



Medicare Health Outcomes Survey 2021 New Survey Vendor Training



May 25, 2021



Welcome, Introduction, and Overview

HOS 2021 New Survey Vendor Training Agenda

Time (p.m., ET)	Agenda Item
1:00 – 1:05	Welcome, Introduction, and Overview
1:05 – 1:25	Implementation of the HOS
1:25 – 1:40	Overview of the HOS and HOS Measures
1:40 – 1:55	Sampling
1:55 – 2:30	The HOS Protocol
2:30 – 2:45	Mail Processing and Decision Rule Guidelines
2:45 – 3:05	Telephone Interviewing Specifications
3:05 – 3:15	Break
3:15 – 3:45	Data Coding
3:45 – 3:55	Data Submission
3:55 – 4:25	Quality Oversight
4:25 – 4:40	Questions and Closing
4:40 – 5:00	Post-Training Test



Implementation of the HOS

Overview

- Introduction to the HOS
- HOS Primary Goals
- Uses of the HOS Data
- Star Ratings
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Communications Protocol
- Feedback and Process Improvement

Introduction to the HOS

- First patient-reported outcomes measure (PRO or PROM) for the Medicare population in managed care
 - Launched in 1998 as the *Health of Seniors*
 - Renamed Health Outcomes Survey to reflect the inclusion of disabled, non-elderly beneficiaries
- Monitors the quality of care provided to Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare Advantage Organizations (MAOs)
- Measures self-reported health status, physical and mental functioning, and outcomes of care
- CMS remains committed to measuring quality of care through outcomes assessment

Introduction to the HOS (Cont'd)

- Longitudinal or “cohort” survey administered to a random sample of members from each MAO at the beginning (Baseline) and end (Follow-Up) of a two-year period
 - 2021 Round 24 will survey Cohort 24 (Baseline) and resurvey Cohort 22 (Follow-Up)
- Participants: Medicare beneficiaries ages 18 and up who are currently enrolled in an MAO and reside in the U.S. or its territories
 - Baseline: No continuous enrollment requirement
 - Follow-Up: Members resurveyed after two years

HOS Primary Goals

- Gather valid, reliable, and meaningful data that are used to:
 - Monitor health plan performance
 - Reward top-performing Medicare Advantage (MA) contracts (Quality Bonus Payments)
 - Estimate frailty and adjust payments for Fully Integrated Dual Eligible (FIDE) Special Needs Plans (SNP) and Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) based on average frailty of their enrollment
 - Provide metrics that allow plans to monitor the health of their enrollment and to target quality improvement activities for vulnerable subgroups
 - Provide data to beneficiaries that allow them to make more informed enrollment decisions

Other Uses of HOS Data

- Assess frailty, health disparities, and quality of life in the Medicare Advantage population
- Advance the science of functional health outcomes measurement
- Support research by CMS, other federal agencies, and external researchers
 - Public Use Files (PUF)
 - Limited Data Sets (LDS)
 - Research Identifiable Files (RIF)
 - SEER-MHOS data resource provides information about elderly MA enrollees with cancer (NIH/NCI)

Star Ratings: Impact

- Public Reporting
 - HOS data are used to create Star Ratings which consumers can use along with benefit and cost information to make plan choices
- Marketing/Enrollment
 - CMS makes special enrollment provisions for outlier performing contracts
- Financial
 - The Affordable Care Act established CMS's Star Ratings as the basis of Quality Bonus Payments

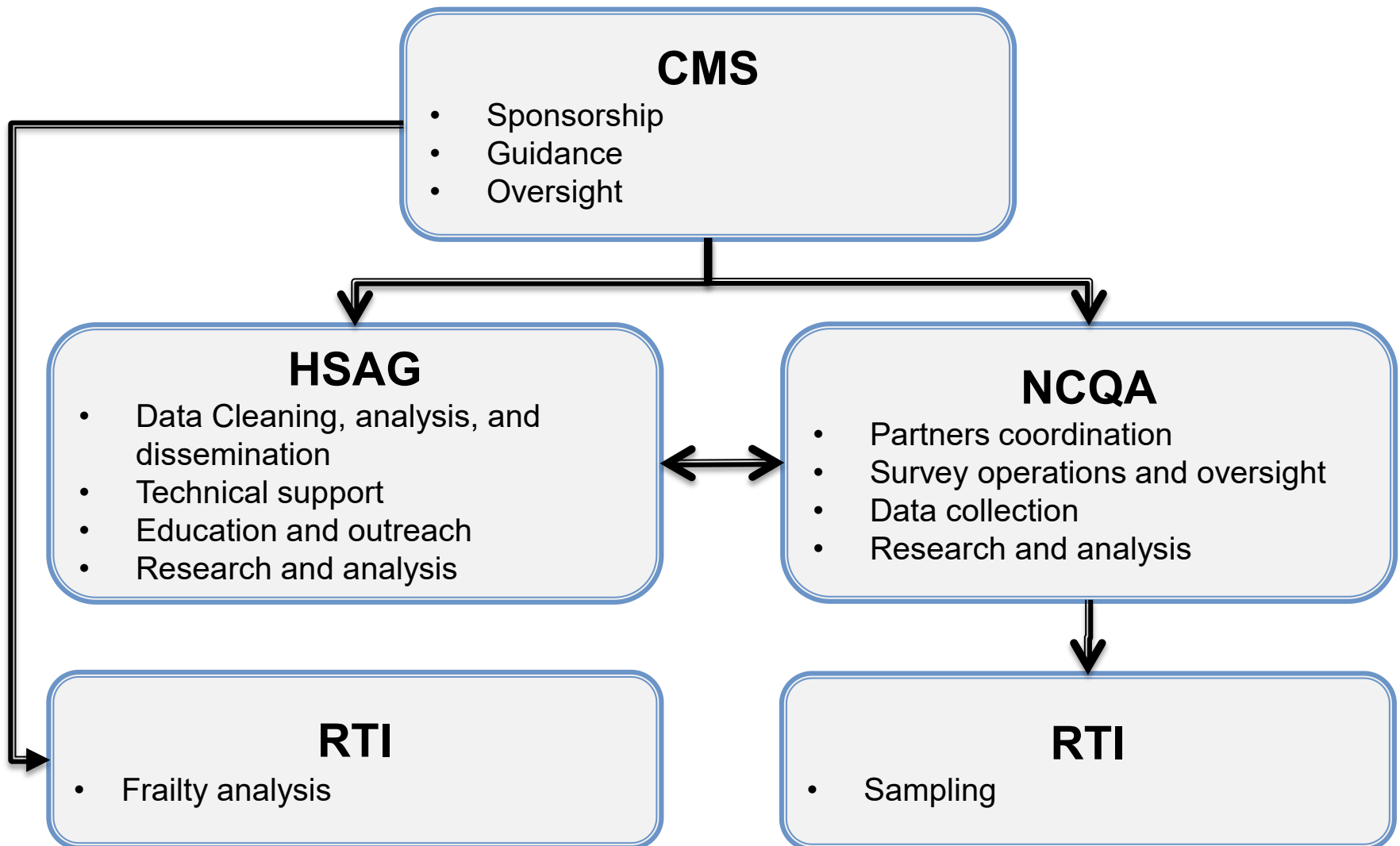
Star Ratings: Integrity

- Data integrity is critical to Star Ratings
- CMS continues to monitor and identify risks for inaccurate or unreliable Star Ratings data
 - A contract's rating is reduced to **1 star** if biased or erroneous data are identified
- MAOs and HOS Survey Vendors **MAY NOT:**
 - Attempt to influence beneficiaries' responses to HOS survey questions in any way
- Encouraging participation without biasing the results is tricky
 - When in doubt about practices, consult the HOS Project Team rather than jeopardizing your clients' results by having them labeled as biased



