



## Reminder: March into CAHPS Survey Season

**Effective Date:** March 4, 2026

**Health Plans Affected:** Advantage MD, Employer Health Programs (EHP), Priority Partners, US Family Health Plan (USFHP)

**Type of Change:** Member Survey

### Explanation of Change:

The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey, sent each spring, captures how patients experience care with their personal doctor. These insights help practices strengthen care quality, improve patient retention, enhance performance in incentive programs, and support health plans in offering stronger benefits.

Strong patient engagement aligns closely to better clinical outcomes, treatment adherence, chronic disease management, and long-term loyalty. Please consider the following categories of CAHPS questions and best practices.

### Getting Appointments and Care Quickly

**What CAHPS Measures:** Timeliness of urgent care, routine appointments and wait times.

#### Best Practices

- Hold same-day slots for urgent needs.
- Use effective triage to direct frail or very sick patients to immediate or alternative care (ie. phone, telehealth, urgent care).
- Offer appointments with NPs/PAs when the PCP is unavailable.
- Provide multiple scheduling options (ie. portal or after-hours line).
- Support patients through referrals and authorizations.
- If delays exceed 15 minutes, ensure staff engagement (ie. vitals, screenings or brief assessments).

### Care Coordination

**What CAHPS Measures:** Record availability, medication review, test result follow-up, communication with specialists, and help managing care across providers.

#### Best Practices

- Review charts and specialist notes before entering the exam room.
- Ask about recent specialty visits and discuss relevant findings.
- Set clear expectations for when and how test results will be delivered.
- Notify patients of normal results and invite follow-up questions.
- Promote use of the patient portal for results and communication.
- Encourage patients to bring medications or a medication log.
- Provide a clear post-visit summary with next steps.
- Ensure timely exchange of information with specialists.
- Identify high-risk patients for care management support.
- Train staff to communicate clearly with older adults about labs and follow-up.

## **Getting Needed Care**

**What CAHPS Measures:** Access to specialists and ease of obtaining needed tests and treatments.

### **Best Practices**

- Train staff to explain referral processes and timelines.
- Notify patients promptly about referral status and expiration.
- Prioritize urgent vs. routine referrals to ensure timely access.
- Use open access or auto-approval pathways when appropriate.
- Monitor specialist availability and adjust referral patterns as needed