

# CAHPS for ACOs Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines V4

## Summary of Updates and Emphasis

This document is a reference tool that highlights the major changes from the *CAHPS for ACOs Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines V3 to V4*. This document is not a substitute for reviewing the *CAHPS for ACOs Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines V4* in its entirety. The *CAHPS for ACOs Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines V4* manual is effective upon its release in July 2016. General format and minor wording revisions have occurred throughout the manual and are not included in this change matrix. Please contact CAHPS for ACOs Survey Technical Assistance for any specific questions.

Section of the QAG V4	Summary of Key Changes in V4
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ V3 changed to V4</li> <li>○ Revised dates as necessary, i.e., 2015 to 2016</li> <li>○ Updated quality reporting period 2015 to 2016</li> <li>○ Added information about Next Generation ACOs as needed</li> <li>○ Replaced “Original Medicare beneficiaries” with “fee-for-service Medicare beneficiaries” throughout</li> <li>○ Updated vendor authorization process from submitting a vendor authorization form to completing web-based survey vendor authorization tool</li> <li>○ Relabeled appendices throughout due to removal of Vendor Authorization Form (previously Appendix B)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>I. Reader’s Guide</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>
<b>II. Introduction and Overview</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added information about Next Generation ACOs</li> <li>○ Removed <i>Table 1. Contents of ACO-9</i></li> <li>○ Removed <i>Table 2. Contents of ACO-12</i></li> <li>○ Deleted section <i>Administration of the CAHPS for ACOs Survey</i></li> <li>○ Deleted section <i>Public Reporting and Use of the CAHPS for ACOs Survey Data</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>III. Program Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added the bullet, “Select from one of two survey versions (ACO-9 or ACO-12)” in <i>ACO Roles and Responsibilities</i></li> <li>○ Added requirement for vendors to provide information on how the sample and/or survey data are transferred between subcontractor and survey vendor, if applicable, in <i>Develop Survey Vendor CAHPS for ACOs Survey Quality Assurance Plan</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>IV. Technical Assistance and Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>

# CAHPS for ACOs Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines V4

## Summary of Updates and Emphasis

Section of the QAG V4	Summary of Key Changes in V4
<b>V. Sampling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added “Where possible, CMS will also provide a beneficiary phone number as of October 2016” under <i>Sample Preparation</i></li> <li>○ Updated row ACO_ID in the Sample File table to include the ACO ID for Next Generation ACOs</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clarified that Pioneer and Next Generation ACO IDs are a 4-column alpha numeric identifier</li> <li>○ Clarified that “the random sample for each ACO has two strata: higher users of care, and those who are not high users of care” in <i>Sample Selection and Eligibility Criteria</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>VI. Data Collection Protocol</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated the Data Collection Schedule with new dates</li> <li>○ Added an additional option for administering the survey in one of the optional languages                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “In place of an individual insert, a language specific note may be placed at the bottom of the first survey mailing cover letter providing beneficiaries with instructions for requesting a survey in that language. This option can be exercised if only one non-English survey language is being offered by the ACO.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Added text that survey vendors must make all attempts to process any returned surveys to be included in the interim data submission file</li> <li>○ Added a note that if additional numbers are dialed (after the original number is determined to be disconnected, non-working or a wrong number), each additional number may receive up to six call attempts</li> <li>○ Added approved use of neutral acknowledgement words by interviewers during the phone interview</li> <li>○ Added text indicating the survey status section of the data record layout must include the procedures used to administer the survey in the optional languages</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clarified that survey vendors may use their own Do Not Survey list and specified a retention period of 3 years for the Do Not Survey list</li> <li>○ Clarified that any mail surveys received after the cutoff date should also be stored in a secure and environmentally controlled location for a minimum of three years</li> <li>○ Added verbiage that it is strongly recommended that recipients of the seeded mailing be CAHPS for ACOs Survey vendor staff at an address other than the vendor’s business address</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## CAHPS for ACOs Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines V4