HOS Roles and Responsibilities

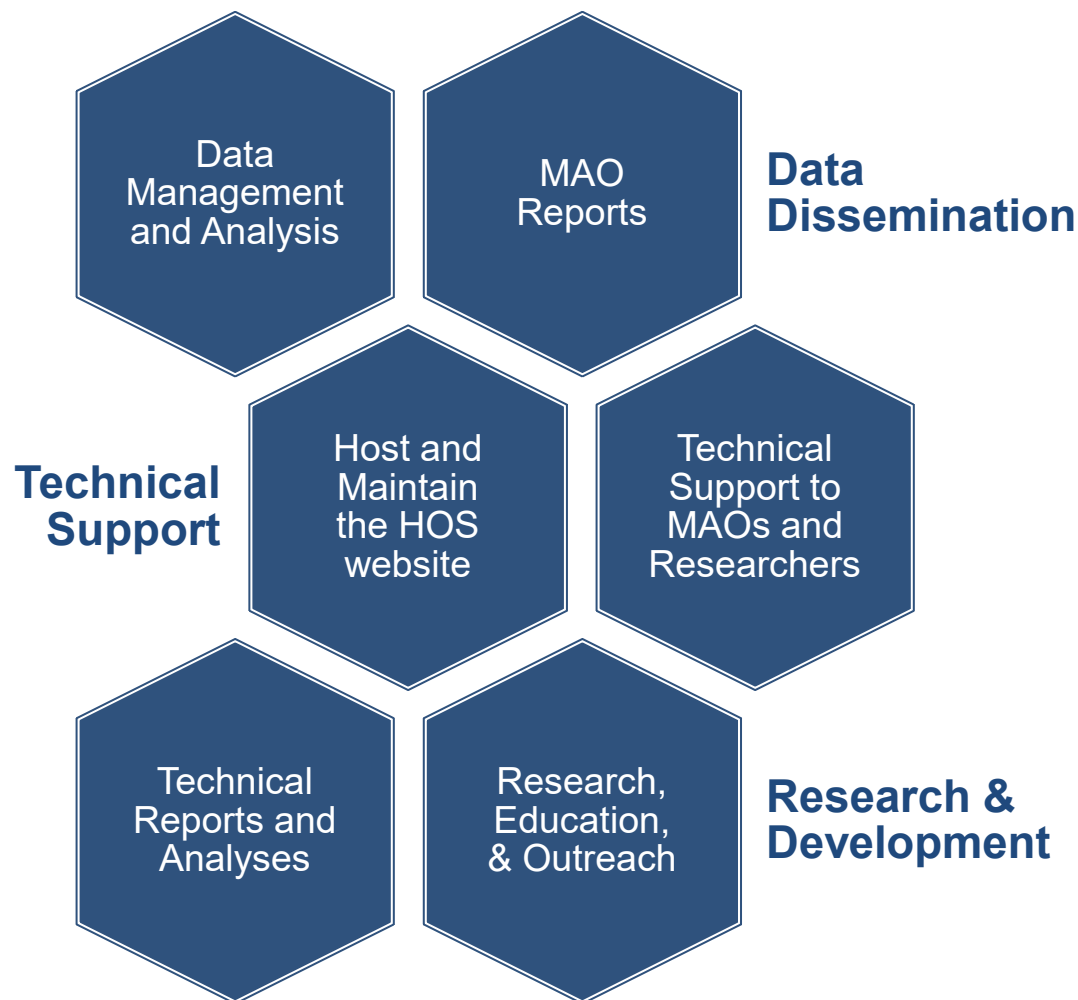
The HOS Partners



NCQA



HSAG



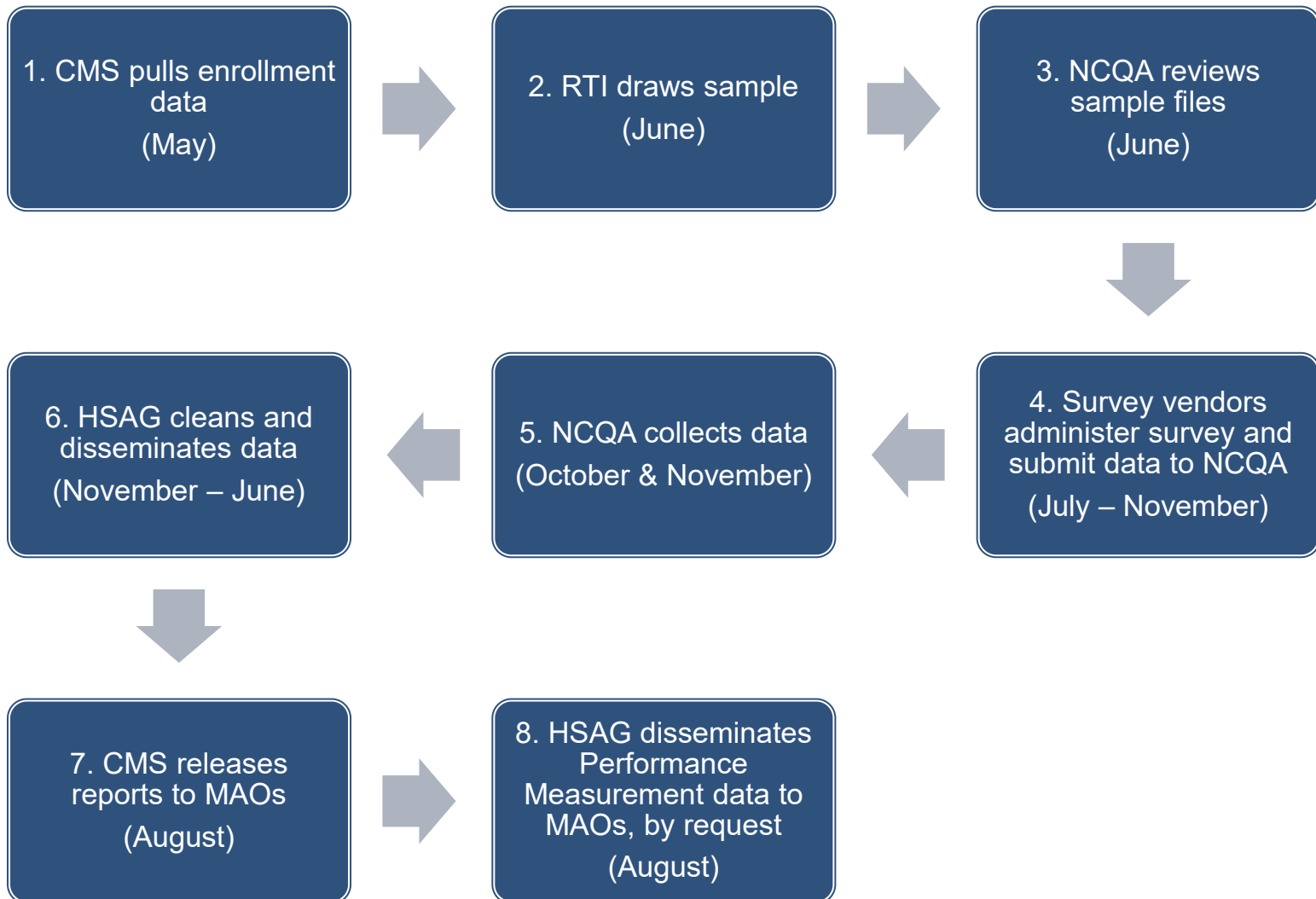
Medicare Advantage Organizations

- Contract with a CMS-approved HOS survey vendor
- Authorize the survey vendor to submit data on their behalf
- Add telephone numbers to the SUPPLEMENTAL file
- Preview HOS results in CMS's Health Plan Management System (HPMS) during the plan preview period prior to public reporting

CMS-Approved Survey Vendors

- Adhere to the HOS Minimum Business Requirements, Rules of Participation, and program requirements outlined in the Quality Assurance Guidelines (QAG)
- Execute a Data Use Agreement (DUA) with CMS
- Verify authorization to submit data on behalf of MAOs
- Perform quality checks on sample files
- Administer HOS and oversee staff, subcontractors, and external partners
- Conform with HOS protocols and promptly report discrepancies (within one business day)
- Refrain from providing HOS measure results to MAOs
- Participate in quality oversight activities with NCQA
- Submit data files and attest to data quality

HOS Administration Process



Communications Protocol

Survey vendors should note the following:

- NCQA and the survey vendors communicate directly about all operational matters affecting survey administration
- NCQA will distribute policy directions from CMS to vendors
- NCQA creates and maintains the standardized distribution list for all HOS communications
- HOS survey vendors are responsible for maintaining protocols for addressing distressed beneficiaries (those at risk of harm, self-harm or harming others)
- Vendors must report operational errors to NCQA immediately

Feedback and Process Improvement

- CMS and its contractors provide feedback to MAOs about survey implementation and results
- CMS responds to MAO requests, such as for new translations of the survey, but does not require survey vendors to offer new translations
