in the future.*

If you have additional questions regarding the ICH CAHPS Survey, please feel free to reach out to your Account Manager or the NRC Health Compliance Team at [compliance@nrchealth.com](mailto:compliance@nrchealth.com) and we would be happy to submit additional questions to the ICH CAHPS Coordination Team on your behalf.

### **ICH CAHPS Citation:**

<https://ichcahps.org/Home.aspx> Centers for Medicare & Medicaid, Baltimore, MD. September 16, 2017.

### **ICH CAHPS website:**

<https://ichcahps.org/>



# OAS CAHPS

## ***OAS CAHPS Survey Vendor Authorization***

Remember to authorize NRC Health as your OAS CAHPS survey vendor prior to the Quarter 2, 2017 Submission deadline of **October 11, 2017**.

## ***CMS Proposes to Postpone OAS CAHPS Mandate***

In the Proposed Rule for CY 2018, published on July 20, 2017, CMS proposed to delay the date of a national mandate for OAS CAHPS until further rulemaking. A national mandate is currently set to begin with 2018 data collection. If the delay is approved in the Final Rule (to be published in November 2017), OAS CAHPS would continue with the voluntary reporting throughout 2018. The OAS CAHPS survey remains the national standard of measurement for hospital outpatient departments and ambulatory surgery centers.

If you are currently in the process of transitioning or are planning a future transition to the OAS CAHPS survey, this remains NRC Health's recommendation. NRC Health will continue to monitor this topic and keep you updated with regard to a mandated final decision for OAS CAHPS.

To view the full announcement from the OAS CAHPS Coordination Team, please [click here](#).

### **OAS CAHPS Citation**

<https://oascahps.org/> Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Baltimore, MD. September 22, 2017.

### **OAS CAHPS website:**

<https://oascahps.org/>



# CAHPS for ACO



## **CAHPS for ACO Fielding Timeline**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>
Mail out pre-notification letters	11/8/2017-11/9/2017
Open customer support toll-free line	11/9/2017
Mail out first survey with cover letter	11/15/2017-11/16/2017
Mail out second survey with cover letter	12/12/2017-12/13/2017
Initiate CATI follow-up (first attempt <u>must</u> occur during this time)	1/4/2018-1/11/2018
Submit interim data	1/9/2018-1/11/2018
Conduct additional CATI follow-up	1/12/2018-2/1/2018
Complete the phone follow-up sequence	2/1/2018
Cutoff date for returned mail surveys	2/1/2018
Close customer support toll-free line	2/1/2018
Submit final data to CMS	2/6/2018-2/8/2018



## **CAHPS for ACO Update File Request**

As in past years, NRC Health is requesting an update data file from healthcare organizations participating in CAHPS for ACO. While not required, NRC Health highly recommends submitting an update file to ensure we have the most accurate information to match against the data file we will receive from CMS.

NRC Health would like to have the update data file by **October 7, 2017**. This file should contain ALL beneficiaries and must be uploaded via the NRC Health Secure DataExchange or your client SFTP site.

Please reach out to your Account Manager or the NRC Health Compliance Team ([compliance@nrchealth.com](mailto:compliance@nrchealth.com)) with any questions.

### **CAHPS for ACO Citation**

<http://acocahps.cms.gov/> Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Baltimore, MD. September 16, 2017.

### **CAHPS for ACO website:**

<http://acocahps.cms.gov/>

# CAHPS for MIPS



## **CAHPS for MIPS Fielding Timeline**

Activity	Date
Mail out pre-notification letter	11/8/2017-11/9/2017
Open customer support toll-free line	11/9/2017
Mail out first survey with cover letter	11/15/2017-11/16/2017
Mail out second survey with cover letter	12/12/2017-12/13/2017
Initiate CATI follow-up (first attempt <u>must</u> occur during this time)	1/4/2018-1/11/2018
Submit interim data	1/9/2018-1/11/2018
Conduct additional CATI follow-up	1/12/2018-2/1/2018
Complete the phone follow-up sequence	2/1/2018
Cutoff date for returned mail surveys	2/1/2018
Close customer support toll-free line	2/1/2018
Submit final data to CMS	2/6/2018-2/8/2018



## **CAHPS for MIPS Update File Request**

As in past years, NRC Health is requesting an update data file from healthcare organizations participating in CAHPS for MIPS. While not required, NRC Health highly recommends submitting an update file to ensure we have the most accurate information to match against the data file we will receive from CMS.

NRC Health would like to have the update data file by **October 7, 2017**. This file should contain ALL beneficiaries and must be uploaded via the NRC Health Secure DataExchange or your client SFTP site.

Please reach out to your Account Manager or the NRC Health Compliance Team ([compliance@nrchealth.com](mailto:compliance@nrchealth.com)) with any questions.

### **CAHPS for MIPS Citation:**

<https://qpp.cms.gov/> Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Baltimore, MD. September 16, 2017.



# External Submission Deadlines

	Q2 2017 Discharges	Q3 2017 Discharges	Q4 2017 Discharges
<b>HCAHPS</b>	10/4/2017	1/3/2018	4/4/2018
<b>HHCAHPS</b>	10/19/2107	1/18/2018	4/19/2018
<b>CAHPS Hospice</b>	11/8/2017	2/14/2108	5/9/2018
<b>OAS CAHPS</b>	10/11/2017	1/10/2018	4/11/2018
<b>ICH CAHPS</b>		1/31/2018 (Spring 2017)	
<b>ACO CAHPS</b>	2/8/2018*		
<b>CAHPS for MIPS</b>	2/8/2018*		

\*Tentative deadline



If you have any questions regarding the information included in this edition of the CAHPS Insider, please email NRC Health CAHPS Compliance at [compliance@nrchealth.com](mailto:compliance@nrchealth.com).