



HCAHPS Essentials: May 2009

HCAHPS Alert

In the April issue of Random Samples, HealthStream Research alerted you to the [new CMS guidelines for HCAHPS communication](#). HealthStream Research's HCAHPS experts have been 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.

CMS is still in the process of defining what is allowed, but they shared a powerful statement with HealthStream Research: **For the time being, treat everything as status quo.** Do not worry (for now) if 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. CMS suggests that hospitals refrain from *starting* any new programs or policies that could be impacted by the new guidelines.

HealthStream Research continues to communicate with CMS on this issue. Once CMS clearly explains how the new policies can (or cannot) coexist with your own communication policies, HealthStream Research will rapidly communicate this to you.

If you 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.

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](#).
- 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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