- CMS has NCQA gather feedback from vendors about process improvements that could be made
- Mistakes made by vendors can be costly to MAOs, so open and rapid communication between vendors and NCQA are crucial



Overview of the HOS and HOS Measures

Overview

- Medicare Health Outcomes Survey
- Physical and Mental Component Summary Scores
- Physical Functioning and Activities of Daily Living
- HOS Questionnaire
- HEDIS Effectiveness of Care Measures
- Data Collection and Dissemination
- Health Outcomes Survey – Modified

Medicare Health Outcomes Survey

- Assesses an MAO's ability to maintain or improve the physical and mental health of its Medicare beneficiaries over time
- Two-year cohort survey
 - Administered to random sample at Baseline
 - Baseline respondents resurveyed at Follow-Up (two years later)
 - Change score calculated (taking adjustment factors into account)

Medicare Health Outcomes Survey (Cont'd)

- Each member's physical and mental health status categorized as "better," "the same" or "worse" than expected
 - MAO death rate is combined with the physical health results only
- Plan-level results indicate:
 - Proportion of members "better"
 - Proportion of members "the same"
 - Proportion of members "worse"
- Physical and Mental Component Summary score results reported separately

Physical and Mental Component Summary Scores

- Veterans RAND 12-Item Health Survey (VR-12) evaluates physical and mental health
 - Results include:
 - Physical Component Summary (PCS) score
 - Mental Component Summary (MCS) score
 - PCS and MCS are mode adjusted for the impact of telephone administration
 - PCS and MCS for quality reporting are case-mix adjusted for respondent characteristics at Baseline, including age, gender, race, education, chronic conditions, and health status

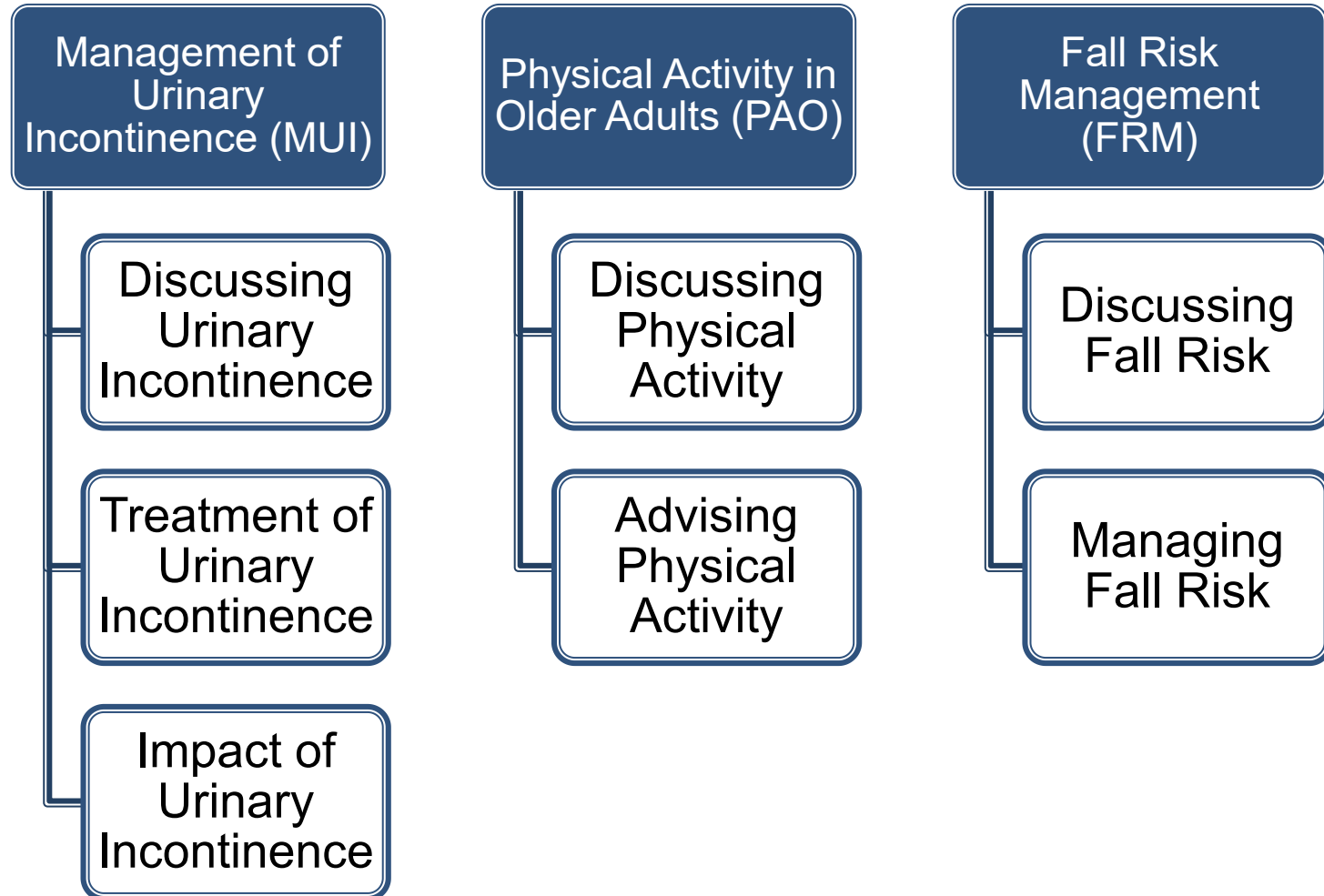
Physical Functioning and Activities of Daily Living

