
FEHB Program Carrier Letter

All Carriers

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Insurance Programs

Letter No. 2001-41

Date: December 3, 2001

Fee-for-service [36] Experience-rated HMO [39] Community-rated HMO [38]

SUBJECT: 2002 Consumer Assessment of Health Plans Survey Requirements

All Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) plans with at least 500 FEHB subscribers (contracts) as of March 31, 2001, must administer the 2002 Consumer Assessments of Health Plans Survey (CAHPS®)¹ 2.0H Adult Commercial Survey (a copy of the questionnaire is included as Appendix A). You may use the National Committee for Quality Assurance's (NCQA) mail-only or mixed (mail, plus telephone follow-up) methodology to administer the 2002 CAHPS® 2.0H survey.

Additional Instructions for 2002:

- We are not requiring FEHB plans to administer the CAHPS® 2.0H Child Survey (survey for the general population or the new survey for children with chronic conditions), or the Management of Menopause (MoM) Survey.
- You may use an alternative or enhanced protocol or add supplemental questions to the survey with prior NCQA approval.
- We will not require FEHB plans to add supplemental questions to the Adult Survey.
- Regardless of the size of your FEHB enrollment, if you conduct any 2002 HEDIS CAHPS® Survey (Adult, Child or MoM Survey), you must send us a copy of your survey results.
- The required Sample Size for the Adult Survey is 950 and the target Response Rate is 55 percent.
- All Plans must submit their member level data files to the NCQA for calculation of survey results and generation of validated member level data files and summary level data files. Before submitting your results to NCQA, you will need to obtain an NCQA submission ID and complete NCQA's Healthcare Organization Questionnaire (HOQ) through NCQA's Website. Please contact NCQA's Technical Inquiry Line at HOQ@ncqa.org or by telephone at (888) 275-7585, for help in obtaining a user ID and

¹ CAHPS® is a registered trademark of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

password to access NCQA's secure site and in completing the HOQ. All plans must complete an HOQ in order to receive a submission ID. User IDS, passwords and HOQs are available by the beginning of February.

- We require you to provide a Crosswalk file that will allow us to match your NCQA data files with your FEHB plan name and Sub-Code two weeks after NCQA makes submission ID's available (see additional information regarding the Crosswalk below).
- **June 17, 2002**, is the reporting deadline for you to provide your final member-level data files, summary-level data files and crosswalks to our contractor, Office Remedies, Inc. (ORI).
- The OPM data processing fee will change from \$283 per subcode to \$474 per carrier code. Plans that submit data to OPM will be charged the data processing fee regardless of the plans FEHB Program status for 2003.

Public Burden Statement

You must include the following statement on questionnaires you mail to respondents: "This information collection has been approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (Control Number 3206-0236) and is in compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. We estimate that it will take an average of 20 minutes to complete, including the time to read instructions and to gather necessary information. You may send comments about our estimate or any suggestions for minimizing respondent burden, reducing completion time or any other aspect of this information collection to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Reports and Forms Officer (OMB Number 3206-0236), Washington, DC 20415-7900. Your participation in this information collection is voluntary. The OMB Number, 3206-0236, is currently valid. OPM may not collect this information, and you are not required to respond, unless this number is displayed." Also, include the following statement in the upper right corner of each questionnaire: "Form approved: OMB No. 3206-0236."

Data Collection Vendor

You must use a NCQA Certified HEDIS Survey Vendor to administer your CAHPS® 2.0H Surveys. You may contract with any NCQA Certified survey vendor. A list of approved vendors is available online at <http://www.ncqa.org/Programs/HEDIS/hedis2002vol3.htm>. Please check the list to verify that your vendor is NCQA Certified to administer HEDIS 2002 CAHPS® 2.0H Surveys.

Please provide all of the information requested in the enclosed Vendor Selection Form (Appendix B) and return to us by December 21, 2001. If you offer more than one FEHB plan, please list the name and FEHB Sub-Code for each plan you offer. Please e-mail the

completed form to rpierce@opm.gov. You can also submit the form by facsimile at (202) 606-0036.

