



## HCAHPS Essentials

### April 2009

#### **HCAHPS News**

The June 2009 Hospital Compare Preview Reports for the Hospital Quality Alliance (HQA) and Reporting Hospital Quality Data for Annual Payment Update (RHQDAPU) initiatives are now available on My QualityNet to participating providers and Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs).

The HQA Preview Reports will be available from April 10, 2009 through May 9, 2009. (*To access the reports, you must be registered as a My QualityNet user and have been assigned the QIO Clinical Data Warehouse Feedback Report role.*) The data that appear in the Preview Reports will be reported on [Hospital Compare](#), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Web site for Medicare beneficiaries and the general public, in June 2009.

#### **HCAHPS Alert**

In the February issue of Random Samples, HealthStream Research alerted you to the [new CMS guidelines for HCAHPS communication](#). Hospitals (and survey vendors) are **not** allowed to do any of the following:

- Ask any HCAHPS questions of patients prior to administration of the survey after discharge
- Attempt to influence or encourage patients to answer HCAHPS questions in a particular way
- Imply that the hospital (or any of its employees or agents) will be rewarded for positive feedback from patients by asking patients to choose certain types of responses
- Indicate that the hospital is hoping for a given response, such as a 10, *Definitely Yes*, or *Always*
- Ask patients to explain why they did not rate a hospital with the most favorable rating
- Offer incentives of any kind for participation in the survey

Soon after CMS released the above list, they provided additional guidelines:

- Inpatients must not be given *any* survey during their hospital stay or at the time of discharge.
- The HCAHPS survey must be administered prior to any other inpatient survey.
- The HCAHPS survey sample must be drawn prior to the administration of any other hospital inpatient survey. *Reminder: All discharged hospital inpatients who are eligible for the HCAHPS survey must be included in the HCAHPS sample frame.*
- Patients who were not randomly selected into the HCAHPS sample become eligible to receive a separate inpatient survey at any time after the HCAHPS sample has been drawn.

HealthStream Research is communicating almost daily with CMS, on behalf of clients and non-clients alike, in an effort to determine not only what *isn't* allowed, but what *is* allowed. If you are concerned that your service recovery policies, discharge processes, survey promotion strategies, or any other type of patient evaluation/interaction are not in compliance with the new CMS guidelines, please send an email to [researchinfo@healthstream.com](mailto:researchinfo@healthstream.com) describing your situation and our HCAHPS experts will contact CMS on your (anonymous) behalf.

## **Important Updates**

- HealthStream Research has successfully completed the submission of Q4 2008 data to CMS for all clients.
- CMS has posted the HCAHPS Quality Assurance Guidelines Summary of Key Changes and Clarifications in V4.0 document. This document is posted on the [Quality Assurance page](#).
- All Q3 data has been submitted to [QualityNet](#). Hospitals are encouraged to sign into their QNet account and review their data.
- The update to [HospitalCompare](#) (for Q3/07 – Q2/08 data) is scheduled for March 26, 2009. Hospitals will then receive and be able to view their preview reports of the information that is to be posted. IPPS hospitals may NOT suppress this information; however, if they choose, CAH (critical access hospitals) may continue to suppress.
- Reminder: Calls to patients must be initiated no later than 42 days post discharge. In order to meet that, HealthStream must receive timely sample loads to keep hospitals in compliance.

## **Upcoming Data Submission Deadlines**

2009 deadlines for HCAHPS data submission are as follows:

- **July 8, 2009** is the data submission deadline for patients discharged in January, February and March 2009. March 2009 Dry Run data also must be submitted by this date.
- **October 14, 2009** is the data submission deadline for patients discharged in April, May and June 2009. June 2009 Dry Run data also must be submitted by this date.

### **For HCAHPS questions or assistance at HealthStream Research:**

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### **For questions or assistance at Quality Net Exchange:**

Quality Net Exchange at [qnet-support@ifmc.sdps.org](mailto:qnet-support@ifmc.sdps.org)

1-866-288-8912

### **Official HCAHPS Website for content, announcements, updates, & reminders:**

<http://www.hcahponline.org/>