



IOWA TOTAL CARE

Provider CAHPS® Resource Guide

2022

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CAHPS®

Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems

Each spring, a random sample of Iowa Total Care members are surveyed about their experiences with their doctors, healthcare services, and health plan through the CAHPS® survey. CAHPS® surveys allow members to evaluate the aspects of care delivery that matter most to them.

As a provider, you are an important partner in our members' satisfaction with their healthcare experience. The 2022 Provider CAHPS® Resource Guide provides insight into how members are evaluating the care they receive. Please take a moment to review some of the key topics included in the survey and other valuable resources provided to you by Iowa Total Care.

Patient Experience & Clinical Outcomes

The relationship between clinical outcomes and the patient experience is clear: patients with better care experiences are more likely to have better health outcomes. For example, research has shown that positive healthcare experiences can help patients with chronic illnesses better adhere to medical advice and treatment.

To learn more about the clinical case for improving patient experience, visit AHRQ's Improvement Guide: <https://www.ahrq.gov/cahps/quality-improvement/improvement-guide/2-why-improve/index.html>.



Measures



CAHPS® Measure: Getting Needed Care

The Getting Needed Care measure assesses the ease with which patients received the care, tests, or treatment they needed. It also assesses how often they were able to get a specialist appointment scheduled when needed.

Incorporate the following into your daily practice:

- ✓ Office staff should help coordinate specialty appointments for urgent cases.
- ✓ Encourage patients and caregivers to view results on the patient portal when available.
- ✓ Inform patients of what to do if care is needed after hours.
- ✓ Offer appointments or refills via text and/or email.



CAHPS® Measure: Getting Care Quickly

The Getting Care Quickly measure assesses how often patients got the care they needed as soon as they need it and how often appointment wait times exceeded 15 minutes.

Incorporate the following into your daily practice:

- ✓ Ensure a few appointments each day are available to accommodate urgent visits.
- ✓ Offer appointments with a nurse practitioner or physician assistant for short notice appointments.
- ✓ Maintain an effective triage system to ensure that frail and/or very sick patients are seen right away or provided alternate care via phone and urgent care.
- ✓ Keep patients informed if there is a longer wait time than expected and give them an option to reschedule.



CAHPS® Measure: Care Coordination

The Care Coordination measure assesses providers' assistance with managing the disparate and confusing healthcare system, including access to medical records, timely follow-up on test results, and education on prescription medications.

Incorporate the following into your daily practice:

- ✓ Ensure there are open appointments for patients recently discharged from a facility.
- ✓ Integrate PCP and specialty practices through EMR or fax to get reports promptly.
- ✓ Ask patients if they have seen any other providers; discuss visits to specialty care as needed.
- ✓ Encourage patients to bring in their medications to each visit.



CAHPS® Measure: How Well Doctors Communicate

The How Well Doctors Communicate measure assesses patients' perception of the quality of the communication with their doctor. Consider using the teach-back method to ensure patients understand their health information.

What is teach-back?

- ✓ A way to ensure you – the health care provider – have explained information clearly. It is not a text or quiz of patients.
- ✓ Asking a patient (or a family member) to explain in their own words what they need to know or do in a caring way.
- ✓ A way to check for understanding and, if needed, re-explain and check again.
- ✓ A research-based health literacy intervention that improves patient-provider communication and patient health outcomes.



CAHPS® Measure: Rating of Health Care Quality

The CAHPS survey asks patients to rate the overall quality of their health care on a 0-10 scale.

Incorporate the following into your daily practice:

- ✓ Encourage patients to make their routine appointments for checkups or follow up visits as soon as they can – weeks or even months in advance.
- ✓ Ensure that open care gaps are addressed during each patient visit.
- ✓ Make use of the provider portal when requesting prior authorizations.



Interested in learning more about the CAHPS survey and how survey scores are used?

Visit our CAHPS® Corner page at iowatotalcare.com to learn more and access additional resources.

Cultural Competency

What is cultural competency?

Cultural competency is the ability to interact effectively with people from different cultures and backgrounds.

Why is cultural competency important?

Better cross-cultural and linguistic communications can play a role in reducing health disparities. The ability to communicate successfully across barriers in healthcare can directly affect a patient's treatment and/or the outcome of the treatment.

What can you do to become more culturally competent?

- ✓ Provide effective, equitable, understandable, and respectful quality care that is responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices
- ✓ Recruit, promote, and support a culturally and linguistically diverse governance, leadership, and workforce that are responsive to the population in your service area
- ✓ Offer communication and language assistance to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs
- ✓ Establish culturally and linguistically appropriate goals, policies, and management accountability, and infuse them throughout your office's planning and operations

Iowa Total Care's [Cultural Competency: Bridging The Communication Gap](#) flyer contains more information on becoming culturally competent. Visit iowatotalcare.com > Provider Resources > Manuals, Forms & Resources to access this and much more.

