



CAHPS for MIPS Web Mode Field Test

Background

The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) for the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) Survey measures 10 key domains of patients' experience of care with a group, virtual group, subgroup, or APM Entity, including Medicare Shared Savings Program Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs). These domains are called Summary Survey Measures (SSMs) and include:

1. Getting timely care, appointments and information
2. How well your providers communicate
3. Patient's rating of provider
4. Access to specialists
5. Health promotion and education
6. Shared decision-making
7. Health status and functional status
8. Courteous and helpful office staff
9. Care coordination
10. Stewardship of patient resources

The CAHPS for MIPS Survey is an annual survey and data is collected using a mail-phone survey administration protocol:

- Patients receive a pre-notification letter
- Patients may receive up to 2 mailings of a paper survey
- Patients who don't respond by mail may receive up to 6 phone attempts to administer the survey by phone

Declining response rates in annual federal surveys, including the CAHPS for MIPS Survey, is an increasing challenge for health policy administrators and researchers.¹ CMS tested whether the administration of a web-based survey mode of the CAHPS for MIPS Survey would improve the survey response rate.

About the Field Test

During March through May 2023, CMS conducted a field test of web administration of the CAHPS for MIPS Survey using a "web first" survey administration protocol:

- Web was the initial mode of survey administration
- Patients who didn't respond by web received up to 2 mailings of the paper survey

¹ [Declining Response Rates in Federal Surveys: Trends and Implications \(PDF, 782KB\)](#)

- Patients who didn't respond by web or mail received up to 6 phone attempts to administer the survey by phone

The field test was conducted with a random sample of 8,613 Medicare fee-for-service patients assigned to 20 Medicare Shared Savings Program ACOs, or about 430 cases per ACO. Sampled patients met all of the eligibility requirements for the CAHPS for MIPS Survey, and the sample excluded patients known to be deceased or residing in institutional settings.² All data collection was conducted in English.

The goals of the field test were to assess the feasibility of matching email addresses provided by ACOs to a random sample of patients and to test for any effect of web administration of the survey on the characteristics of survey respondents and the scores generated by the survey.

Survey Administration

The field test was administered during an 87-day data collection period, similar to the 2022 CAHPS for MIPS Survey, using the contact schedule indicated in Table 1. Data collection was conducted by a CMS contractor familiar with the CAHPS for MIPS Survey administration procedures. For the field test, the CAHPS for MIPS Survey pre-notification letter was modified to include the URL for the web survey, and a PIN code that was unique to each patient in the sample. The pre-notification letter was followed by a personalized invitation to complete the survey via the web. The invitation was sent via email to sampled patients matched to an email address provided by their ACO and via a first-class postage letter to patients without an email address. Patients with an email address received one reminder email to complete the survey by web. Patients who didn't complete the web-based survey received up to 2 mailings of the paper survey, similar to the current CAHPS for MIPS Survey procedures. Nearly 4 weeks after the second survey mailing, phone administration of the survey was initiated. Table 1 shows the contact schedule for the web mode field test of the CAHPS for MIPS Survey compared to the contact schedule of the 2022 CAHPS for MIPS Survey.

Table 1. Contact Schedule

Contact Event	Field Test	2022 CAHPS for MIPS
Pre-notification letter mailed	Day 1	Day 1
Web invitation emailed/mailed	Day 4	N/A
Web reminder emailed	Day 8	N/A
W1 survey mailed	Day 9	Day 8
W2 survey mailed	Day 29	Day 29
Outbound phone interviews initiated	Day 53	Day 53
Close of data collection	Day 87	Day 87

² The definitions of institutional settings used for CAHPS for MIPS Survey eligibility is on page 38 of the [CAHPS for MIPS Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines, Version 2023 \(PDF, 2MB\)](#).

Results of the Web Mode Field Test

All participating ACOs provided email address data for matching against the sample of patients drawn by CMS. CMS' contractor matched an email address for 38% of the sampled patients. During data collection, 3.5% of the email addresses were identified as undeliverable or incorrect. The field test resulted in a response rate of 43%, with 17% of the completed surveys returned by the web, 73% by the mail, and 10% by phone. In comparison, the 2022 CAHPS for MIPS Survey achieved a response rate of 28%, with 93% of surveys returned by the mail and 7% by phone.

Table 2. Response Rates

Survey	Total Response	Web Response	Mail Response	Phone Response
Field Test Survey	43%	17%	73%	10%
2022 CAHPS for MIPS Survey	28%	N/A	93%	7%

Note: Total response rates are for the 20 ACOs participating in both the web mode field test and the 2022 CAHPS for MIPS Survey

CMS compared the results of the web-mail-phone administration of the field test to the results of the mail-phone administration of the 2022 CAHPS for MIPS Survey for the same ACOs and found:

- Adding the web improved the overall survey response rate and increased participation among Hispanic or Latino patients
- No meaningful difference in patterns of response to CAHPS for MIPS Survey items
- No meaningful differences in the item-level missing data

These findings indicate that adding the web to the existing CAHPS for MIPS Survey mail-phone administration protocol is likely to increase the overall survey response rate. Rates of response have been declining over time and adding an additional mode is a way to address the decreasing rates. Additionally, the findings indicate that the addition of the web doesn't change how patients respond to the survey. CAHPS for MIPS Survey data collected using web-mail-phone administration is comparable to the data collected using mail-phone administration.