- Two VR-12 and six activities of daily living (ADL) questions are combined to calculate the Physical Functioning and Activities of Daily Living change score

HOS Questionnaire

- The HOS questionnaire also contains questions on the following survey components:
 - HEDIS Effectiveness of Care Measures
 - Health questions on ADL, pain, depression, sleep quality, and chronic conditions
 - Information for case-mix and risk adjustment
 - Healthy Days measure
 - Height and weight for Body Mass Index calculation
 - Race, ethnicity, primary language, sex, and disability status (Section 4302 of the Affordable Care Act)

HEDIS Effectiveness of Care Measures



Data Collection and Dissemination

	Year 20 (2017)	Year 21 (2018)	Year 22 (2019)	Year 23 (2020)	Year 24 (2021)
Cohort 20	Cohort 20 Baseline Data Collection		Cohort 20 Follow-Up Data Collection	2017-19 Cohort 20 Performance Measurement	
Cohort 21		Cohort 21 Baseline Data Collection		Cohort 21 Follow-Up Data Collection	2018-20 Cohort 21 Performance Measurement
Cohort 22			Cohort 22 Baseline Data Collection		Cohort 22 Follow-Up Data Collection
Cohort 23				Cohort 23 Baseline Data Collection	
Cohort 24					Cohort 24 Baseline Data Collection

HOS – Modified (HOS-M)

- Administered to vulnerable Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in PACE organizations and some MAO FIDE SNP
- Assesses the frailty of the population to adjust payments
- Cross-sectional study design that measures the physical and mental functioning of beneficiaries at a single point in time
- Questionnaire and protocols vary from HOS



Sampling

Overview

- HOS Reporting Requirements
- Baseline and Follow-Up Sample Selection
- Double-Duty Respondents
- Voluntary Fielding
- Oversampling
- Options for MAOs Offering FIDE SNPs
- Sample Files, Member Confidentiality and Sample File Review
- Do Not Survey List

HOS Reporting Requirements

- Eligible organization types in effect on or before January 1, 2020, with 500 or more beneficiaries as of February 1, 2021, are required to report the Baseline survey
- All continuing MA contracts that administered the Baseline survey two years prior are required to administer the Follow-Up survey in 2021

HOS Reporting Requirements (Cont'd)

- Baseline and Follow-Up reporting requirements may vary per contract based on total enrollment
- Baseline sample is drawn first, then Follow-Up sample is identified
- Baseline and Follow-Up samples are called the “Quality Reporting Sample”

Reporting Requirement	Definition
Baseline Only	Contract has 500 or more members and did not administer the Baseline survey two years prior
Follow-Up Only	Contract has less than 500 members but administered the Baseline survey two years prior
Baseline and Follow-Up	Contract has 500 or more members and fielded the Baseline survey two years prior

Baseline Sampling

- The Baseline sample size varies according to MA contract size

MA Contract Size	Sampling Procedure
500-1,200 members	All eligible members included in the sample
1,201 or more members	Random sample of 1,200 members

Follow-Up Sample Selection

- CMS identifies members eligible for the Follow-Up survey
 - Valid PCS or MCS score was calculated during Baseline
 - Enrolled in the same MA contract at the time Follow-Up sample is selected

Double-Duty Respondents

- “Double-duty” respondents are eligible for the Follow-Up survey and are also randomly selected for the Baseline survey
- Respondents receive one survey during survey administration

Voluntary Fielding

- MAOs that are not required to report may choose to voluntarily report Baseline
- MAOs that choose to voluntarily report Baseline are required to report Follow-Up and will have their results publicly reported

Oversampling

- MAOs have the option to oversample the Baseline sample
- MAOs may elect to oversample over the standard maximum sample size of 1,200 at the contract level
- Oversampling requests are expressed as a whole percentage of the maximum sample size

Options for MAOs Offering FIDE SNPs

- MAOs offering FIDE SNPs elect to field HOS or HOS-M* at the Plan Benefit Package (PBP) level for frailty adjustment
- For plans required to report HOS, the quality reporting sample is drawn first
- FIDE SNP PBPs must have at least 50 members in the PBP to participate
 - There must be 50 remaining members after the quality reporting requirements are met in order to participate using HOS-M
- At least 30 responses are needed to calculate a frailty score

Optional Fielding FIDE SNP

MA contracts with less than 500 members

- All eligible FIDE SNP PBP members are surveyed using either HOS or HOS-M

MA contracts with 500 or more members and all eligible members are needed for quality reporting

- FIDE SNP PBP members must be surveyed using HOS; sample size of up to 1,200

MA contracts with 500 or more members with 50 remaining after quality reporting

- FIDE SNP PBP members may be surveyed for frailty using HOS or HOS-M; sample size of up to 1,200

Sampling Files Sent to Survey Vendors

Header

- MA contract, survey vendor, and submission information

Sample

- Names, contact information, and other variables for sampled members

Supplemental

- Sampled members and is padded with non-sampled members
- Survey vendors send this file **securely** to MAOs to obtain member telephone numbers (MAO may optionally send language preferences and mailing addresses)
- **This is the only file that survey vendors may share with the MAO**

List

- Breakdown of protocol paths by MA contract

Summary Report

- Breakdown of various summary information included in the other four files

Member Confidentiality

- Sampling procedures were developed to maintain the confidentiality of sampled members
- Survey vendors may not give MAOs access to sampled members' information
 - The **SUPPLEMENTAL** file is the **ONLY** file that may be shared with MAOs

Survey Vendor Review of Sample Files

- NCQA will provide sample files to survey vendors in advance of survey fielding
- Survey vendors review the sample files and report any findings to the HOS Project Team
- Survey vendors may not exclude any member in the sample file from administration
 - Contact the HOS Project Team with questions about member eligibility
- Report issues immediately to the HOS Project Team at hos@ncqa.org

Survey Vendor Review of Sample Files (Cont'd)

Quality Check	Verification
Foreign Address	Survey vendors may use standard means (e.g., National Change of Address) to secure a U.S. mailing address
Date of Birth	All sampled members are age 18 or older
Date of Death	No sampled member has a date of death
Termination Date from MAO	No MA-assigned termination date for any member
Duplication of Member	No duplicate Beneficiary Link Keys (i.e., CMS member identifier)

Do Not Survey List

- Survey vendors must maintain a list of members who request to be removed from future surveys during administration
- Survey vendors will only assign a *Exclude from Future Survey Samples* flag of “1” when a member specifically requests not to be contacted again