### Summary of Updates and Emphasis

Section of the QAG V4	Summary of Key Changes in V4
<b>VII. Data Coding and Data Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated MODE for data submission to be coded “8 – Not Applicable” for beneficiary records where no mail survey was returned and no survey items were collected by phone</li> <li>○ Updated references of eight SSMs to nine SSMs regarding discussion of determining survey completeness in <i>Survey Completion Guidelines</i> section. Specifically, to determine if a survey is complete or partially complete, at least one response item from the nine, instead of eight, SSMs must be answered. To determine if a survey is blank or incomplete, no response items from the nine, instead of eight, SSMs may be answered. These updates have also been made to the Final Survey Disposition Codes Table.</li> <li>○ Revised code 33 criteria from “No response collected either by mail or by phone when there is no indication of bad address or bad phone number” to “No response collected either by mail or by phone when there is no indication of bad address <u>and</u> bad phone number”</li> <li>○ Revised code 35 description and criteria from “Unable to obtain a viable address and/or phone number” to ” Unable to obtain a viable address <u>and</u> phone number”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added reference to Symantec</li> <li>○ Added link, <a href="http://buy.symantec.com/estore/clp/productdetails/pk/file-share-encryption">http://buy.symantec.com/estore/clp/productdetails/pk/file-share-encryption</a>, to purchase PGP File share license</li> <li>○ Specified mail and phone follow-up after receipt of a blank or incomplete survey <i>by mail</i> must start “from scratch”</li> <li>○ Revised the Final Survey Disposition Codes Table as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Added “Appropriately skipped items don’t count as a response” to the Criteria column of Partially Completed Survey Disposition</li> <li>▪ Revised code 33 criteria from “No response collected either by mail or by phone when there is no indication of bad address or bad phone number” to “No response collected either by mail or by phone when there is no indication of bad address <u>and</u> bad phone number”</li> <li>▪ Revised code 35 description and criteria from “Unable to obtain a viable address and/or phone number” to ” Unable to obtain a viable address <u>and</u> phone number”</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>VIII. Data Submission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Revised vendor authorization process to reflect web-based vendor authorization process</li> <li>○ Updated the survey file submission naming convention, description bullets and example</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added a note about the timeframe for the final data submission</li> <li>○ Added “The data administrator and backup data administrator will be given read and write access to the ACO Data Warehouse. The project manager will be given read-only access to the ACO Data Warehouse”</li> <li>○ Added the RAND Corporation Server email address (<a href="mailto:RANDManagedFileXferSvc@rand.org">RANDManagedFileXferSvc@rand.org</a>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## CAHPS for ACOs Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines V4 Summary of Updates and Emphasis

Section of the QAG V4	Summary of Key Changes in V4
<b>IX. Data Analysis and Public Reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated survey results for the 2016 quality reporting period will be available to ACOs by Fall 2017</li> <li>○ Added “CAHPS for ACOs Survey data for seven of the eight scored SSMs are reported on the Physician Compare website.”</li> <li>○ Deleted the following from the <i>Reporting of CAHPS Data to ACOs</i> section: “Original Medicare beneficiaries within the organization’s geographic service area for items that overlap the Medicare CAHPS FFS Survey” as being compared to the average scores from all participating ACOs</li> <li>○ Reworded the paragraph about scoring of SSMs under the <i>Reporting of CAHPS Data to ACOs</i> section</li> <li>○ Deleted links to 2014 benchmarking documents</li> <li>○ Deleted “For items that overlap with FFS CAHPS, the report provides average FFS CAHPS scores in an organization’s geographic service area.”</li> <li>○ Added new content about ACO quality improvement points and a link to the 2016 benchmarking document under the <i>Scoring and Benchmarks</i> section</li> <li>○ Deleted <i>Defining Geographic Service Areas</i> section</li> <li>○ Added paragraph about appending data to the sample or survey data</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Revised sub-header from <i>Use of Summary Survey Measures</i> to <i>Why We Use SSMs</i></li> <li>○ Specified any SSM with either low or very low reliability is flagged in the data presented to <a href="http://data.cms.gov">data.cms.gov</a></li> <li>○ Revised sub-header from <i>Case-Mix Adjustment and Weighting</i> to <i>Weighting and Case-Mix Adjustment</i></li> <li>○ Revised the paragraph under <i>Weighting and Case-Mix Adjustment</i> so weighting information is presented first, followed by case-mix adjustment details</li> <li>○ Revised the second paragraph of the <i>Scoring and Benchmarks</i> section to note that two SSMs (Health Status and Functional Status and Stewardship of Patient Resources) are currently pay for reporting</li> <li>○ Clarified that CMS compares an organization’s 0-100 case-mix adjusted score in each SSM to a set of benchmarks</li> <li>○ Specified that all reports provided to the ACOs must include a statement on <i>each page</i> that vendor results are unofficial and are for the ACO’s internal quality improvement purposes only</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>X. Oversight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added “<i>Note: Depending on the issues identified during the QAP and survey material review, survey vendors may be required to resubmit the QAP and the survey materials for re-review and approval. Vendors remain responsible for meeting all deadlines regardless of when the project team provides the re-review of materials outcome notification.</i>”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>XI. Discrepancy Reports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added bullets regarding submission of a Discrepancy Report under the <i>Discrepancy Report Process</i> section</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## CAHPS for ACOs Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines V4 Summary of Updates and Emphasis

Section of the QAG V4	Summary of Key Changes in V4
<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix A</b> Minimum Survey Vendor Business Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added <i>Customer Support</i> requirements</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added all CAHPS for ACOs business operations must be conducted in the United States, including subcontractor work</li> <li>○ Defined Mixed-Mode as survey administration that includes mail survey administration followed by survey administration via CATI with non-respondents</li> <li>○ Added fifth bullet in <i>Relevant Survey Experience</i> row, “Demonstrated experience with formatting a flat ASCII file utilizing a standardized data layout and submitting encrypted data to an external data warehouse”</li> <li>○ Added “<i>Note: All applicant vendors must fulfill the above requirements independent of a subcontractor’s experience</i>” to the <i>Relevant Survey Experience</i> row</li> <li>○ Clarified CAHPS experience criteria by adding “all experience is within the last 5 years”</li> <li>○ Added “at least” to the <i>Experience with Multiple Survey Languages</i> row to state, “Prior experience required in conducting survey administration in both English AND at <u>least</u> one of the following languages”</li> <li>○ Added seventh and eighth bullet to the <i>Data Security</i> row: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop procedures for identifying and handling breaches of confidential data</li> <li>▪ Data custodian must be accountable for all data security for data collection as specified in the CMS Data Use Agreement</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Appendix B</b> Survey Vendor Authorization Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deleted Form</b></li> </ul>
<b>Appendix B</b> Data Use Agreement Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>
<b>Appendix C</b> Vendor Access to ACO Data Warehouse Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated due date</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## CAHPS for ACOs Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines V4