Resources for Your Practice: Complimentary Interpretation Services

Iowa Total Care provides interpretation services for members at no cost to them or our providers.

- To schedule an in-person interpreter, call Member Services: 1-833-404-1061 (TTY: 711).
- To obtain access to a telephonic interpreter, follow these steps:

1. Call Iowa Total Care Member Services: 1-833-404-1061 (TTY: 711).	2. Tell the representative that you need an interpreter and the desired language.	3. When connected, use the speakerphone function to communicate with the patient.
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Cultural Competency tips relate to the following CAHPS® questions:

- 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?

Health Literacy

What Is health literacy?

Health literacy is the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate decisions.

Why is health literacy important?

A patient's level of health literacy can impact how and when they take their medications, their understanding of their health conditions, attendance at their appointments, and the choices they make regarding treatment.

Signs of low health literacy

- Noncompliance with medication regimens, lab tests, or appointment attendance
- An incomplete or inaccurately completed registration form
- Inability to explain the functions, timing, and names of their medications
- Saying they “forgot their glasses” if they cannot read something

Steps to improving interpersonal communications with low health literacy patients

The American Medical Association Foundation has compiled steps to improve interpersonal communications with low health literacy patients:

- ✓ **Slow down.** Sometimes a little extra time is needed so the patient can process the information better
- ✓ **Use plain, non-medical language.** Use terms like “high blood pressure” instead of “hypertension” or “skin doctor” instead of “dermatologist”
- ✓ **Show or draw pictures.** Visual imagery can improve the patient's recall of ideas
- ✓ **Limit the amount of information and repeat it.** Sometimes it can be overwhelming for a patient to receive too much information at once
- ✓ **Use the teach-back method.** Confirm that the patient understands by asking them to repeat back your instructions
- ✓ **Create a shame-free atmosphere that encourages questions.** Make patients feel comfortable asking questions
- ✓ **Be positive and empowering.** Encourage questions from the patient after every main point

Iowa Total Care's [Cultural Competency: Bridging The Communication Gap](#) flyer contains more information and resources on addressing health literacy issues. Visit iowatotalcare.com > Provider Resources > Manuals, Forms & Resources to access this and much more.



Health Literacy Tips relate to the following CAHPS® questions:

- How often did your personal doctor listen to you?
- How often did your personal doctor explain things in a way that was easy for you to understand?

Tips for Your Provider Office

ENHANCE PATIENT EXPERIENCE WITH PROVIDER ACCESS

Tip	Benefit
Consider having staff perform in-visit related activities (e.g., checking temperature, blood pressure, etc.).	Shortens patient's perceived wait time
Provide brief explanations and updates to patients about appointment delays; offer options to reschedule or be seen by another provider.	Sets patient expectations

ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH PATIENT BY ACTIVELY LISTENING

Tip	Benefit
Ask patients to list key concerns at the start of the visit	Ensures patient's needs are being met
Review medications to ensure understanding and encourage adherence	Encourages medication adherence
Ask patients if all questions and concerns were addressed before end of visit	Patients feel sufficient time was spent with them
Take complaints seriously and try to resolve promptly	Shows patients that they are being heard

REVIEW APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING PROTOCOLS & ACCESS TO CARE STANDARDS

Type of Appointment	Scheduling Requirement/Timeframe
Primary Care Providers	
Emergency Medical Condition	24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Urgent Medical Condition	Within 24 hours
Non-Urgent Sick Visits	Within 48 hours
Routine Appointments	Not to exceed 4-6 weeks
Specialists	
Specialty Providers: Urgent	Within 24 hours
Specialty Providers: Routine	Within 30 days
Hospitals: Emergency	24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Behavioral Health: Non-Life-Threatening Emergency	Within 6 hours, or direct member to crisis center or ER
Behavioral Health: Mobile Crisis	Within 1 hour of presentation or request
Behavioral Health: Urgent	Within 1 hour of presentation at a service delivery site or within 24 hours of telephone contact with provider or Iowa Total Care
Behavioral Health: Persistent Symptoms	Within 48 hours of reporting symptoms
Behavioral Health: Routine	Within 3 weeks of the request for an appointment
Labs and X-Ray Services: Non-Urgent	Not to exceed 3 weeks
Labs and X-Ray Services: Urgent	Within 48 hours
General Optometry: Routine	Not to exceed 3 weeks
General Optometry: Urgent	Within 48 hours

Please refer to the [Iowa Total Care Provider Manual](#) for additional guidance on appointment availability and access standards.

Tips for Your Provider Office

Additional Resources for Office Staff & Patients

24/7 Nurse Advice Line: 1-833-404-1061 (TTY: 711)

Iowa Total Care members can call for additional after-hours coverage.

