

## GETTING STARTED WITH THE OAS CAHPS SURVEY

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is pleased to announce the start of the **voluntary** national implementation phase of the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems Outpatient and Ambulatory Surgery (OAS CAHPS®) Survey in January 2016. Below are highlights about the voluntary national implementation phase:

- Participation in this next phase will be open to any interested Medicare-certified hospitals (specifically targeting the hospitals' outpatient departments, also known as HOPDs) and free-standing ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs).
- CMS will provide guidelines for administration of the survey instrument similar to those implemented on other CAHPS® surveys.
- CMS-approved survey vendors will administer the survey on behalf of HOPDs and ASCs and submit the data to the OAS CAHPS Data Center.
- January 2016 is not a deadline for starting participation; it is the initial launch for voluntary national implementation. Interested facilities can begin participating at any time after this date.
- Results will be publicly reported on a CMS website after four consecutive quarters of data are collected. CMS anticipates that the first two quarters of data would not be included in the public reports so the earliest public reporting would be in 2018. Therefore, the first publicly reported data will represent surveys from patients in sample months July 2016 through May 2017.
- The *target* minimum number of surveys for the OAS CAHPS survey is 300 completed surveys over each 12-month reporting period.

### Definitions

- An **HOPD** is a unit of a hospital whose primary focus is to perform outpatient surgeries and procedures. CMS specifically defines eligible HOPDs as units within the hospital that bill under the OPPTS (Outpatient Prospective Payment System). Additionally, outpatient-focused units that are within critical access hospitals (CAHs) are also eligible as HOPDs even though CAHs do not bill under OPPTS. There can be more than one HOPD in a hospital. Not every hospital has an HOPD.
- An **ASC** is a freestanding medical facility that performs outpatient surgeries and procedures. CMS specifically defines eligible ASCs as distinct entities that operate exclusively for the purposes of furnishing outpatient surgical services to patients. The ASC must have an agreement with CMS and meet the general conditions and requirements in accordance with 42 CFR 416 subpart B. The ASC may also have physician offices on site, but it does not have any overnight patients. Some ASCs have more than one location, typically in a geographic region.

### How to Participate

To participate in the OAS CAHPS survey, with the intention of publicly reporting data from your facility, see the steps below:

1. Register for login credentials on the OAS CAHPS website using this link: <https://oascahps.org/For-Facilities/Facility-Registration>. Monitor the website for news and updates about the OAS CAHPS Survey throughout the year.

2. Register your facility(s) using the “Click here to register your HOPD facility or your ASC facility (by CCN)” link available on your personal dashboard (under the Resource column).
3. Contract with a CMS-approved OAS CAHPS survey vendor to conduct your survey. A preliminary list of approved survey vendors has been posted on the OAS CAHPS website (<https://oascahps.org/>).
4. Authorize your contracted survey vendor to collect and submit your OAS CAHPS survey data to the OAS CAHPS Data Center. The vendor authorization page will be available on the OAS CAHPS website (<https://oascahps.org/>) in early January 2016.
5. Work with your approved vendor to determine a date each month by which the vendor will need the monthly patient information file for sampling and fielding the OAS CAHPS survey.
6. By the agreed-upon date each month, compile and deliver to the survey vendor a complete and accurate list of patients (i.e., the monthly patient information file) and information that will enable the vendor to administer the OAS CAHPS survey.
7. Avoid influencing patients in any way about how to answer the OAS CAHPS Survey. For example, facilities may not hand out any information to patients about how to answer the survey. (Please refer to the section about Communications with Patients About the OAS CAHPS Survey in Chapter III of the *Outpatient and Ambulatory Surgery CAHPS Survey Protocols and Guidelines Manual* found at <https://oascahps.org/Survey-Materials>.)
8. Review survey data submission reports from your survey vendor (<https://oascahps.org/>) to ensure that the survey vendor has submitted data to the OAS CAHPS Data Center on time and without data problems.
9. Review OAS CAHPS Survey results prior to public reporting.

### **Benefits to Participating**

- Participating HOPDs and ASCs will provide valuable information to consumers and stakeholders about the quality of outpatient care provided at their facility. The survey findings also can be used by HOPDs, ASCs, and other stakeholders for internal quality improvement and benchmarking efforts.
- 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 will be available for download on a CMS website such as Medicare.gov.
- 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; however, HOPDs and ASCs may not change the wording of the OAS CAHPS survey questions.
- The OAS CAHPS survey may be used to meet state or other regulations that require a patient satisfaction survey to be conducted regularly. Check with your state or accreditation bodies.

### **Questions About the OAS CAHPS Survey?**

We welcome questions and comments via our e-mail address at [oascahps@rti.org](mailto:oascahps@rti.org) or our toll-free number 1-866-590-7468 (please leave a message).