

The Consumer Assessment of Health Plans (CAHPS) program is an initiative that produces standardized survey tools for each health care setting. These surveys are used to evaluate consumers' experiences with the quality of care and service they receive. The CAHPS surveys are developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and used by CMS for public reporting.

AHCA has long advocated for the voice of the consumer as the driver of results-oriented performance improvement, transparency, and informed decision-making in long term care. In fact, AHCA and the Gallup Organization pioneered some of the first customer assessment surveys for long term care in early 1990's. As these types of tools have evolved, AHCA has served as a sounding board for a number of leading private and public research organizations.

Customer Surveys are valuable for gathering feedback, in a standardized way, from those that receive our care and services. To date more than 5,000 AHCA members, and many other long term care providers, are using tools that are both valid and reliable. For example, the My InnerView, 2009 national survey, based on the responses of 233,300 residents and their families, showed that 86% rated their facility as being good to excellent.

Recently, the AHRQ completed development of two CAHPS surveys for nursing home residents and one for their families. AHRQ is currently in development on a CAHPS survey for the discharged short stay resident. AHCA supports the use of standardized surveys for our customers. We do have concerns about the datedness of the CAHPS survey questions and how they can be effectively implemented in the nation's 16,000 nursing homes that serve more than 1 million residents and families.

Concerns with the CAHPS Long Stay Resident Instrument

- The survey is very long. It has 50 questions and requires significant effort for residents to complete.
- The survey is designed to be administered by trained third- party interviewers. This presents challenges in the availability of an adequate pool of interviewers, interviewer bias, and the increased costs associated with conducting personal interviews; important factors for implement that must be addressed.
- The questions on the survey need to be updated to include questions on person-centered care. This is an essential component of the quality life that is embodied in the rapidly growing culture change movement.

Concerns with the CAHPS Family Member Instrument

- This survey allows the family members to respond to the survey even if they have only visited the resident once in a six month period.
- The questions on the survey need to be updated to include questions on person-centered care. This is an essential component of the quality life that is embodied in the rapidly growing culture change movement.

Concern with the 2007 Draft CAHPS Nursing Home Discharged Resident Instrument

- The questions need to be updated to include the needs of short stay residents, including the discharge process, participation in the care planning, therapy and rehabilitation, and response to individual preferences.
- The survey is very long, 50 questions, and requires significant time to complete as well as limiting the opportunity for provides to gather additional information for performance improvement.
- There is a prevalence (60%) of 0-10 point response scales which encourage lower ratings and are not evident in the Hospital or Home Health CAHPS.