



Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) Star Ratings

Overview

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is aiming to improve the salience and usability of comparative quality information for consumers by incorporating a 5 Star Rating system in its Compare websites. Currently, Nursing Home Compare features an overall star rating for each facility and star ratings for other important categories of health care quality. Earlier this year, CMS introduced star ratings to Physician Compare, which uses them to rate a limited number of measures for group practices. All of the data currently on the Compare websites will continue to be available. The star rating system is intended to enhance and supplement existing publicly reported quality information.

Reasons for the Initiative:

- To respond to the call for transparent, easily understandable and widely available public reporting in the Affordable Care Act (ACA).
- To respond to the call to continue to utilize and expand existing dissemination methods in quality measures and to take into consideration current innovative methodologies and strategies for quality improvement practices.
- To make consumer use of quality measures data a key driver of health care system improvement.
- To provide more “customer-centric” content, as described in the Administration’s Digital Government Strategy.

HCAHPS Overview

As part of a new initiative to add five-star quality ratings to its Compare Web sites, CMS plans to add HCAHPS Star Ratings to the Hospital Compare Web site in April 2015. Star ratings will make it easier for consumers to use the information on the Compare Web sites and spotlight excellence in healthcare quality. CMS has developed a methodology whereby twelve HCAHPS Star Ratings would appear on Hospital Compare: one for each of the 11 publicly reported HCAHPS measures, plus an overall Summary Star Rating that represents a weighted average of the individual HCAHPS Star Ratings. HCAHPS Star Ratings will be the first star ratings to appear on Hospital Compare; CMS plans to update the HCAHPS Star Ratings each quarter. In order to receive HCAHPS Star Ratings, hospitals must have at least 100 completed HCAHPS surveys over a given four-quarter period. In addition, hospitals must be eligible for public reporting of HCAHPS measures (for example, subsection (d) hospitals that are required to collect, submit and publicly report HCAHPS data). Hospitals with fewer than 100 completed HCAHPS surveys will not receive Star Ratings; however, their HCAHPS measure scores will still be publicly reported on Hospital Compare.

Audience

Consumers are the main audience for the Compare Web sites and CMS is committed to making these Web sites even more consumer-focused and to raising awareness about the Compare Web sites by: 1) educating consumers about the differences in quality performance between providers and hospitals and the impact of those differences on patients and families; 2) raising awareness about the availability of information on quality data; 3) making information accessible and understandable; and 4) promoting its use in consumer decision-making. In addition, publically reported data from the Compare Web sites are readily available for other private and public sector reporting initiatives. Consistent with the objectives of the Digital Government Strategy [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/egov/digital-government/digital-government.html>], quality data can be directly accessed on Data.Medicare.gov and accessed through an Application Programming Interface, which enables other applications to be connected to the same live data that populate the Compare websites and directories.

Next Steps

In April 2015, CMS plans to introduce star ratings on the Hospital Compare Web site for the HCAHPS measures. CMS will provide hospitals the opportunity for a 30 day period during which to preview their data before the data and the star rating is posted. CMS will hold a national provider call in early October 2014 in order to provide further opportunity for hospitals to learn about the star ratings methodology and address their questions and comments directly to CMS. CMS will provide further information about the national provider call in the near future.

Feedback Opportunities

CMS is seeking ongoing feedback on any aspect of the star rating system. Questions or comments about the hospital preview reports and star ratings methodology can be submitted to the following email address: HospitalCompare@hsag.com. Deadline for comments is October 30, 2014. Additional relevant information is below:

- Detailed information about HCAHPS, star ratings, and a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) is available at www.hcahponline.org.
- The *Hospital Compare* Web site is the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS's) website for Medicare beneficiaries and the general public. *Hospital Compare* can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.medicare.gov/hospitalcompare/>.