Field Description	Valid Values
DNS <i>Do Not Survey—Exclude from Future Survey Samples Flag</i>	1 = Member specifically requested <i>Take me off your list and/or never contact me again</i> 2 = Member did not request <i>Take me off your list and/or never contact me again</i>

Do Not Survey List (Cont'd)

- Survey vendors may NOT remove HOS members from sampling or assign an *Exclude from Future Survey Samples* flag based on information from its internal corporate Do Not Call list or information provided by the MAO



The HOS Protocol

Overview

- Data Collection Protocol
- Protocol Paths
- Administering HOS in Multiple Languages
- The Mail Phase
- The Telephone Phase
- Customer Support Services

Data Collection Protocol

- Mixed mode data collection
- Longitudinal to assess health over time
 - Sample member at Baseline, then two years later (at Follow-Up)
- English, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian
 - Russian protocol: mail only

Standardized Data Collection

- Survey vendors must use the standardized data collection protocol outlined in the *Medicare HOS Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications V2.5* (QAG)
- Standardized data collection ensures survey data collected across the CMS-approved HOS survey vendors are comparable
- Survey vendors may not change the wording or order of the survey questions, mailing materials, or telephone script

Data Collection Timeline

Task	Date (2021)
Send sample files to vendors	June 28
Mail Baseline and Follow-Up prenotification letter	July 19
Open survey vendor customer support telephone and email	July 19
Open inbound electronic telephone interviewing	July 19
Mail Baseline and Follow-Up first questionnaire	July 26

Data Collection Timeline (Cont'd)

Task	Date (2021)
Mail Baseline and Follow-Up reminder/thank-you postcard	August 2
Mail Baseline and Follow-Up second questionnaire	August 30
Mail Baseline and Follow-Up second reminder/thank-you postcard (<i>Russian only</i>)	September 7
Conduct Baseline and Follow-Up outbound telephone interviewing	September 20 – November 1

Data Collection Timeline (Cont'd)

Task	Date (2021)
Submit interim data files	October 5 – October 7
End Baseline and Follow-Up data collection	November 1
Prepare and submit final data files	November 2 – November 12
Final data files due	November 12

Administering the HOS

- Sampled members are kept in the protocol until a final disposition code is achieved or the protocol is exhausted
 - All sampled members receive prenotification letter and first questionnaire mailing
 - Members who return a complete questionnaire are removed from the remainder of the protocol
 - Members who do not respond must remain in the protocol unless the vendor receives a refusal or identifies the member as ineligible
 - In some cases, if a member is deemed ineligible, the vendor must attempt to obtain a proxy

Survey Management System

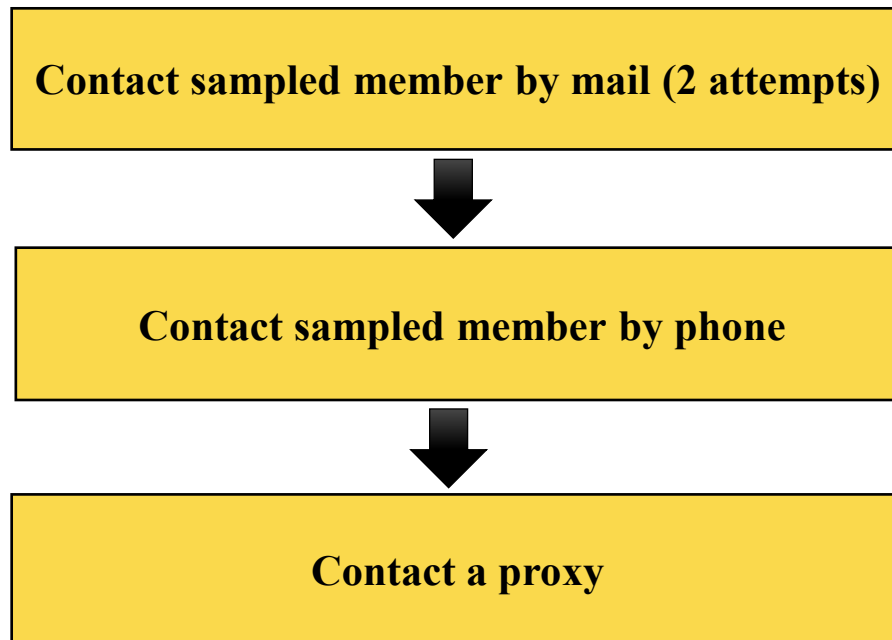
- Survey vendors must implement an automated survey management system (SMS)
- The SMS must track sampled members' data elements, data throughout various stages of survey implementation and processes, and returned survey data
- Survey vendors should test all modules of the SMS thoroughly prior to survey implementation
- Minimum functionality is specified in the QAG

Proxy Respondents

- Members are encouraged to respond
- Proxies can be family members, close friends, other responsible parties, program staff, home staff
- Facility or program staff should only serve as proxies at the request of the participant, family member, or other caregiver

Proxy Respondents (Cont'd)

- Survey vendors implement the following hierarchy when attempting to obtain a complete survey



Tracking Proxy Respondents

- Proxy information from Baseline is included in the sample file for the Follow-Up cohort
- Use exact proxy information provided by NCQA when entering into SMS
- If no name is provided in the sample file or if the proxy name is listed as “Illegible,” enter “Not Provided” for the proxy name on the survey cover letters and use a generic phrase during telephone interviewing

Protocol Paths

Protocol Identifier Flag

- Sample file combines Baseline and Follow-Up members
- Each member is assigned a Protocol Identifier flag that specifies the member's protocol path

Flag	Cohort	Language	Status at Baseline
1	Follow-Up	English	No proxy at Baseline
2	Follow-Up	English	Proxy at Baseline
3	Baseline	All Languages	
4	Follow-Up	Spanish	No proxy at Baseline
5	Follow-Up	Spanish	Proxy at Baseline
6	Follow-Up	Chinese	No proxy at Baseline
7	Follow-Up	Chinese	Proxy at Baseline
10	Follow-Up	Russian	No proxy at Baseline
11	Follow-Up	Russian	Proxy at Baseline

Protocol Paths

- Survey vendors use the Protocol Identifier flag to determine the appropriate mailing material language for each sampled member
 - See **Table 4** in the QAG for mailing material tracking numbers and protocol identifiers
- For sampled members in a Follow-Up protocol, survey vendors must send materials to the member or proxy in the language indicated by the Protocol Identifier flag unless the member or proxy requests otherwise

Administering HOS in Multiple Languages

- CMS provides survey vendors with translations of HOS questionnaires and supporting mailing materials in Spanish (and Chinese and Russian, if applicable)
- Survey vendors work with their MAOs to determine the survey language to send to sampled Baseline members
- Survey vendors and their MAOs have options for determining language preference for Baseline members

Administering HOS in Multiple Languages (Cont'd)

- Survey vendors include instructions for requesting a Spanish (and Chinese or Russian, if applicable) language questionnaire in the English Baseline prenotification letter
- If a member calls the survey vendor to request the questionnaire in Spanish, (Chinese or Russian, if applicable) the member is flagged to receive all further mailings in the requested language

