

What you should know about CAHPS and HOS quality measures

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) publishes annual Medicare Part C and D Star Ratings to evaluate the quality of care and service provided by Medicare Advantage (MA) and prescription drug plans. These ratings help MA beneficiaries compare plans and reinforce CMS' commitment to delivering high-quality, patient-centered care.

Within Star Ratings, patient experience has become increasingly influential. CMS measures it primarily through two national surveys—the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) and the Health Outcomes Survey (HOS)—which **together account for over 30% of a plan's total Star Rating**. Strong CAHPS and HOS performance reflects positive experiences among Humana-covered patients and directly contributes to stronger overall Star Ratings.

Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS)

The CAHPS survey is administered annually by CMS from March to June. It captures patients' perceptions of the care and service they receive, including access, communication, follow-up and coordination. These interactions occur primarily in provider offices, which means providers play a major role in shaping CAHPS outcomes.

Strong communication, timely access and coordinated follow-up directly influence how members respond to CAHPS questions. The measures below represent areas where provider behaviors and workflows can meaningfully improve the patient experience—and the resulting MA Star Rating.

How providers can influence CAHPS measures*

Getting Needed Care (2x)

How easily patients obtain referrals, see specialists and get needed services.

Managing expectations, streamlined referrals, and proactive follow-up support higher satisfaction.

Getting Appointments and Care Quickly (2x)

Patients' ability to secure timely appointments, including urgent needs.

Timely access drives better responses; same-day/next-day scheduling, short wait times, and transparent triage steps can meaningfully improve this measure.

Rating of Health Care Quality (2x)

Patients' overall impression of the care they receive.

Elements like empathy, clarity, shared decision-making, and ensuring patients feel heard tend to elevate this rating.

Care Coordination (2x)

How well providers communicate, share information and ensure test results and care transitions are handled smoothly.

Reviewing prior records, following up on referrals and labs, and closing the communication loop contribute to improved patient experience.

Getting Needed Prescription Drugs (2x)

How easy it is for patients to obtain medications prescribed by their providers.

Selecting formulary alternatives when needed, helping navigate prior authorizations, and clearly communicating next steps improve patient confidence and experience.

Annual Flu Vaccine (1x)

Whether patients received their flu vaccine during the measurement period.

Proactive outreach, reminders and making flu shots available during visits can drive meaningful improvement.

*CAHPS includes nine total measures; this section highlights the six most directly influenced by provider interactions. Three additional measures evaluate health plan operations and are not included here.

Health Outcomes Survey (HOS)

The Health Outcomes Survey (HOS) assesses whether MA plans help members maintain or improve physical and mental health over time. HOS is administered annually by CMS from July to November to a random sample of members.

Because HOS focuses on functional health status, many of the opportunities to improve results come through brief, preventive conversations and screenings that occur during routine provider visits. Providers play an essential role in these interactions.

How providers can influence HOS measures

Improving or Maintaining Physical Health (3x)

Whether patients maintain or improve physical functioning over two years.

Addressing mobility issues early, supporting chronic condition management, and reinforcing preventive care all positively influence results.

Improving or Maintaining Mental Health (3x)

Whether patients maintain or improve mental well-being over two years.

Screening for depression/anxiety, timely referrals, and follow-up on mental health concerns contribute to improved outcomes.

Monitoring Physical Activity in Older Adults (1x)

Whether patients receive guidance to start, continue or increase physical activity.

Even a brief conversation about exercise during any encounter can impact survey responses and encourage better health habits.

Improving Bladder Control (1x)

Whether patients experiencing urinary leakage discuss treatment options with their provider.

Proactively initiating sensitive conversations supports patient comfort, care and survey performance.

Reducing the Risk of Falling (1x)

Whether patients are screened for fall risk and receive fall prevention guidance.

Asking about falls, reviewing medications and offering simple prevention tips help patients feel supported and confident in their care.

Resources that can help

Humana offers resources to support providers in delivering strong, seamless patient experiences and improving CAHPS and HOS performance.

Provider resources (not for patient use)

- [Screening and interventions to reduce the risk of falls](#) – Guidance on identifying fall risk factors and evidence-based interventions.
- [Screening and management of UI in women](#) – Clinician guidance for assessment and management of urinary incontinence (UI) in female patients.
- [Screening and interventions for mental health](#) – Tools and best practices for depression and anxiety screening in older adults.
- [Humana Quality Measure Guide](#) – A comprehensive guide to HEDIS, HOS, CAHPS and Patient Safety measures within the Medicare Star Rating Program.
- [Humana Patient Experience webinar registration](#) – These sessions review how patient experience is measured through CAHPS, HOS, and Humana’s Patient Experience survey, and offer practical resources to support improved patient experiences.

Patient resources

Contact your assigned Humana representative for more information on these resources.

- [Let’s talk questionnaire](#) – A pre-visit tool that helps patients identify concerns related to physical, mental and overall healthcare experience so they can discuss them with their provider.
- [Fall risk flyer](#) – Encourages conversations about fall prevention.
- [Bladder control brochure](#) – Helps patients discuss bladder health with their provider.
- [Humana Community Navigator®](#) – Connects patients to local food, housing, transportation, and utility resources.

How we can partner together

Humana is committed to supporting you in delivering a stronger, more seamless patient experience. We can partner by sharing insights, offering practical resources, and helping integrate simple workflows that reinforce clear communication and follow-up. **Together, we can make it easier for your patients and our members to get the care they need—and strengthen their experience along the way.**

References and additional information

- For more information on CAHPS, please visit <https://ma-pdpcahps.org/>
- For more information on HOS, please visit <https://www.hosonline.org/>

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The Pharmacy Quality Alliance (PQA) oversees the Patient Safety category.