

CAHPS Hospital Survey Podcast Series—Transcript

Updates to HCAHPS Survey Mode Adjustments, Effective January 2023

Note: The information covered in this podcast was current at the time of posting. CMS will occasionally update guidelines and calculations.

Slide 1-Updates to HCAHPS Survey Mode Adjustments, Effective January 2023

Welcome to the HCAHPS Podcast covering “Updates to HCAHPS Survey Mode Adjustments, Effective January 2023.” During this podcast, we will cover the updated mode adjustments that will be applied to HCAHPS scores beginning with quarter 1, 2023 discharge data.

Slide 2-Purpose of the HCAHPS Mode Adjustments

As a reminder, the survey mode used in HCAHPS impacts both which patients respond to the survey and how those patients respond. It is also possible that survey mode effects may change over time from both technology and usage habits.

Slide 3-Purpose of the HCAHPS Mode Adjustments, cont’d

CMS adjusts HCAHPS scores for the survey modes of Telephone Only, Mixed, and IVR. These adjustments result in scores that would be equivalent if the responses were collected in the Mail Only survey mode. As a reminder, when HCAHPS scores are adjusted for both survey mode and patient mix, this results in scores not influenced by a hospital’s mix of patients or the mode that data was collected with.

Slide 4-Updated Mode Adjustments: Background

In 2021, CMS conducted a mode experiment to update mode adjustments for the Telephone Only and Mixed modes. As a reminder, the previous mode adjustments were derived from a 2016 mode experiment conducted by CMS. Note, the mode adjustments for IVR are unchanged.

These updated mode adjustments will be applied to all HCAHPS scores beginning with January 2023 discharges. The updated adjustments can be found on HCAHPS online. Adjustments for top box, bottom box, and linear means were updated. In the following slides, we will focus on top-box survey mode adjustments.

Slide 5-2021 HCAHPS Mode Experiment

The 2021 mode experiment included a random sample of 46 hospitals from each of the 4 Census geographic regions. Over 36,000 patients were included in the experiment who were discharged between April and September 2021. Results from the experiment were used to develop updated adjustments for the HCAHPS Mail Only, Telephone Only, and Mixed modes.

Slide 6-Updated Mode Adjustments: Methods

CMS employed a regression model for each HCAHPS measure to derive survey mode adjustments for Telephone Only and Mixed modes, relative to the Mail Only reference group. Models included HCAHPS patient-mix adjusters and hospital fixed effects. The mode adjustments are coefficients from those models multiplied by negative 1. Next, we'll review the updated mode adjustments for the HCAHPS top box scores.

Slide 7-Updated Top-Box Mode Adjustments: Telephone Only Summary

As with previous mode adjustments, the Telephone Only mode responses were more positive than Mail Only for all HCAHPS measures. This means that the actual mode adjustments for Telephone are negative since patients' Telephone responses were more positive. As we'll see in the upcoming table, the size of the Telephone survey mode adjustments was sometimes larger and sometimes smaller than the 2016 adjustments. The overall net change between 2016 and 2021 Telephone adjustments was very small.

Slide 8-2016 and 2021 Survey Mode Adjustments to Telephone Only

This table shows the Telephone Only adjustments for each HCAHPS measure for both the 2016 and 2021 mode experiments. Note some measures had adjustments more negative, including Nurse Communication and Communication about Medicines. However, some adjustments were less negative in the 2021 mode experiment, including Cleanliness, Quietness, and Overall Hospital Rating. Also note that the average adjustment is the same from both mode experiments. Again, the 2021 column are the updated mode adjustments that will be employed beginning with January 2023 discharge data.

Slide 9-Updated Mode Adjustments: Mixed Mode Summary

Here, we will review the changes to the Mixed mode adjustments from the 2021 mode experiment. Mixed mode effects were sometimes more positive than Mail Only and sometimes more negative. Thus, some adjustments were negative, and some were positive. This differs from the 2016 mode experiment, where most responses for the Mixed mode were more positive than Mail Only, resulting in negative adjustments. Differences between 2016 and 2021 could be related to which patients participate in the Mixed mode and whether they respond by mail or phone within the Mixed mode protocol.

Slide 10-2016 and 2021 Survey Mode Adjustments to Mixed Mode

Here, we see that the updated Mixed mode adjustments are a combination of negative and positive adjustments relative to Mail Only, whereas the 2016 adjustments were always negative. The adjustments in the 2021 column will be employed beginning with January 2023 discharge data.

Slide 11-Updated Mode Adjustments on HCAHPS Online

This slide shows the updated HCAHPS survey mode adjustments for Top and Bottom box scores that will be used to adjust scores beginning with January 2023 discharge data. For example, a hospital using Telephone Only mode would receive a negative 5.1% adjustment for their Communication with Nurses

Top Box score. This table can be found on HCAHPS Online under the Mode and Patient-Mix Adjustment tab, within the 2021 Mode Experiment section.

Slide 12-Previous Mode Adjustments on HCAHPS Online

This slide shows the previous HCAHPS survey mode adjustments for Top and Bottom box scores that were used prior to January 2023 discharge data. This table will be archived on HCAHPS Online once adjustments are no longer used.

Slide 13-Updated Mode Adjustments: Summary

In summary, the Telephone Only adjustments continue to be negative compared to Mail Only, meaning patient responses were more positive in the Telephone mode versus the Mail mode. Differences between the 2021 and 2016 adjustments for Telephone were sometimes more negative, and sometimes less negative. Mixed mode adjustments were mostly negative compared to Mail Only. But some measures were more positive than Mail Only, however, most adjustments were small in magnitude.

Slide 14-Implementation Dates for Mode Adjustments

The updated adjustments will begin with January 2023 discharges. CMS will apply these adjustments to HCAHPS quarterly scores and will roll in one quarter at a time. Thus, some public reports, which are 4 quarters, will include scores mode adjusted with the 2021 adjustments and the 2016 adjustments.

October 2024 public reporting will include calendar year 2023 discharges, which will represent the first public report where all quarters are adjusted with the 2021 mode experiment adjustments.

Slide 15-Updated Adjustments Will Roll in One Quarter at a Time

This table shows how the updated mode adjustments will roll into the upcoming reporting periods. The January 2024 reporting period will contain one quarter adjusted with updated mode adjustments, quarter 1 2023, and three quarters with previous mode adjustments, quarters 2, 3 and 4 2022. Again, the October 2024 public report will be the first one where all four quarters have the updated mode adjustments applied. January, April, and July 2024 public reports will contain quarters with a mix of both previous and updated mode adjustments.

Slide 16-Resources

Please contact HCAHPS Technical Support for any questions you might have using the email address or telephone number displayed on this slide. Additional HCAHPS Podcasts can be found on the HCAHPS Online website using the URL shown. We hope you have found this podcast helpful. Thank you for listening to “Updates to HCAHPS Survey Mode Adjustments.”