Optional Languages

- For MAOs with a majority of members who primarily speak Chinese or Russian, the survey vendor may elect to administer Baseline Surveys in Chinese or Russian after discussion with the MAO to ascertain if that is the better option
- Chinese is a mixed-mode protocol
- Russian is available by mail only; therefore, protocol members receive two reminder/thank-you postcards

The Mail Phase

Data Collection Protocol

The Mail Phase

Mail Protocol Tasks	Date (2021)
Mail Baseline and Follow-Up prenotification letter	July 19
Mail Baseline and Follow-Up first questionnaire	July 26
Mail Baseline and Follow-Up reminder/thank-you postcard	August 2
Mail Baseline and Follow-Up second questionnaire	August 30
Mail Baseline and Follow-Up second reminder/thank-you postcard (<i>Russian only</i>)	September 7
End data collection	November 1

HOS Mailing Materials

- Survey vendors produce materials using templates provided by the HOS Project Team
- Must follow all requirements for mailing materials, including using CMS logos, personalizing salutations and adhering to formatting requirements
- NCQA reviews and approves all materials prior to printing

HOS Questionnaire

- Cover art provided separately; must be attached to HOS questionnaire
- Include survey vendor contact information on inside cover page and at the end of the survey
- May not change questions or response choices
- Submit any minor changes to questionnaire layout and formatting to NCQA for review

HOS Questionnaire (Cont'd)

- No supplemental questions
- Inscribe sampled member's unique identifier on front cover, back cover or both
- Print OMB footer on every page of HOS questionnaire

Validating and Correcting Addresses

- Validate mailing addresses using USPS CASS Certified Zip+4 or National Change of Address (NCOA)
- May use other methods to proactively identify incorrect addresses
- May send the SUPPLEMENTAL file to MAOs to obtain updated addresses
- May update address information for the second mailing if the correct address is obtained

Mailing of Postcards and Survey Packets

- Use First Class postage and postal bar coding on all mailing pieces (first class indicia allowed)
- Mark prenotification postcards “Return Service Requested” or “Address Service Requested”
- Return envelopes must be stamped or business reply
- Subcontractors may be used for mailing

The Telephone Phase

Data Collection Protocol

The Telephone Phase

Task	Date (2021)
Open inbound electronic telephone interviewing	July 19
Conduct Baseline and Follow-Up outbound telephone interviewing for mail nonrespondents or members that send blank or partial complete surveys	September 20 – November 1
End data collection	November 1

Telephone Phase

- Telephone phase begins four weeks after second questionnaire mailing
- Members in telephone phase:
 - Did not respond to mail questionnaire
 - Returned a blank or partially complete questionnaire (80% or more complete with one or more missing ADL items or less than 80% complete) to convert partially completes to completes
 - Survey vendors must ask all survey questions during the telephone interview

Telephone Phase (Cont'd)

- Standardized CATI script and design specifications required
- Capacity of interviewers must support data collection timeline
- Subcontractors may be used for CATI
- NCQA reviews screenshots and skip patterns prior to the start of fielding

Obtaining Telephone Numbers

- Sample file does not contain telephone numbers
 - NCQA provides SUPPLEMENTAL file
 - Use padded file to obtain telephone numbers from MAOs (also optional to obtain addresses)
- Obtain phone numbers from a second source (Telematch software, directory assistance, Internet directories)
- Two telephone numbers on record for each member; attempt second source number if number from MAO is not viable

Telephone Protocol

- Six to nine telephone attempts
 - Different times of day
 - Different days of the week
 - Different weeks
 - 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. call window (member local time)
- Interviewers may not leave voicemail messages

Telephone Data Collection

- A telephone attempt is defined as
 - Reaching an answering machine
 - Do not leave messages on answering machines
 - Six rings with no answer
 - Member not available
 - Member requests a call back at another time
 - Busy signal
 - If possible, attempt to re-contact member at 20-minute intervals
 - More than one busy signal on one day constitutes one attempt

Customer Support Services

- Survey vendor establish and maintain telephone help lines and a customer support email address
- Survey vendors ensure that personnel responding to telephone and email inquiries are properly trained
- Survey vendors must use the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document provided (Appendix C in the QAG)

Customer Support Telephone

- Toll-free customer support lines must be operational by the prenotification mail out date (July 19)
- Must have processes to accommodate all languages in which the survey vendor is fielding the survey
- Must be staffed from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (survey vendor local time), Mon-Fri
- Voicemails must be returned within 24 hours (or next business day)

Customer Support Email

- Emails must be responded to within 24 hours (or next business day)
- Must have processes to respond in multiple languages
- All emails must be forwarded to the HOS Project Team securely each week



Mail Processing and Decision Rule Guidelines

Overview

- Data Entry
- Scanning
- Decision Rules for Mail Surveys

Data Entry

- Scan in returned mail surveys to record date of receipt within **24 hours**
- Data must be processed within **three business days** of receipt
- SMS must track duplicate returned surveys separately and capture date of receipt
- Use key entry or scanning to capture survey data
- Survey vendors review each returned mail survey for legibility and completeness

Key Entry Guidelines

- **Unique record verification** – Must verify duplicate responses are not in the system
- **Range checks** – Must alert for invalid or “out of range” responses
- **100 percent validation** – Two separate data entry specialists key enter each answer from the survey; compare and reconcile errors
- **Disposition codes** – SMS must flag various states of data processing

Scanning Guidelines

- **Unique record verification** – Must verify duplicate responses are not in the system
- **Reconciling discrepancies** – Must detect “out of range” responses that need to be reconciled
- **Capture open-ended questions** – Survey vendors must capture responses to all open-ended questions
- **100 percent validation** – If scanning technology cannot accurately capture data and data must be key-entered, two separate data entry specialists key enter each answer from the survey; compare and reconcile errors
- **Disposition codes** – SMS must flag various states of data processing

Decision Rules for Mail Surveys

Decision Rules for Mail Surveys

Scale and Dichotomous/Categorical Questions

- If appropriately answered, code as is
- If mark is between two choices and is obviously closer to one, select the closer mark
- If mark is equally between two choices, code the data with the value for Missing
- If multiple responses are marked, code the data with the valid value for Missing
- If value is missing, code as Missing

Scale Questions

Earlier in the survey you were asked to indicate whether you have any limitations in your activities. We are now going to ask a few additional questions in this area.

10. Because of a health or physical problem, do you have any difficulty doing the following activities **without special equipment or help from another person?**

a. Bathing

- 1 ☒ No, I do not have difficulty
2 ☐ Yes, I have difficulty
3 ☐ I am unable to do this activity

b. Dressing

- 1 ☐ No, I do not have difficulty
2 ☒ Yes, I have difficulty
3 ☐ I am unable to do this activity

11. Because of a health or physical problem, do you have any difficulty doing the following activities?

a. Preparing meals

- 1 ☒ No, I do not have difficulty
2 ☐ Yes, I have difficulty
3 ☐ I don't do this activity

b. Managing money

- 1 ☒ No, I do not have difficulty
2 ☒ Yes, I have difficulty
3 ☐ I don't do this activity

c. Taking medication as prescribed

- 1 ☐ No, I do not have difficulty
2 ☐ Yes, I have difficulty
3 ☐ I don't do this activity

Q10a = 1

Q10b = 9 (Missing)

Q11a = 1

Q11b = 9 (Missing)

Q11c = 9 (Missing)

Decision Rules

Open-Ended Questions

- Code as is; zero-fill as instructed
- Code as is regardless of appropriateness
- For fractions or decimals, round up to nearest whole number
- For numeric responses with too many numbers, code as Inappropriate Answer
- For non-numeric responses and ranges, code as Inappropriate Answer
- If response is missing, code as Missing

Decision Rules

Open-Ended Questions

- If a response is illegible, survey vendors code it as ILLEGIBLE rather than leaving the response blank, so the value is included in the numerator of percent complete
- Contact NCQA for support if additional circumstances arise
- See **Table 8** in the QAG for specific coding instructions

Coding Open-Ended Questions

12. Now, thinking about your physical health, which includes physical illness and injury, for how many days during the **past 30 days** was your **physical health not good**?

