

CAHPS: Improving Getting Appointments and Care Quickly

Improving patients' ability to get appointments and care quickly is one of the ways we can better serve members and help them live healthier lives. Each year, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) sends a Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey to gather feedback from consumers about their overall health care experience, including their experience getting appointments and care quickly. The annual survey starts in March and runs through May.

Here are the types of questions your patients will be asked on the CAHPS survey about getting appointments and care quickly, and ideas to help you improve patients' experience.

Questions About Getting Appointments and Care Quickly

- When you needed care right away, how often did you get care as soon as you needed it?
- How often did you get an appointment for a checkup or routine care at a doctor's office or clinic as soon as you needed?
- Wait time includes time spent in the waiting room and exam room. How often did you see the person you came to see within 15 minutes of your appointment time?

Ideas to Help Improve Patients' Experience Getting Appointments and Care Quickly

- Acknowledge each patient upon their arrival to the office. Example: "Thank you for waiting. We respect your time and the doctor should be with you within 15 minutes. If it is going to be any longer than that, I will stop by myself to check on you and give you an update."
- Check in periodically with waiting patients. Example: "Thank you for waiting. I just checked with the nurse and she said they will bring you back in the next five minutes. We appreciate your patience."
- Give patients something to help pass the time while they wait, e.g., magazines, television, etc.
- Offer patients, especially new patients, online forms to reduce the amount of time they need to spend in the office filling out forms.
- Reserve time for urgent appointments.

We're Here to Help

For more information about the CAHPS survey, please contact your Provider Advocate or visit cahps.ahrq.gov. Thank you.