Pre-Administration Audit Requirement

If you are an FEHB plan that is not seeking NCQA Accreditation and do not intend to include survey results in NCQA's information products, you do not have to meet this requirement. If you are seeking NCQA Accreditation and if you intend to include your plan's survey results in NCQA's information products (i.e., Quality Compass^{®2}), then your sample frame must be audited. Please contact NCQA's Technical Inquiry Line, if you have questions about this requirement.

Survey Instruments & Protocols

Your vendor must use the CAHPS[®] 2.0H questionnaire (see Appendix A). Vendors must administer the survey and report survey results according to the protocols in NCQA's HEDIS[®] 2002, Volume 3 (Specifications for Survey Measures), including subsequent updates. NCQA vendors have received copies of HEDIS[®] - Volume 3, which includes the survey instrument and protocols. You may order copies from NCQA online at <http://www.ncqa.org/Communications/Publications/index.htm>.

Membership Data & Sample Frame

Please work closely with your vendor to draw sample frames for your survey. HMO and POS plans must draw the sample according to NCQA protocols.

Fee-for-Service (FFS) plans must also follow the NCQA protocols for drawing the sample frame with one exception. FFS plans must draw the sample frame from all currently enrolled FEHB members, regardless of their Medicare status.

Crosswalk

When your vendor submits member level and summary level data to OPM, they will need to provide a "Crosswalk" file to identify plan data submissions. The Crosswalk will allow us to match up NCQA Sub-ID's with your plan's unique FEHB Sub-Code. Also, the Crosswalk will identify plans that are sharing survey data. Appendix C contains a list of FEHB plans and their unique Sub-Codes.

² Quality Compass is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

The Crosswalk file must include the names of the plan(s) that you will survey, the State(s) in which the plan provide services and the plan's FEHB Sub-Code (See Appendix D for an example of what the Crosswalk should look like). The file includes: member level file name, summary level file name and the plan's NCQA Sub-ID. A Crosswalk must accompany each data submission to OPM. Please direct questions regarding the Crosswalk to: Paul Kallaur or Nina Smith with the Center for the Study of Service at (202) 454-3030 or (202) 454-3042, or by e-mail at: pkallaur@cssresearch.org or nsmith@cssresearch.org.

Reporting Survey Data to OPM

Your vendor must submit CAHPS® 2.0H member level data files to NCQA according to NCQA's Adult Survey File Specifications and Layouts. To ensure consistency and comparability of survey results we require all plans to submit their member level data files to NCQA for calculation of survey results through their vendor. NCQA will calculate survey results and create validated member level data files and summary level data files on behalf of vendors.

Reporting Format

We will accept your member level data files and summary level data files after they have been processed by NCQA. Your vendor may submit data via e-mail, diskette or compact disc (CD). You may include results for multiple plans on a single diskette or CD. All submission must include a content label/sheet and a Crosswalk. Please direct questions regarding data files to Sue Lynd or Carla Trexler with ORI at (703) 478-0910. Please send all data files to ORI via e-mail at oridata@aol.com or by overnight mail to:

ORI
Attention: Sue Lynd
171 Elden Street
Suite 160
Herndon, VA 20170

Processing Fee

Each plan participating in the survey will be responsible for a pro rata share of the total cost of compiling, processing and reporting CAHPS® 2.0H Survey data to OPM. The 2002 processing fee is \$474 per carrier code. ORI will send you an invoice for the data processing fee. The fees are payable directly to ORI and will be due on June 17, 2002. If a plan decides to withdraw from the FEHB Program after submitting CAHPS data to OPM, the plan is still liable for the processing fee.

Reporting Deadlines

Please note the following reporting deadlines for submitting information and data to OPM:

- ❑ Vendor Selection Form - December 21, 2001
- ❑ Crosswalk - two weeks after NCQA issues Submission ID's
- ❑ Member level data – June 17, 2002
- ❑ Final summary level data files (must be NCQA validated) – June 17, 2002

We look forward to working with you to make the 2002 Survey a great success. Please contact Ralph Pierce (rpierce@opm.gov), (202) 606-0745, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Abby L. Block
Assistant Director
For Insurance Programs

Enclosures