Please enter a number between "0" and "30" days. If no days, please enter "0" days. Your best estimate would be fine.

60 days

13. Now, thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the **past 30 days** was your **mental health not good**?

Please enter a number between "0" and "30" days. If no days, please enter "0" days. Your best estimate would be fine.

zero days

14. During the **past 30 days**, for about how many days did **poor physical or mental health** keep you from doing your usual activities, such as self-care, work, or recreation?

Please enter a number between "0" and "30" days. If no days, please enter "0" days. Your best estimate would be fine.

2-3 days

Q12 = 60

Q13 = 00

Q14 = 88 (Inappropriate)

Coding Open-Ended Questions

54. How much do you weigh in pounds (lbs.)?

9 0 lbs.

55. How tall are you without shoes on, in feet and inches? Please fill in both feet and inches, for example: 5 feet 00 inches, or 5 feet 04 inches (if 1/2 inch, please round up).

feet 6 0 inches

Q54 = 090

Q55 = 960

54. How much do you weigh in pounds (lbs.)?

200 1/2 lbs.

55. How tall are you without shoes on, in feet and inches? Please fill in both feet and inches, for example: 5 feet 00 inches, or 5 feet 04 inches (if 1/2 inch, please round up).

15 feet inches

Q54 = 201

Q55 = 899

Coding Open-Ended Questions

66. Did someone help you complete this survey? If so, please fill in that person's name.

DO NOT enter the name of the person to whom this survey was addressed.

Please **print** clearly.

First Name: Jane Doe

Last Name: _____

Q66 (First Name) = Jane

Q66 (Last Name) = Doe

Decision Rules

Exceptions

- Select questions allow for multiple response choices
- File Layout allows for multiple response choices to be coded
 - Q57 (Ethnicity)
 - Q58 (Race)
 - Q62 (Living arrangement)

53. Are you Hispanic, Latino/a or Spanish origin? (One or more categories may be selected)

- 1 ☐ No, not of Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin
- 2 ☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano/a
- 3 ☒ Yes, Puerto Rican
- 4 ☒ Yes, Cuban
- 5 ☐ Yes, another Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin

57a = 0 57d = 1

57b = 0 57e = 0

57c = 1

Decision Rules

Exceptions

- **Q59 (Primary Language):** Members who select response category “7 = Some other language (please specify)” are instructed to specify the language mainly spoken at home if it is not English, Spanish, Chinese, or Russian
- **Q61 (Education):** If multiple responses have been selected then code as the highest level of education selected

Coding Primary Language Question

59. What language do you **mainly** speak at home?

- ~~1~~ ☒ English
2 ☐ Spanish
3 ☐ Chinese
4 ☐ Russian
~~7~~ ☒ Some other language (please specify)

Mand

Q59a = 9

Q59b = ILLEGIBLE

Decision Rules

- If question was supposed to have been skipped but was not, code data as is
- Do not clean skip pattern errors

Q46 = 3

Q47 = 2

Q48 = 3

46. In the **past 12 months**, did you talk with a doctor or other health provider about your level of exercise or physical activity? For example, a doctor or other health provider may ask if you exercise regularly or take part in physical exercise.

- 1 ☐ Yes → *Go to Question 47*
2 ☐ No → *Go to Question 47*
3 ☒ I had no visits in the past 12 months → *Go to Question 48*

47. In the **past 12 months**, did a doctor or other health provider advise you to start, increase or maintain your level of exercise or physical activity? For example, in order to improve your health, your doctor or other health provider may advise you to start taking the stairs, increase walking from 10 to 20 minutes every day or to maintain your current exercise program.

- 1 ☐ Yes
2 ☒ No

48. A fall is when your body goes to the ground without being pushed. In the **past 12 months**, did you talk with your doctor or other health provider about falling or problems with balance or walking?

- 1 ☐ Yes
2 ☐ No
3 ☒ I had no visits in the past 12 months



Telephone Interviewing Specifications

Overview

- Programming the Telephone Script
- Conventions
- Introduction
- Proxy Interviews
- Telephone Interviewer Training and Monitoring
- Guidelines for Reaching Members
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- Distressed Respondent Procedures

Programming the Telephone Script

- Use standardized telephone script provided by CMS (Appendix F in the QAG) to program telephone interviewing systems
 - Available in English, Spanish, and Chinese
- Link telephone interviewing system to the SMS to track sampled members throughout survey administration
- Submit screenshots of telephone interviewing systems and skip pattern logic for review prior to fielding

Programming the Telephone Script (Cont'd)

CMS Administrative Gender

- Use to program correct pronouns
- Field Position 232 of the Sample File Layout
- If CMS Administrative Gender = 2 (Female), survey vendors skip Question 35d (Prostate Cancer)
- Survey vendors must have a process for correcting gender mismatches

Programming the Telephone Script (Cont'd)

- Interviewer notes throughout the telephone script must be included on screen for telephone interviewers

<p>>Q34< {Has a doctor ever told you that you had}</p> <p>Any cancer other than skin cancer?</p> <p><1> YES [Q35a] <2> NO [Q36] <9> NOT ASCERTAINED [Q36]</p>	<p>>Q34< {Has a doctor ever told [him/her] that [he/she] had}</p> <p>Any cancer other than skin cancer?</p> <p><1> YES [Q35a] <2> NO [Q36] <9> NOT ASCERTAINED [Q36]</p>
<p><i>Interviewer Note: Member does not have to have the condition now.</i></p>	

Programming the Telephone Script (Cont'd)

- Programming notes in the telephone script do not need to be included on screen

<p>>Q57a< Are you Hispanic, Latino/a, or of Spanish origin?</p> <p><0> YES, <u>HISPANIC</u> OR NOT ASCERTAINED [Q57b] <1> NO, NOT HISPANIC [Q58a]</p> <p>{IF THE RESPONDENT DOES NOT WANT TO ANSWER QUESTION 57, CODE Q57a-e AS "0".}</p>	<p>>Q57a< Is [MEMBER NAME] Hispanic, Latino/a, or of Spanish origin?</p> <p><0> YES, <u>HISPANIC</u> OR NOT ASCERTAINED [Q57b] <1> NO, NOT HISPANIC [Q58a]</p> <p>{IF THE RESPONDENT DOES NOT WANT TO ANSWER QUESTION 57, CODE Q57a-e AS "0".}</p>
<p><i>Programming Note: For telephone interviewing, Question 57 is broken into parts a-e.</i></p>	

Conventions

- **Square brackets** show programming instructions (such as skip patterns) that do not appear on the interviewing screen
- **Curly brackets** identify language interviewers read as necessary
- **All capitals enclosed in curly brackets** are used for on-screen directions to interviewers

>Q10a<

Now I am going to ask a few additional questions about limitations with activities because of a health or physical problem. Because of a health or physical problem, do you have any difficulty bathing **without special equipment or help from another person**?

