

Brief summary: HCAHPS

Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems

In order to provide more transparency to the consumer on hospital quality, HCAHPS was developed as a survey of the hospital experience. It was developed over several years and endorsed by a private-public alliance which included government, industry, medical and consumer participants. For example, representatives were included from the American Hospital Association, American Medical Association, AFL-CIO, AARP and CMS (Medicare and Medicaid). Surveys began in 2006.

Who is included: Generally adult inpatients with an overnight stay receiving medical, surgical or maternity care.

When they are surveyed: Patients fill out the survey mailed to them by a vendor at home after they are discharged. They are returned directly to the vendor.

Who surveys them: A specially trained vendor surveys patients, sends the hospital a report and the results directly to CMS. Although the hospital hires the vendor, it has no interaction with patients in the process.

What do the numbers mean: CMS applies a formula to make it a level playing field. For example, it will account for differences in patient mix. "Patient-mix adjustment takes these differences into account so that the survey results reported on this website are what would be expected for each hospital if all hospitals had a similar mix of patients." (*Medicare website*) Raw numbers are percentages. There are no fractional percentages, and tied hospitals are listed in order of hospital number. Results are a rolling 12 month average, about nine months delayed, and are usually refreshed quarterly.

Who participates: Almost 4,700 hospitals participate nationally. Hospitals can opt out of having results made public. In Minnesota as of the December 2014 update, 107 publicly report their results and 22 do not. ("All short-term, acute care hospitals are invited to participate." *Medicare website*)

Latest update: The latest update was posted on the CMS hospital compare website in December 2014, covering scores for the year ending December 31, 2013.

Error message: Due to an oversight by a vendor, some surveys during Q2 and Q3 2013 were printed without the answer option, "Yes, I would definitely recommend the hospital." This was a question in which Bigfork Valley had consistently scored at the top of the state. This error will affect Bigfork Valley results until the September 2015 data refresh.

Data source: <https://data.medicare.gov/Hospital-Compare/HCAHPS-Hospital/dgck-syfb>