



**CAHPS Survey
Guidance for REACH ACOs
2023 Survey Administration**

Contract with and Authorize a Survey Vendor to Conduct the PY2023 CAHPS Survey

REACH ACOs must enter and maintain a formal written contract with a CAHPS vendor that is approved for ACO REACH CAHPS. After executing the contract, REACH ACOs are also required to execute a Business Associate Agreement with the vendor and authorize their vendor online at the ACO REACH CAHPS website by **August 7, 2023**.

CMS will publish the list of ACO REACH CAHPS vendors conditionally approved for the PY2023 CAHPS in **April 2023**. ACOs may wish to begin contacting these vendors to learn about their services. CMS will publish the list of ACO REACH CAHPS vendors fully approved for the 2023 CAHPS no later than **June 9, 2023**, in the Knowledge Library. Watch for announcements in ACO REACH Newsletter.

Follow these easy steps to authorize your survey vendor:

1. Choose an individual on your staff to be your designated Survey Administrator.

Your Survey Administrator should be the person who will be working with your approved survey vendor. Your Survey Administrator should select a backup Administrator to cover duties during periods when the Survey Administrator is out of the office.

2. The Survey Administer registers on the ACO REACH CAHPS website.

During the **June 9 – August 7, 2023 open registration period**, the Survey Administrator:

- obtains user credentials to the ACO REACH CAHPS website,
- registers their ACO by entering ACO name, “Lookup” and “Confirm,” and
- signs an electronic consent form agreeing to serve as the ACO’s Survey Administrator.

Note: If your ACO’s Survey Administrator for PY2023 is the same person as the Survey Administrator for PY2022, there is no need to register again.

3. The Survey Administrator authorizes your approved survey vendor.

Your Survey Administrator, who registered in Step 2, must log in to the ACO REACH CAHPS website and:

- select a vendor from the drop down list of approved vendors for the PY2023 period,
- attest that they have executed a contract with the vendor, and
- save the authorization by **August 7, 2023**.

Watch the ACO REACH Newsletter for announcements, instructions and links beginning in June 2023.

Once the survey administrator has authorized a vendor for PY2023, switching to a different vendor is not recommended. Doing so will jeopardize your ability to meet PY2023 ACO REACH quality reporting requirements, however, if necessary, vendors can be switched before August 7, 2023.

Notify Your CAHPS Survey Vendor of Residential Care/Assisted Living Facilities

CMS strongly encourages REACH ACOs to provide their authorized survey vendor with the names and addresses of residential care facilities and assisted living facilities commonly used by the beneficiaries in their REACH ACO. Survey vendors need this information in **August 2023**, so please follow up with your survey vendor for their specific requirements.

To identify facilities, REACH ACOs can scan through patient addresses or do a geographical search of nearby residential care/assisted living facilities. Providing this information to survey vendors allows them to identify facility-residing patients and block these patients from the telephone follow-up portion of the survey. Survey calls to facilities—particularly when multiple ACO REACH patients are surveyed in a facility—place a significant burden on facility staff and can negatively impact the relationship between facilities and REACH ACOs.

Communicating with Patients about the Survey

Medicare beneficiaries who receive a survey about their provider may be wary of its legitimacy and frequently turn to their provider for assurance. Providers can communicate their support for the survey and encourage patients to answer the survey, noting that their response, while voluntary, is valuable. REACH ACO staff should familiarize themselves with the Waiting Room FAQs (discussed below) so they can answer patient questions about the survey with confidence and support, while assuring patients of the survey’s confidentiality.

REACH ACO staff should follow the Patient Communication Do’s and Don’ts presented in the table below.

Do	Don't
Express support for the survey.	Ask patients if they would like to be included in the survey.
Answer questions based on the Waiting Room FAQs.	Influence patients’ answers on the survey.
Confirm the legitimacy of the survey and the survey vendor.	Attempt to determine which patients were sampled.
Confirm that participation is voluntary.	Solicit positive feedback from patients in the survey.
Assure patients that the REACH ACO has no way of knowing who responds to the survey. Patient names are never reported, only responses.	Imply that the REACH ACO or its providers will be rewarded for positive feedback.
Confirm that their participation will not affect the care they receive.	Offer incentives of any kind for participating in the survey.
Confirm that their participation will not affect their Medicare benefits or other health care benefits.	Provide a copy of the questionnaire to patients.

CMS provides Waiting Room FAQs that answer common patient questions about the survey. Once FAQs are disseminated in **March 2023** via the ACO REACH Newsletter and Knowledge Library, CMS recommends REACH ACOs print and keep copies in their waiting rooms for patient perusal. FAQs are provided in both English and Spanish. Watch for announcements in the ACO REACH Newsletter.

Refrain from Administering Other Surveys While PY2023 ACO REACH CAHPS Is Actively Surveying

To avoid placing more burdens on patients, CMS strongly encourages REACH ACOs to refrain from conducting other patient surveys or census surveys starting 4 weeks prior to and during the period when the ACO REACH CAHPS is actively surveying: **August 14, 2023, to December 8, 2023**. CMS-sponsored surveys are exempt from this guidance.

- When conducting other surveys, REACH ACOs must not ask any survey questions that are the same as or similar to the questions in the ACO REACH CAHPS Survey. (This guidance does not apply to other CMS-sponsored surveys.)
- Other surveys can include questions that ask for more in-depth information, as long as the questions are different from those included in the ACO REACH CAHPS.

Review Your Survey Vendor's PY2023 ACO REACH CAHPS Data Submission Reports

Since participation in the ACO REACH CAHPS Survey is a quality reporting requirement, CMS encourages all REACH ACOs to confirm that their survey vendor has submitted data files on the ACO REACH CAHPS website before the data submission deadline of **January 15, 2024**. To enable REACH ACOs to confirm this with ease, the registered Survey Administrator can view a data submission report showing whether their vendor has submitted data. The purpose of this review is to ensure each vendor meets its contracted requirements to submit REACH ACO data, so that REACH ACOs will be in compliance with quality reporting requirements. Watch the ACO REACH Newsletter in December 2023-January 2024 for announcements that the data submission reports is available.

To Obtain Further Information

Watch for further updates and information about upcoming webinars in the ACO REACH Newsletter.

Contact the ACO REACH Helpdesk at ACOREACH@cms.hhs.gov or 1-888-734-6433 with specific questions.

See the ACO REACH CAHPS website at <https://gpdccahps.org> (prior to February 2023) or <https://acoreachcahps.org> (beginning February 2023).