



CAHPS Survey
Guidance for REACH ACOs
2024 Survey Administration

Contract with and Authorize a Survey Vendor to Conduct the PY2024 CAHPS Survey

REACH ACOs must enter and maintain a formal written contract with a CAHPS vendor that is approved for ACO REACH CAHPS. After executing the contract, REACH ACOs are also required to execute a Business Associate Agreement with the vendor and authorize their vendor online at the ACO REACH CAHPS website by **August 2, 2024**.

CMS will publish the list of ACO REACH CAHPS vendors conditionally approved for the PY2024 CAHPS in **April 2024**. ACOs may wish to begin contacting these vendors to learn about their services. CMS will publish the list of ACO REACH CAHPS vendors fully approved for the 2024 CAHPS no later than **June 7, 2024**, in the Knowledge Library. Watch for announcements in ACO REACH Newsletter.

Follow these easy steps to authorize your survey vendor:

1. Your organization's Survey Administrator logs into the ACO REACH CAHPS website.
2. Under the ACO tab, navigate to Vendor Authorization and then to Start an Authorization.
3. Select an approved survey vendor from the dropdown list.
4. Select PY2024 Survey from the dropdown list.
5. Use the checkbox to select all ACOs for which you would like to authorize this vendor.
6. If you have executed a contract with this survey vendor, check the attestation box.
7. Save the authorization. This must be completed on or before August 7, 2024.

If your REACH ACO does not have a Survey Administrator, choose an individual on your staff to serve in this role. This individual should follow instructions in [How to Register as a Survey Administrator](#) to obtain user credentials and register as a survey administrator for their ACO.

If your REACH ACO wants to change from a previous Survey Administrator to a new one, please contact acoreachcahps@rti.org for assistance.

Provide Your CAHPS Survey Vendor with a Patient Roster

CMS strongly encourages REACH ACOs to provide their CAHPS survey vendor with their Medicare patient list, complete with patient names, addresses, phone numbers, and (if the vendor desires) patient dates of birth. We observe year after year that ACOs' contact information on patients is more accurate and up to date than information from other sources. Survey vendors need this information in August 2024.

Notify Your CAHPS Survey Vendor of Residential Care/Assisted Living Facilities

CMS strongly encourages REACH ACOs to provide their authorized survey vendor with the names and addresses of residential care facilities and assisted living facilities commonly used by the beneficiaries in their REACH ACO. Survey vendors need this information in **August 2024**, so please follow up with your survey vendor for their specific requirements.

To identify facilities, REACH ACOs can scan through patient addresses or do a geographical search of nearby residential care/assisted living facilities. Providing this information to survey vendors allows them to identify facility-residing patients and block these patients from the telephone follow-up portion of the survey. Survey calls to facilities—particularly when multiple ACO REACH patients are surveyed in a facility—place a significant burden on facility staff and can negatively impact the relationship between facilities and REACH ACOs.

Communicating with Patients about the Survey

Medicare beneficiaries who receive a survey about their provider may be wary of its legitimacy and frequently turn to their provider for assurance. Providers can communicate their support for the survey and encourage patients to answer the survey, noting that their response, while voluntary, is valuable. REACH ACO staff should familiarize themselves with the Waiting Room FAQs (discussed below) so they can answer patient questions about the survey with confidence and support, while assuring patients of the survey’s confidentiality.

REACH ACO staff should follow the Patient Communication Do’s and Don’ts presented in the table below.

Do	Don't
Express support for the survey.	Ask patients if they would like to be included in the survey.
Answer questions based on the Waiting Room FAQs.	Influence patients’ answers on the survey.
Confirm the legitimacy of the survey and the survey vendor.	Attempt to determine which patients were sampled.
Confirm that participation is voluntary.	Solicit positive feedback from patients in the survey.
Assure patients that the REACH ACO has no way of knowing who responds to the survey. Patient names are never reported, only responses.	Imply that the REACH ACO or its providers will be rewarded for positive feedback.
Confirm that their participation will not affect the care they receive.	Offer incentives of any kind for participating in the survey.
Confirm that their participation will not affect their Medicare benefits or other health care benefits.	Provide a copy of the questionnaire to patients.

CMS provides Waiting Room FAQs that answer common patient questions about the survey. Once FAQs are disseminated in **March 2024** via the ACO REACH Newsletter and Knowledge Library, CMS recommends REACH ACOs print and keep copies in their waiting rooms for patient perusal. FAQs are provided in both English and Spanish. Watch for announcements in the ACO REACH Newsletter.

Refrain from Administering Other Surveys While PY2024 ACO REACH CAHPS Is Actively Surveying

To avoid placing more burdens on patients, CMS strongly encourages REACH ACOs to refrain from conducting other patient surveys or census surveys starting 4 weeks prior to and during the period when the ACO REACH CAHPS is actively surveying: **August 12, 2024, to December 6, 2024**. CMS-sponsored surveys are exempt from this guidance.

- When conducting other surveys, REACH ACOs must not ask any survey questions that are the same as or similar to the questions in the ACO REACH CAHPS Survey. (This guidance does not apply to other CMS-sponsored surveys.)
- Other surveys can include questions that ask for more in-depth information, as long as the questions are different from those included in the ACO REACH CAHPS.

Review Your Survey Vendor's PY2024 ACO REACH CAHPS Data Submission Reports

Since participation in the ACO REACH CAHPS Survey is a quality reporting requirement, CMS encourages all REACH ACOs to confirm that their survey vendor has submitted data files on the ACO REACH CAHPS website before the data submission deadline of **January 13, 2025**. To enable REACH ACOs to confirm this with ease, the registered Survey Administrator will receive an email from acoreachcahps@rti.org with a link to a data submission report showing whether their vendor has submitted data. The purpose of this review is to ensure each vendor meets its contracted requirements to submit REACH ACO data, so that REACH ACOs will be in compliance with quality reporting requirements.

To Obtain Further Information

Watch for further updates and information about upcoming webinars in the ACO REACH Newsletter.

Contact the ACO REACH Helpdesk at DPC@cms.hhs.gov or 1-888-734-6433 with specific questions.

See the ACO REACH CAHPS website at <https://acoreachcahps.org> .