Provider Web Portal: provider.iowatotalcare.com

Providers can access the provider portal to:

- Check member eligibility.
- View member health records.
- View and submit claims and adjustments.
- View and submit prior authorizations.
- Check prior authorization requirements.
- View gaps in member care.

Interpretation Services: 1-833-404-1061 (TTY: 711)

Interpreter services are provided free of charge to members during any service.

Contact Iowa Total Care Member Services at the number above.



Provider Office Tips relate to the following CAHPS® questions:

- How often did your personal doctor listen to you?
- How often did your personal doctor spend enough time with you?
- How often did your personal doctor explain things in a way that was easy for you to understand?
- When you needed care right away, how often did you get care as soon as you needed?
- When you made an appointment for a check-up or routine care at a doctor's office or clinic, how often did you get an appointment as soon as you needed?

Provider Engagement Collateral

Getting Needed Care

Access to medical care, including primary care, specialist appointments and appointment access, are key elements of quality care.



Each year, the CAHPS® survey asks questions like:

- In the last 6 months, how often was it easy to get appointments with specialists?
- In the last 6 months, how often was it easy to get the care, tests, or treatment you needed?
- In the last 6 months, when you needed care right away, how often did you get care as soon as you thought you needed?
- In the last 6 months, not counting the times when you needed care right away, how often did you get an appointment for your health care at a doctor's office or clinic as soon as you thought you needed?
- In the last 6 months, how often did you see the doctor you were scheduled to see within 15 minutes of your appointment time?



Ensure your patients are satisfied with their ease of access by:

- ✓ Seeing members within access and availability standards.
- ✓ Scheduling appointments in a reasonable window for each request.
- ✓ Following up with members after referral to specialists to ensure care is coordinated.
- ✓ Ensuring all information for specialists, tests, and procedure authorizations is provided and following up as necessary.
- ✓ Reducing time in the waiting room to no more than 15 minutes from appointment time.



Helpful tips to provide the needed care to your patients:

Iowa Total Care continually monitors and evaluates measures that reflect appropriate coordination of care practices. These include:

- ✓ Reviewing medications with your patients.
- ✓ Offering to schedule specialist and lab appointments while your patients are in the office.
- ✓ Reminding your patients about annual flu shots and other immunizations.
- ✓ Making sure your patients know you also are working with specialists on their care. Ensure you receive notes from specialists about the patient's care and reach out to specialists if you have not gotten consultation notes. Tell your patient the results of all tests and procedures. Sharing decision making with patients to help them manage care. And please follow up on all authorizations requested for your patient.
- ✓ Contacting your patients to remind them when it's time for preventive care services, such as annual wellness exams, recommended cancer screenings, and follow-up care for ongoing conditions such as hypertension and diabetes.

Quick Tips: Provider Focus

At Iowa Total Care, we value everything you do to deliver quality care to our members – your patients – and ensure they have a positive healthcare experience. Below are some tips you can follow to improve on the four quality measures listed below:



Getting Needed Care

- ✓ For urgent specialty appointments, office staff should help coordinate with the appropriate specialty office.
- ✓ If a patient portal is available, encourage patients and caregivers to view results there.



Getting Care Quickly

- ✓ Maintain an effective triage system to ensure that frail and/or very sick patients are seen right away or provided alternate care via phone and urgent care.
- ✓ For patients who want to be seen on short notice but cannot access their doctor, offer appointments with a nurse practitioner or physician assistant.
- ✓ Ensure a few appointments each day are available to accommodate urgent visits.
- ✓ Address the 15-minute wait time frame by ensuring patients are receiving staff attention.
- ✓ Keep patients informed if there is a wait and give them the opportunity to reschedule.



Care Coordination

- ✓ Ensure there are open appointments for patients recently discharged from a facility.
- ✓ Integrate PCP and specialty practices through EMR or fax to get reports on time.
- ✓ Ask patients if they've seen any other providers. If you are aware specialty care has occurred, please mention it and discuss as needed.
- ✓ Encourage patients to bring their medications to each visit.



Rating of Health Care

- ✓ Encourage patients to make their routine appointments for checkups or follow up visits as soon as they can – weeks or even months in advance.

Care Coordination



What is coordination of care and who provides it?

Coordination of care requires proactively identifying the patient's needs, organizing care and communicating vital information at the right time to the right people.

Coordination can occur among various parties but often includes:

- ✓ Primary care providers
- ✓ Specialty providers
- ✓ Behavioral health practitioners
- ✓ Inpatient hospitals
- ✓ Skilled nursing facilities
- ✓ Home care agencies
- ✓ Labs and other diagnostic services
- ✓ Family and caregivers
- ✓ Health plan care managers
- ✓ Other care managers



Why is coordination of care important?

