

## **Frequently Asked Questions [OAS CAHPS]**

### **What is OAS CAHPS?**

The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) Outpatient and Ambulatory Surgery Survey (OAS CAHPS), is a patient experience of care survey for Medicare- certified hospital outpatient departments (HOPDs) and ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs).

### **How was the survey developed?**

The survey development process followed the principles and guidelines outlined by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and its Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) Consortium in developing a patient experience of care survey. This included reviewing topic areas and surveys submitted as a result of a public call for topics and measures; reviewing existing literature; conducting focus groups with patients who had recent outpatient surgery or procedures in an HOPD or ASC; conducting cognitive interviews with patients to test their understanding and ability to answer the questions; obtaining stakeholder input on the draft survey and other issues that may impact implementation; and conducting a field test. The goal of the survey development process was to identify and include dimensions of care that patients and other consumers want or need to inform their choice of an HOPD or ASC.

### **What are the survey topics?**

The survey measures patients' experiences on topics that are important when choosing an HOPD or ASC. These topics include communication and care provided by health care providers and office staff, preparation for the surgery or procedure, post-surgical care coordination, and patient-reported outcomes.

### **What is the current status of the survey?**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and its survey contractor, RTI International, are implementing the next phase of the program which includes a mode experiment (fall of 2015) and a voluntary national reporting program (beginning in January 2016).

### **What is the mode experiment?**

The mode experiment will be conducted by RTI International to assess the effects, if any, of using different methods of data collection. The mode experiment will test mail, telephone, and mixed (i.e., mail with telephone follow-up) modes of data collection. A random, nationally representative sample of 50 HOPDs and 50 ASCs will be selected and recruited. The recruitment effort begins in April 2015; data collection is projected to begin in the fall of 2015. CMS will use the findings from the mode experiment to finalize the survey administration and analysis procedures for the voluntary national reporting program.

### **What are the benefits to participating in the mode experiment?**

1. Participation provides an opportunity to understand patients' experiences of care at HOPDs and ASCs.
2. Survey findings will identify areas for improvement before the voluntary national reporting program begins.

3. CMS will cover all of the costs of implementing the survey; RTI will prepare and mail the questionnaires and conduct the telephone interviews as well as prepare summary results.
4. At the conclusion of the study, overall de-identified frequencies of survey responses will be shared with all participating HOPDs and ASCs; aggregate results will be sent to each participating HOPD or ASC separately.
5. RTI will provide assistance with preparation of materials for governing boards or a Business Associate Agreement.

### **What is needed from HOPDs and ASCs for the mode experiment?**

Over a period of three consecutive sample months, participating HOPDs and ASCs will be requested to provide a list of patients who had an outpatient surgery/procedure in the prior month. Patients selected from each of the three months will receive either a mail, telephone, or mixed mode survey. Each data collection period, regardless of mode, will last approximately six weeks. Patients will be randomly assigned to one of the three data collection modes.

### **Are HOPDs and ASCs required by federal law to participate in the mode experiment?**

No. Participation is voluntary. However, we hope all selected HOPDs and ASCs will participate in this study so that the general population of providers that perform outpatient surgeries and procedures is accurately and fairly represented.

### **What is the voluntary national reporting program?**

CMS plans to implement a voluntary national reporting program starting in 2016. Unlike the mode experiment, participation in the program will be open to any interested Medicare- certified HOPDs and ASCs. CMS will provide guidelines for survey administration similar to those implemented on other CAHPS surveys. Additionally, CMS- approved survey vendors will administer the survey on behalf of HOPDs and ASCs and submit the data to RTI International. RTI International will analyze the data; subsequently the results will be publicly reported on a CMS website.

### **What are the benefits to participating in the voluntary national reporting program?**

1. Participating HOPDs and ASCs will be part of a program that provides valuable information to consumers about the quality of care provided nationally by HOPDs and ASCs.
2. Because participation will be open to any interested facilities, HOPDs and ASCs can compare performance against their state and the national average. Results and links to these datasets would be available for download on a CMS website such as Medicare.gov.
3. HOPDs and ASCs may add supplementary questions to the survey and can choose to replace their internal patient experience of care surveys with the OAS CAHPS survey.

### **Where can I find more information about OAS CAHPS?**

Visit the OAS CAHPS mode experiment website at <https://oascahpsmode.rti.org>

For additional information about OAS CAHPS contact [oascahps@rti.org](mailto:oascahps@rti.org) or 1-866-590-7468.