



## PROJECT SUMMARY

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# The CAHPS<sup>®</sup> Ambulatory Care Improvement Guide

### The Aim

The CAHPS Health Plan Survey and the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey are widely used by health care providers, payers, and purchasers to assess patients' experiences with ambulatory care. Many organizations share the results of these surveys both privately and publicly to inform medical leaders, quality managers, and clinicians and staff about the patients' perspective on their care and encourage improvements where needed. While health care organizations may be familiar with the process of clinical quality improvement (QI), many find the process of improving patients' experiences with care to be challenging—in part because survey results identify relative strengths and weaknesses but do not always indicate how to address those weaknesses.

The CAHPS Ambulatory Care Improvement Guide is designed to help organizations that want to enhance patient experience. The Guide helps health care providers and staff better understand—

- The kind of organizational environment that supports positive experiences,
- The steps they can take to apply established improvement methods to patient experience, and
- Ways to use the survey results along with other sources of information to identify performance problems and causes.

Users of the Guide can also find over a dozen improvement strategies organized by CAHPS survey topics, such as access to care and patient-provider communication.

### Our Approach

The CAHPS Improvement Guide was first developed in the early 2000's to support Medicare health plans that receive CAHPS Health Plan Survey scores from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Since that time, the Guide has been updated and expanded by the CAHPS team to be useful to any organization providing ambulatory care services either directly or indirectly—including health plans, medical groups, physician practices—whose performance is assessed with a CAHPS survey. The research team reviews both published and grey literature to identify both promising strategies for improving key aspects of patient experience as well as useful resources, many of which are publicly available. Over time, new strategies will be added to the Guide, and existing descriptions will be updated with current information and resources.

### Learn More

To download and read the CAHPS Ambulatory Care Improvement Guide, visit <https://cahps.ahrq.gov/quality-improvement/index.html>.



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