

CAHPS Member Satisfaction

What Satisfaction Scores Say About the Care Members are Receiving

Each year, Superior HealthPlan conducts the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey to determine patient satisfaction with their health care. It includes questions on the accessibility to medical services, physicians, specialists and communication skills of the physician. The survey results provide data that allows Superior the opportunity to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement. Past survey results for Superior identified common areas for monitoring and/or improvement and those are noted below along with the specific CAHPS questions.

What Does the CAHPS Survey Ask Patients about Physician Communication?

In the last six months:

- How often did your personal doctor explain things in a way that was easy to understand?
- How often did your personal doctor listen carefully to you?
- How often did your personal doctor show respect for what you had to say?
- How often did your personal doctor spend enough time with you?

What Are the Benefits of Effective Physician Communication for Members?

- Physician satisfaction
- Patient/member satisfaction
- Adherence to medical advice
- Diagnostic accuracy
- Improved health outcomes
- Malpractice reduction

Other Topics on the Survey Include:

Shared Decision Making

- Doctor/health provider talked about reasons why you may/might not want to take a medication.
- Doctor/health provider asked what you thought was the best for you when starting/stopping a prescription medication.

Coordination of Care

- In the last six months, how often did your personal doctor seem informed and up-to-date about the care you got from health providers besides your personal doctor or other health providers?

Health Promotion and Education

- In the last six months, did your doctor or health provider talk about specific things you could do to prevent illness for yourself?



Provider Best Practices

“It Pays to Coordinate CARE”

- Confirm all medication your patient is taking.
- Assess patient’s sociological situations and obstacles to care; this can provide critical insight into the best treatment strategies.
- Referrals for in-network specialists are always appreciated by patients; ask for test results from specialists.
- Electronic Health Record (EHR) and health information exchange should be utilized.

What Can a Physician Do to Improve Communication With Members? ALERT Is a Model That Is Intended to Help Physicians Communicate Effectively.

- Always
- Listen to member/patient carefully.
- Explain in an understandable way.
- Respect what the member/patient says.
- Time management perception.

Additional Best Practices:

- Maintain eye contact when the patient is talking.
- Sit down, lean in and keep open and receptive body language.
- Avoid interrupting the member/patient.
- Explain why tests, treatments, medications or referrals are necessary.
- Use simple, easy to understand wording.
- Speak in a slow and clear manner.
- Share goals for treatment and tell what to expect in their recovery.
- Explore specific barriers to their compliance with treatment, medications and follow up.
- Provide patients with resources like hand-outs, brochures, diagrams and other material to help them understand.
- Ask if they have additional questions, if they need any clarification or if they are in agreement.
- Ask for their input about illness or care.
- Ask about how the issue or illness is impacting daily life.
- Allow them to work with you to find a resolution or treatment plan that is agreeable to both of you.



Sources:

Hardee, J.T. & Kasper, I.K. (2008). A Clinical Communication Strategy to Enhance Effectiveness and CAHPS Scores: The Alert Model. *The Permanente Journal*, 12(3), 70-74.

Virginia Premier Health Plan, Inc. (n.d.). *Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems*. Retrieved September 5, 2014, from Virginia Premier Health Plan, Inc.: <https://www.vapremier.com/assets/5-CAHPS-PROVIDER-HANDOUT.pdf>.