



# ICH CAHPS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Developed jointly by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality (AHRQ), the In-Center Hemodialysis Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (ICH CAHPS®) is the first survey to focus solely on a chronic disease and the first standardized, national survey to publicly report patients' perception of dialysis care received for End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD).





## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE ICH CAHPS SURVEY?

CMS factors ICH CAHPS survey results into its ESRD Prospective Payment System (PPS) for qualifying dialysis centers. The key requirement for participation is the number of survey-eligible patients a center served during the previous calendar year. Facilities serving 30 or more eligible patients are required to administer the survey twice each year, while facilities serving fewer than 30 patients are not required to administer the survey, but can do so if they choose. Non-qualifying dialysis centers must submit the Facility Non-Participation Form annually.

**The ICH CAHPS survey is only administered to patients who meet the following eligibility criteria:**

- Are 18 years or older by the end of the sampling window
- Are alive on the last day of the sampling window
- Have received ICH care from their current facility for at least three months
- Are not receiving hospice care
- Are not residing in an institution such as a nursing home or jail

Sampling for this semi-annual survey occurs from April to June and October to December each year.

## HOW IS THE ICH CAHPS SURVEY ADMINISTERED?

1. The survey administration period for ICH CAHPS occurs twice each year.
2. CMS selects the sample of patients from designated three-month periods and transmits a comprehensive file of patient contact information to PRC at the beginning of each administration cycle.
3. PRC mails a pre-notification letter to all sampled patients, notifying them that they will receive a survey from PRC in the near future.
4. Respondents have about 10 weeks to complete the questionnaire, whether by phone or mail.
5. PRC telephone interviewers act as representatives of PRC clients, and they bring compassion, respect, and professionalism to every interaction they have with patients.
  - Because patients may be receiving treatments or feeling under the weather, accommodating their needs is a priority for interviewers.
  - To reach selected patients, interviewers may call up to 10 times.
  - Call attempts must occur on different days of the week, at different times of the day.
6. PRC also administers mail-out/mail-back surveys when facilities want to give respondents the option of completing paper surveys on their own at their convenience.
  - Selected patients will receive the questionnaire and cover letter in the mail about two weeks after the pre-notification letter.
  - A second questionnaire and cover letter will be mailed to non-respondents approximately four weeks after the first packet.
7. PRC compiles all of the results and submits the data to RTI International, in accordance with the prescribed timeline.

## IS PRC A CMS-APPROVED ICH CAHPS SURVEY VENDOR?

Yes, PRC has been granted approval as an ICH CAHPS survey vendor since the program's introduction in 2014 and is qualified to conduct the survey by mail or telephone.

## WHAT DOES THE ICH CAHPS SURVEY MEASURE?

The ICH CAHPS survey consists of 59 questions that evaluate patients' experiences in the dialysis center and gather key demographic information. The results are reported as the following six measures:

Reported Measures	
Nephrologists' Communication and Caring	6 questions
Quality of Dialysis Center Care and Operations	17 questions
Providing Information to Patients	9 questions
Rating of the Nephrologist	1 question
Rating of the Dialysis Center Staff	1 question
Rating of the Dialysis Facility	1 question

## CAN WE CUSTOMIZE THE STANDARD SURVEY TOOL TO ENCOURAGE EXCELLENCE?

Given the length of the questionnaire, facilities and vendors have to thoughtfully consider the addition of any supplemental questions. However, supplemental questions measuring performance on a five-point scale topped by "Excellent" can prove extremely valuable in predicting patient loyalty and allocating limited resources where they will have the greatest impact. Excellence also differentiates high-performing providers in the marketplace. PRC is the only research firm measuring excellence and the only survey partner offering a loyalty benchmarking database. PRC will send any supplemental, custom questions to the ICH CAHPS Project Team for approval prior to the start of the administration period, as required by CMS.

## HOW WILL WE RECEIVE THE SURVEY RESULTS?

Client dialysis centers will be able to access research results through PRC's award-winning online data management tool, PRCEasyView.com®. EasyView® enables PRC's research partners to monitor results and design custom reports to share with staff and leadership. PRC clients have fast access to data — as soon as PRC receives the completed survey, it's available for reporting.

CMS will generate formal reports after each submission cycle, and the dialysis center's ICH CAHPS Survey Administrator will be able to access the secure portion of ICHCAHPS.org, where he or she can view the submission history and a survey preview report.



## PRC Product Lines and Coaching



**Patient Experience & CAHPS**



**Employee Engagement**



**Physician Partnership Solutions**



**Consumer & Brand**



**Community Health**



**PRC  
EXCELLENCE  
ACCELERATOR**

## WILL THE RESULTS BE PUBLICLY REPORTED?

Care Compare (<https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/>) is a feature of the Medicare.gov website that consumers can use to select a dialysis center. The ICH CAHPS results are published on the Care Compare website every six months to share a rolling year of submitted data. Consumers may use this information to evaluate the elements of care most important to them before selecting a dialysis center. Each CAHPS dimension is reported as the percent of patients who provided the top-box response.

## ABOUT PRC

Since 1980, PRC has helped more than 2,200 healthcare organizations achieve their research objectives by collecting and analyzing timely, accurate, and reliable feedback from patients, employees, physicians, and the community at large. PRC's high-quality survey research, analytics tools, and coaching give voice to healthcare organizations, patients, and the community as a whole. Leading the standards for healthcare market research, PRC partners with organizations to support their efforts in becoming better places for patients to be treated, physicians to practice medicine, and employees to work.

## Achieve healthcare excellence with PRC.

## WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

To learn what PRC's data can do for you, contact us at 800-428-7455 or visit [PRCCustomResearch.com](https://www.prc-custom-research.com)



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