

HCAHPS Essentials: August 2009

September 2009 Preview Period Has Ended

The September 2009 Hospital Compare Preview Reports for the Hospital Quality Alliance (HQA) and Reporting Hospital Quality Data for Annual Payment Update (RHQDAPU) initiatives has come to a close. The data that appeared in the Preview Reports will be reported on [Hospital Compare](#) in September 2009.

HealthStream to Become Certified Home Health Care CAHPS Survey Vendor

The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) Home Health Care Survey, hereafter referred to as the "Home Health Care CAHPS Survey" is designed to measure the experiences of people receiving home health care from Medicare-certified home health agencies. The Home Health Care CAHPS Survey will be conducted for home health agencies by approved Home Health Care CAHPS Survey vendors.

The National Implementation of the Home Health Care CAHPS Survey with Medicare-certified home health care agencies will begin in 2009 with home health agencies that wish to voluntarily participate in the survey. Home health agencies that participate in the national implementation will need to contract with an approved survey vendor to conduct the Home Health Care CAHPS Survey. Approved survey vendors will conduct the Home Health Care CAHPS Survey on an ongoing basis and submit data on a quarterly basis. Home Health Care CAHPS Survey results will be publicly reported on [Home Health Compare](#) once an agency has four quarters of data.

HealthStream Research is scheduled to participate in the August 17-18, 2009 CMS training for vendors on the new Home Health Care CAHPS Survey. HealthStream Research has already completed all required applications to become a certified Home Health vendor.

HealthStream Research will begin Home Health data collection in October 2009. CMS is seeking hospitals to participate in modality testing. Please contact HealthStream Research at researchinfo@healthstream.com (or contact your Client Services Manager) if you are interested in participating in the modality testing.

HCAHPS Alert

In the April issue of Random Samples, HealthStream Research was the first HCAHPS vendor to alert hospitals to the [new CMS guidelines for HCAHPS communication](#). HealthStream Research's CAHPS experts constantly communicated concerns from our clients about the new guidelines to CMS, and after much discussion and feedback, a revised set of guidelines was issued in a May 2009 bulletin. The updated guidelines in the "2009-01 Revised" bulletin state that patient sample pulled for the HCAHPS survey cannot be included in a second survey. From the CMS Bulletin:

- The HCAHPS survey should be administered prior to any other inpatient survey.
- The HCAHPS survey sample must be drawn prior to 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 survey at any time *after the HCAHPS sample has been drawn*.

Therefore, the only inpatient records that are eligible for a non-HCAHPS survey are patients not pulled in the HCAHPS survey sample. Even though a patient record pulled for the HCAHPS survey may not result in a completed HCAHPS survey, that patient is no longer eligible for inclusion in additional survey samples, regardless of the sample disposition. For hospitals that seek to conduct additional inpatient surveys, the following are several issues that should be considered:

- It is possible that HealthStream Research is using all or most patient records to meet target quotas, which would limit the number of records that could be eligible for a second survey.
- The remaining sample may not be representative of the entire hospital population. For example, if 100% of the sample is used for a single unit or multiple units, the client would not have any additional patients to survey for those units.
- The second survey would be delayed until the sample is pulled, processed and the list of those sampled are returned to the customer.

If you still have any future concerns that your service recovery policies, discharge processes, survey promotion strategies, or any other type of patient evaluation/interaction may not in compliance with the new CMS guidelines, please send an email to researchinfo@healthstream.com describing your situation and our HCAHPS experts will contact CMS on your (anonymous) behalf.

Upcoming Data Submission Deadlines

2009 and 2010 deadlines for HCAHPS data submission are as follows:

- **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.
- **January 13, 2010** is the data submission deadline for patients discharged in July, August and September 2009. September 2009 Dry Run data also must be submitted by this date.
- **April 14, 2010** is the data submission deadline for patients discharged in October, November and December 2009. December 2009 Dry Run data also must be submitted by this date.
- **July 14, 2010** is the data submission deadline for patients discharged in January, February and March 2010. March 2010 Dry Run data also must be submitted by this date.
- **October 13, 2010** is the data submission deadline for patients discharged in April, May and June 2010. June 2010 Dry Run data also must be submitted by this date.

For HCAHPS questions or assistance at HealthStream Research:

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