



## What you need to know about the CAHPS Health Plan Survey

### What is the CAHPS Health Plan Survey?

The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) surveys ask consumers and patients to share their experiences with health care services across different settings. The CAHPS Health Plan Survey is considered the national standard for measuring and reporting standardized information on enrollees' experiences with health plans and their contracted providers.

### Why is the CAHPS Health Plan Survey important to you and your patients?

- Consumers use results to assess the performance of health plans and select the one that best meets their needs.
- Research indicates higher ratings improve patient retention and reduce malpractice risk.
- Patients' experiences with care, particularly their communication with providers, correlate with adherence to medical advice and treatment plans.
- CAHPS results are used in federal and state performance-based compensation systems.
- The Affordable Care Act mandates the measuring and reporting of patient experience.

### Why is CAHPS Health Plan Survey important for Blue Shield?

Survey results help Blue Shield identify strengths and determine opportunities for improvement. They also allow us to track our progress over time. Additionally, CAHPS scores are used in calculating the following measures:

- Medicare STAR ratings
- Accreditation score for National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA)
- Quality report cards for Office of the Patient Advocate (OPA)
- Covered California's quality rating system (QRS)

Higher ratings in these measures may translate to increased membership for Blue Shield and more patients for our contracted providers.

### How is the CAHPS Health Plan Survey administered?

CAHPS is overseen by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). Each year, a small random sample of members in commercial HMO and PPO, Quality Health Plan (QHP) HMO and PPO across all lines of business, plus Medicare, are selected to participate. There is a Medi-Cal version of the survey for adults and for children (age 17 and younger), which parents complete on their behalf. The survey is conducted each spring via mail, telephone, in-person and on the Web.

## What questions are included in the CAHPS Health Plan Survey?

All federally regulated CAHPS surveys are composed of a standardized set of questions that allow both health plans and consumers to compare results across time and across organizations. These questions are designated as “core,” and must be included for a survey to carry the CAHPS name. Examples of some of the core questions that Blue Shield monitors are:

<b>GETTING NEEDED CARE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How often was it easy to get the care, tests, or treatment you needed?</li><li>• How often did you get an appointment to see a specialist as soon as you needed?</li></ul>	<b>CARE COORDINATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How often did your personal doctor seem informed and up-to-date about the care you got from these doctors or other health providers?</li><li>• Did your personal doctor’s office follow up to ensure you got the tests you needed and the results in a timely manner?</li><li>• How often did you and your provider talk about all the prescription medicines you were taking?</li></ul>
<b>GETTING CARE QUICKLY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When you needed care right away, how often did you get care as soon as you needed?</li><li>• How often did you get an appointment for a check-up or routine care at a doctor’s office or clinic as soon as you needed?</li><li>• Saw person you came to see within 15 mins of appointment time.</li></ul>	<b>HOW WILL DOCTORS COMMUNICATE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How often did your personal doctor explain things in a way that was easy to understand?</li><li>• How often did your personal doctor listen carefully to you?</li><li>• How often did your personal doctor show respect for what you had to say?</li><li>• How often did your personal doctor spend enough time with you?</li></ul>
<b>GETTING NEEDED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How often was it easy to use your prescription drug plan to get the medicines your provider prescribed?</li></ul>	<b>HEALTH PROMOTION AND EDUCATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Did you and a doctor or other health provider talk about specific things you can do to prevent illness?</li></ul>
<b>ANNUAL FLU VACCINE</b> <p>Have you had either a flu shot or flu spray?</p>	<b>OVERALL RATING</b> <p>On a scale of 0 to 10, how would you rate each of these: 1) your health plan, 2) your health care, 3) your personal doctor, 4) your specialist.</p>

## How can you learn more?

To learn more about the CAHPS program, please visit the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality’s webpage at [ahrq.gov/cahps](http://ahrq.gov/cahps).