

Changes to the QHP Enrollee Experience Survey for 2017

Issue Brief #9

October 2016

Purpose

This issue brief is intended to provide QHP issuers and other stakeholders with a high-level summary of changes that CMS and the QHP Enrollee Survey Project Team have implemented to the QHP Enrollee Survey for 2017.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and Qualified Health Plan (QHP) Enrollee Experience Survey Project Team have developed this issue brief to provide a high-level summary of changes that have been implemented for the 2017 QHP Enrollee Experience Survey (QHP Enrollee Survey). More details about the 2017 QHP Enrollee Survey, including the survey questionnaire and the *2017 Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications*, are available on the project website: <https://qhpcahps.cms.gov>.

Changes to Survey Questionnaire

Beginning with the 2017 QHP Enrollee Survey, the survey questionnaire will include six questions measuring enrollees' disability status, as required by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Section 4302 data collection standards. These six items are currently included on the American Community Survey and a number of other large federal surveys. These items were extensively tested by the U.S. Census Bureau.¹ The six questions with yes/no responses include:

1. Are you deaf or do you have serious difficulty hearing?
2. Are you blind or do you have serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses?
3. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?
4. Do you have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?
5. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have difficulty dressing or bathing?
6. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping?

CMS and the QHP Enrollee Survey Project Team anticipate that analysis of this population of people with disabilities will be performed at the national level.

¹ Brault, M., Stern, S., & Raglin, D. (2007). *Evaluation Report Covering Disability, American Community Survey Content Test Report*. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2007/acs/2007_Brault_01.pdf

In addition, the survey question about health insurance during the prior year has been removed from the survey questionnaire.

These changes result in a net addition of 5 survey items for a total of 90 items. The 2017 QHP Enrollee Survey questionnaire is available at:

<https://qhpcahps.cms.gov/survey-instrument-materials>.

Changes to Data Collection Protocol

Based on feedback from survey vendors during the 2015 and 2016 survey administrations, the QHP Enrollee Survey Project Team conducted a systematic analysis to revise the QHP Enrollee Survey data collection protocol. CMS and the Project Team identified potential improvements and developed a revised data collection protocol that balances increased efficiencies with the tight timeline available for collecting the survey data. The following table shows the data collection protocol for the 2016 and 2017 survey administrations.

Task	Administration Schedule for the 2016 Survey	Administration Schedule for the 2017 Survey
Mail prenotification letter to sampled enrollees.	<i>Day 0</i>	<i>Day 0</i>
Customer support phone center opens.	<i>Day 1</i>	<i>Day 1</i>
Mail first questionnaire with survey cover letter.	<i>Day 7</i>	<i>Day 3</i>
Mail reminder letter to nonrespondents.	<i>Day 17</i>	<i>Day 17</i>
Mail second questionnaire to nonrespondents.	<i>Day 28</i>	<i>Day 31</i>
Initiate telephone follow-up contact for nonrespondents.	<i>Days 49–70</i>	<i>Days 52–70</i>
End all data collection activities.	<i>Day 71</i>	<i>Day 71</i>

Additional Enrollment Threshold

CMS has included an additional enrollment threshold for the 2017 QHP Enrollee Survey. The purpose is to minimize the impact on issuers that experience large changes in their enrollment between the previous July 1 enrollment threshold and the beginning of data collection. Beginning with the 2017 QHP Enrollee Survey, to be eligible to administer the QHP Enrollee Survey the reporting unit must have more than 500 enrollees as of July 1, 2016, **and** more than 500 enrollees as of January 1, 2017.

QHP issuers with more than 500 enrollees as of July 1, 2016, but potentially less than 501 enrollees as of January 1, 2017, should proceed as if they will be required to field the QHP Enrollee Survey. Consequently, these issuers should prepare the sample frame and authorize an HHS-approved survey vendor following the QHP Enrollee Survey schedule. If it is discovered later that the issuer did not meet the January 1, 2017, enrollment threshold, then the QHP issuer must notify the QHP Enrollee Survey Project Team and its HHS-approved survey vendor within 3 business days of discovery (but by no later than January 15, 2017). The QHP Enrollee Survey Project Team should be notified via e-mail at qhpcahps@air.org.

Changes to the Sample Frame Layout

CMS and the QHP Enrollee Survey Project Team have streamlined the QHP Enrollee Survey Sample Frame Layout for the 2017 QHP Enrollee Survey and removed the following variables:

- Multi-State Plan (MSP) flag
- Market coverage
- Enrollment route
- Hispanic ethnicity
- Race

To clarify the eligibility rules for QHP enrollees in the 2017 QHP Enrollee Survey, CMS has removed the “-00” non-Exchange value as a valid value for the Health

Insurance Oversight System (HIOS) variant ID variable on the sample frame layout. No enrollees in QHPs offered outside the Marketplace (off-Marketplace plans) and in non-QHPs (traditional commercial plans) should be included in the 2017 QHP Enrollee Survey.

It is important that QHP issuers fully populate the variables included on the sample frame file layout for all enrollees included in a reporting unit's sample frame. As a reminder, QHP issuers are required to have their QHP Enrollee Survey Sample Frame audited by a NCQA-licensed HEDIS Compliance Organization or a NCQA-licensed HEDIS Compliance Auditor **before** a survey vendor may draw the sample and administer the QHP Enrollee Survey.

More information about developing the QHP Enrollee Survey Sample Frame, including a copy of the updated sample frame file layout, can be found at:
<https://qhpcahps.cms.gov/sample-frame>.

Additional Resources

More information about the QHP Enrollee Survey is available on the Project Website:

<https://qhpcahps.cms.gov>

Additional questions can be submitted to the

Exchange Operations Support Center (XOSC)

855-267-1515

CMS_FEPS@cms.hhs.gov

Please reference "*Marketplace Quality Initiatives—QHP Survey*" in your inquiry.