### Summary of Updates and Emphasis

Section of the QAG V4	Summary of Key Changes in V4
<b>Appendix D</b> Model Quality Assurance Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added requirement for vendor to include the length of history used to look up previous address and phone number by the update service</li> <li>○ Added requirement to describe communication processes with subcontractor(s), if applicable</li> <li>○ Added the following documentation must be provided, if applicable:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document containing interim disposition codes with a crosswalk to final disposition codes</li> <li>▪ An annual summary outlining the results from previous survey administration quality control activities and any corrective action plan(s) implemented</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added “The QAP must be very detailed and clearly document the survey vendor’s processes in administering the CAHPS for ACOs Survey.”</li> <li>○ Added a note regarding resubmission of a QAP and/or survey materials for re-review</li> <li>○ Added a note indicating survey vendor’s QAP must detail subcontractor oversight</li> <li>○ Added additional detail under <i>Organizational Background and Structure</i>, Section C including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Describe the evaluation of training of personnel</li> <li>▪ Describe the oversight of training of any subcontractor(s) and/or temporary agency staff, if applicable</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Added content regarding the seeded mailing process</li> <li>○ Added requirement to describe how the customer support line will support any of the optional languages, if applicable</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Appendix E</b> Interviewing Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added a bullet to clarify that the use of “neutral acknowledgement words” is permitted</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added a note permitting survey vendors to indicate emphasis of text in a different manner if the CATI system does not have the capability to indicate emphasis in the preferred styles</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Appendix F</b> Frequently Asked questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added FAQs and responses:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Why did I get a letter from Walter Stone?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>You called my cell phone. Can you call back on this number [BENEFICIARY SPECIFY]?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>How was the provider chosen for my survey?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>How can I answer these questions if I only saw this provider once in the last six months?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>○ The question <i>I never visited this provider/doctor in the last six months</i>, was updated to include one response for mail survey administration and one response for telephone administration</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Revised the response for the FAQ <i>I am not able to complete this by myself. Can I have my ___ help me?</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## CAHPS for ACOs Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines V4

### Summary of Updates and Emphasis

Section of the QAG V4	Summary of Key Changes in V4
<b>Appendix G</b> Accessing the ACO Data Warehouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated several screenshots</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Appendix H</b> Sample File Record Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated description of field contents in the ACO_ID row in the table</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Appendix I</b> Survey File Record Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated description of field contents in the ACO_ID row in the table</li> <li>○ Added new row, "LANG_PROT," to indicate the mode used to deliver non-English mail surveys</li> <li>○ Updated field positions for <i>Beneficiary Response Section</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Appendix J</b> Discrepancy Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>
<b>Appendix K</b> Survey Items Applicable to All Respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>
<b>Appendix L</b> Nine Summary Survey Measures Used to Determine Survey Completeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated appendix title from <i>Eight Summary Survey Measures Used to Determine an ACO's Quality Score</i> to <i>Nine Summary Survey Measures Used to Determine Survey Completeness</i></li> <li>○ Added row <i>Courteous and Helpful Office Staff</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Added "Note: While Courteous and Helpful Office Staff SSM is used to determine survey completeness, it is not used to determine an ACO's quality score."</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Appendix M</b> ACO-9 Survey Version Required (English) ACO-12 Survey Version Required + Optional (English) Survey Cover Letters (English)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>

## CAHPS for ACOs Survey Quality Assurance Guidelines V4

### Summary of Updates and Emphasis

Section of the QAG V4	Summary of Key Changes in V4
<b>Appendix N</b> Instructions and CATI Script (English)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added instructions for resuming a telephone survey</li> <li>○ Added a bullet to clarify that the use of “neutral acknowledgement words” is permitted</li> <li>○ Added an Intro1-In and Intro2-In Script for inbound calls received during telephone survey administration</li> <li>○ Added a <i>Resume a Survey</i> Script</li> <li>○ Revised Option 11 from <i>SP IS TOO ILL</i> to <i>SP IS TOO ILL OR FRAIL/PHYSICALLY UNABLE</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Added a note permitting survey vendors to indicate emphasis of text in a different manner if the CATI system does not have the capability to indicate emphasis in the preferred styles</li> <li>○ Revised title of Intro1 Script to Intro1-Out Script</li> <li>○ Revised title of Intro2 Script to Intro2-Out Script</li> <li>○ Under Proxy3 Script, revised the Yes response to [GO TO PROXY6] instead of [GO TO INTRO2]</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Appendix O</b> Summary of Survey Measures not Used in Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No changes</b></li> </ul>