Appropriate care coordination and the availability of pertinent and up-to-date information leads to many positive benefits, including:

- ✓ Safer and more effective care.
- ✓ Lower admission and readmission rates.
- ✓ Fewer care complications and delays.
- ✓ Smoother care transitions.
- ✓ Increased efficiency and reduced costs.
- ✓ Improved health and satisfaction for the patient.



The provider's role:

Iowa Total Care expects that providers follow these practice guidelines in coordinating care for our members. Our health plan and associated providers are rated and evaluated based on the ability to successfully carry out these practices. Please note that the care coordination measures are specifically evaluated in our annual member experience surveys (CAHPS®).

10 Elements for Using Teach-Back Effectively



What is teach-back?

- ✓ A way to make sure you—the healthcare provider—explained information clearly. It is not a test or quiz of patients.
- ✓ Asking a patient (or family member) to explain in their own words what they need to know or do, in a caring way.
- ✓ A way to check for understanding and, if needed, re-explain and check again.
- ✓ A research-based health literacy intervention that improves patient-provider communication and patient health outcomes.¹

- 1 Use a caring tone of voice and attitude.
- 2 Display comfortable body language and make eye contact.
- 3 Use plain language.
- 4 Ask the patient to explain back, using their own words.
- 5 Use non-shaming, open-ended questions.
- 6 Avoid asking questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no.
- 7 Emphasize that the responsibility to explain clearly is on you, the provider.
- 8 If the patient is not able to teach back correctly, explain again and re-check.
- 9 Use reader-friendly print materials to support learning.
- 10 Document use of patient response to teach-back.



For more information, visit AHRQ's Teach-Back: Intervention Resource:
<https://www.ahrq.gov/patient-safety/reports/engage/interventions/teachback.html>

¹Schillinger, 2003

Helpful Forms & Resources

Direct Link to Resource	Location on Iowa Total Care Website
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral Health Follow-Up After Hospitalization Tip Sheet HEDIS® Behavioral Health Measures Toolkit 	iowatotalcare.com > For Providers> Provider Resources > Manuals, Forms & Resources
Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) Checklist	iowatotalcare.com > For Providers> Provider Resources > Manuals, Forms & Resources
CODING	
Coding Reference Guide	iowatotalcare.com > For Providers> Provider Resources > Manuals, Forms & Resources
HEALTH LITERACY & CULTURAL COMPETENCY	
Health Literacy & Cultural Competency Flyer	iowatotalcare.com > For Providers> Provider Resources > Manuals, Forms & Resources
LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES	
Language Access Services & Guidelines Quick Reference Guide	iowatotalcare.com > For Providers> Provider Resources > Manuals, Forms & Resources
Language Access Services Request Form	iowatotalcare.com > For Providers> Provider Resources > Manuals, Forms & Resources
MEMBER REWARDS PROGRAM	
My Health Pays Rewards Information & Codes	iowatotalcare.com > For Providers> Provider Resources > Manuals, Forms & Resources
PREGNANCY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pregnancy Support Referral Form Notification of Pregnancy (NOP) form: English Notification of Pregnancy (NOP) form: Spanish Pregnancy Quick Reference Guide Prenatal Vitamins Guide 	iowatotalcare.com > For Providers> Provider Resources > Manuals, Forms & Resources
PRIOR AUTHORIZATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medicaid Supplemental Information Prior Authorization Form New Outpatient Medicaid Prior Authorization Form New Inpatient Medicaid Prior Authorization Form Prior Authorization FAQ 	iowatotalcare.com > For Providers> Provider Resources > Manuals, Forms & Resources
PROVIDER INCENTIVE PROGRAM	
Provider Incentive Flyer	iowatotalcare.com > For Providers> Provider Resources > Manuals, Forms & Resources

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PROVIDER PORTAL

- Care & Risk Gaps—Daily View: [PDF](#)
- How to Correct a Claim: [Video](#)
- How to Create & Submit an Authorization: [Video](#)
- How to Submit a Reconsideration: [Video](#)
- Member Eligibility: [Video](#)
- Recurring Claims Submission: [Video](#) | [PDF](#)
- Registration & Login: [Video](#) | [PDF](#)
- Single Claim Submission: [PDF](#)
- Uploading Documents: [PDF](#)
- Viewing Claims: [Video](#) | [PDF](#)
- Viewing Prior Authorizations: [Video](#) | [PDF](#)

Videos:

[iowatotalcare.com](#) > For Providers> Provider Trainings & Webinars > On-Demand Learning

PDFs:

[iowatotalcare.com](#) > For Providers> Provider Resources > Manuals, Forms & Resources

Visit the Provider Manuals, Forms, and Resources page at iowatotalcare.com to view all provider resources and trainings that Iowa Total Care has to offer.