

Eli's Hospice Insider

Quality: Get A Jump On Your CAHPS Contracting

The CAHPS dry-run period is looming large.

There's no time to waste when it comes to a reimbursement-impacting new requirement.

Hospices are required to contract with a third party to conduct their hospice Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems surveys and report the data to the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services**. Hospices have been eagerly awaiting the approved CAHPS vendor list, and CMS finally posted it in late August on its CAHPS website at www.hospicecahpsurvey.org/content/ApprovedSurvey.asp.

The list of about 30 vendors is "conditionally" approved, CMS says on the site.

Reminder: Hospices will perform a CAHPS "dry run" in the first quarter of 2015, explained CMS's **Debra Dean-Whittaker** in the Aug. 20 Open Door Forum for home health and hospice providers. Hospices will need to participate for at least one month in January, February or March next year. After the dry run period, continuous monthly survey administration starts April 1, 2015, Dean-Whittaker told listeners.

CAHPS data reporting in 2015 will impact 2017 rates, Dean-Whittaker pointed out. "There are dollars on the table," she said in the forum.

Vendor To Report Live Discharge Rate

Once you've selected and approved your vendor in the system, your job will be to provide that vendor with a list of patients deaths for the surveys that target caregivers and family, Dean-Whittaker explained. You'll have to do so once in Q1, then every month starting in April.

Tip: Your list will include patients who died, not those who were discharged or revoked the benefit, Dean-Whittaker pointed out in response to a caller question.

However: You will report your number of live discharges, if not their individually identifiable data, she said. In this way, CMS will be able to easily keep tabs on your rate of live discharges.

Stay tuned for the officially approved version of the CAHPS survey, Dean-Whittaker told another caller. The **Office of Management and Budget** has not yet approved the final survey, although CMS doesn't expect major changes to the tool, she added.

You can find out more details about CAHPS requirements in the newly released Quality Assurance Guidelines at www.hospicecahpsurvey.org/content/QualityAssurance.aspx.