

Provider Information: CAHPS

What is Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS)?

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It is a standard survey of patients developed by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) to determine patient satisfaction with their healthcare. This provides the patients' perspective of the healthcare they have received. It includes the accessibility to medical services, physician, specialists and communication skills of the physician.

Sunflower participates in CAHPS satisfaction surveys annually for both the adult and child membership served. The survey results provide data that allows Sunflower the opportunity to identify strengths and where opportunities exist for improvement with regard to the health care the Sunflower members receive from network physicians and specialists, including behavioral health.

What does the CAHPS Survey ask patients about Physician Communication?

The CAHPS survey focuses on four questions that are listed below. In the last six months:

- How often did your personal doctor explain things in a way that is easy to understand?
- How often did your personal doctor listen carefully to you?
- How often did your personal doctor show respect for what you had to say?
- How often did your personal doctor spend enough time with you?

What are the benefits to effective physician communication to our members?

- Physician satisfaction
- Patient/member satisfaction
- Adherence to medical advice
- Diagnostic accuracy
- Improved health outcomes
- Malpractice reduction

Shared decision making is an area of the patient satisfaction survey that focuses on the following questions:

- Doctor/health provider talked about reasons why you might want to take a medication
- Doctor/health provider talked about reasons why you may not want to take a medication
- Doctor/health provider asked you what you thought was the best for you when starting/stopping a prescription medication



Coordination of care is another area of the patient satisfaction survey that focuses on one question:

- In the last six months, how often did your personal doctor seem informed and up-to-date about the care you got from health providers besides your personal doctor or other health providers?

Health promotion and education is an area evaluated for patient satisfaction with the following question:

- In the last six months, did your doctor or health provider talk about specific things you could do to prevent illness for yourself?

What can a physician do to improve communication to our members? ALERT is model that is intended to help physicians to improve CAHPS questions and scores:

- Always
- Listen to member/patient carefully
- Explain in an understandable way
- Respect what the member/patient says
- Time management perception

Ways to improve scores on listening carefully to the member/patient and also to improve the perception of time spent by the physician with them:

- Maintain eye contact when member/patient is talking
- Sit down, lean in, keep open and receptive body language

- Use reflective statements, paraphrases/summaries – (“what I hear you say is ...” or “let me make sure I understand ...”)
- Avoid interrupting the member/patient, multitasking, and unnecessary interruptions if possible

Ways to improve the member/patient perception about their care being thorough and appropriate:

- Explain why tests, treatments, medications or referrals are necessary
- Use simple, easy to understand wording
- Speak in a slow and clear manner and at a volume level that member/patient can understand
- Do not use medical jargon or abbreviations
- Share goals for treatment and tell what to expect in their recovery
- Explore specific barriers to their compliance with treatment, medications and follow up
- Provide patients with resources like hand-outs, brochures, diagrams, and other material to help them understand
- Check to see if they understand and are in agreement
- Ask if they have additional questions or if they need any clarification

Ways to demonstrate respect for the member/patient and what he/she has to say:

- Ask for his/her input about illness or care
- Ask about how the issue or illness is impacting daily life
- Allow them to work in collaboration with you to find a resolution or treatment plan that is agreeable to both the member/patient and the provider



Sources Cited:

Hardee, J. T., & Kasper, I. K. (2008). A Clinical Communication Strategy to Enhance Effectiveness and CAHPS Scores: The Alert Model. *The Permanente Journal*, 12(3), 70-74.

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