<1> NO {ABLE TO DO THIS WITHOUT DIFFICULTY}

→ {IF “YES,” ASK: Are you:}

<2> Able to do this with difficulty, or

<3> Unable to do this?


<9> NOT ASCERTAINED




→ {PROBE: Do you have difficulty taking a bath or taking a shower?}

→ [Q10b]

Conventions (Cont'd)

- Interviewers read aloud response options in **lower case type**
- Interviewers do not read aloud response options in **all capitals**
- Interviewers must emphasize words in **bold print**

 >Q41<
Do you **now** smoke:

<1>	Every day,	
<2>	Some days, or	
<3>	Not at all?	
<4>	DON'T KNOW	
<9>	NOT ASCERTAINED	

Conventions (Cont'd)

- Response options are numbered consistently with the valid value for the response category

>Q1<

In general, would you say your health is:



<1> Excellent,
<2> Very good,
<3> Good,
<4> Fair, or
<5> Poor?

<9> NOT ASCERTAINED

[Q2a]

Conventions (Cont'd)

- **[SPECIFY]** indicates that the interviewer must type in the respondent's exact response

>Q59b<

{IF SOME OTHER LANGUAGE, SAY:
Please specify the language.}

{ENTER LANGUAGE} [SPECIFY]



[Q60]

Conventions (Cont'd)

NOT ASCERTAINED

- NOT ASCERTAINED is a valid response option for each item in the telephone interviewing script
- Interviewers do not read NOT ASCERTAINED aloud

>Q50<

In the **past 12 months**, have you had a problem with balance or walking?

<1> YES

<2> NO

<9> NOT ASCERTAINED



[Q51]

Introduction

- The telephone survey introduction:
 - Must be read verbatim from script
 - Informs the respondent that the survey vendor is calling on behalf of Medicare
 - Identifies purpose of the survey
 - Indicates participation is voluntary

Introduction Screen

>INTRO<

Hello, I'm calling on behalf of Medicare. [SURVEY VENDORS THAT NEED TO INCLUDE THIS DISCLAIMER, INSERT HERE:] This call may be monitored or recorded for quality assurance purposes. We're doing an important survey about the health of people in Medicare health plans. Participation in the survey is completely voluntary. Recently, we sent you a letter and questionnaire in the mail. We're trying to finish the study, so I'd like to interview you now over the phone.

{IF R ASKS IF YOU ARE CALLING FROM MEDICARE, SAY: I am calling from [SURVEY VENDOR NAME]. Medicare has asked our organization to help conduct this study.}

<1>	RESPONDENT READY TO START	[Q65]
<2>	NEED PROXY	[PROXY]

Proxy Interviews

- Program proxy interviewing screens using proxy script provided by CMS (Appendix F in the QAG)
- Q65 (Who are you interviewing?) and Q66 (What is your name?) appear first in the telephone survey to identify if the respondent is a member or a proxy

Proxy Interviews (Cont'd)

>PROXY<

[FOR MEMBERS IN THE *FOLLOW-UP—PROXY AT BASELINE* PROTOCOL PATH, CUSTOMIZE THIS SCREEN WITH “FORMER PROXY NAME: [INSERT *PROXY NAME* FROM FIELD POSITIONS 273-322 OF SAMPLE FILE PROVIDED BY THE HOS PROJECT TEAM].]

{IF SPEAKING TO SAMPLED MEMBER}: Is there someone else we could talk to who would be able to answer questions about your health? {IF FORMER PROXY NAME IS LISTED ABOVE, ASK TO SPEAK WITH FORMER PROXY.}

{IF SPEAKING TO SOMEONE ELSE: IF FORMER PROXY NAME IS LISTED ABOVE, ASK TO SPEAK WITH FORMER PROXY}: I'm calling on behalf of Medicare. [SURVEY VENDORS THAT NEED TO INCLUDE THIS DISCLAIMER, INSERT HERE]: This call may be monitored or recorded for quality assurance purposes. We're doing an important survey about the health of people in Medicare health plans. Participation in the survey is completely voluntary. Recently, we sent [MEMBER NAME] a letter and questionnaire in the mail. We're trying to finish the study, so I'd like to do an interview about [him/her] now over the phone. Would you be able to answer questions about [his/her] health?

{IF NEEDED: Do you know of anyone who would be able to answer questions about [his/her] health?}

[O65]

Q65 (Who are you interviewing?)

Electronic Telephone Interviewing System Specifications	
Member Script	Proxy Script
<p>>Q65< WHO ARE YOU INTERVIEWING?</p> <p><1> PERSON TO WHOM SURVEY WAS ADDRESSED, [Q1]</p> <p>{IF SOMEONE ELSE, PROBE: How are you related to [MEMBER NAME]? Are you a:}</p> <p><2> family member or relative, [Q66] <3> a friend, or [Q66] <4> a professional caregiver? [Q66]</p> <p><9> NOT ASCERTAINED [Q66]</p>	<p>>Q65< WHO ARE YOU INTERVIEWING?</p> <p><1> PERSON TO WHOM SURVEY WAS ADDRESSED, [Q1]</p> <p>{IF SOMEONE ELSE, PROBE: How are you related to [MEMBER NAME]? Are you a:}</p> <p><2> family member or relative, [Q66] <3> a friend, or [Q66] <4> a professional caregiver? [Q66]</p> <p><9> NOT ASCERTAINED [Q66]</p>
<p><i>Interviewer Note: This is the first question asked during the telephone interview. It establishes who the respondent is—the sampled member or a proxy respondent. The question is asked at the beginning of the interview so the correct form of the questions can be used (questions for proxy interviews are different from those used to interview the sampled member).</i></p>	

Q66 (What is your name?)

Member Script	Proxy Script
>Q66< What is your name? {ENTER FIRST NAME} [SPECIFY] {ENTER LAST NAME} [SPECIFY] [Q1]	>Q66< What is your name? {ENTER FIRST NAME} [SPECIFY] {ENTER LAST NAME} [SPECIFY] [Q1]
<i>Programming Note: This question must be programmed to allow the interview to enter the respondent's first and last names into two separate 25-character fields.</i>	

Telephone Interviewer Training

- Survey vendors must:
 - Train telephone interviewers on all HOS telephone protocols and procedures
 - Require subcontractors to train telephone interviewers on the HOS protocol
 - Attend and participate in any subcontractor telephone interviewer training
 - Document telephone interviewer training and quality control procedures in survey vendor QAPs

Telephone Interviewer Training (Cont'd)

- Telephone interviewers must:
 - Follow the telephone script verbatim
 - Pronounce medical terms correctly
 - Employ refusal avoidance techniques
 - Use non-directive probes
 - Record responses accurately
 - Maintain a professional tone with respondents
 - Appropriately address any technical issues
 - Use the HOS FAQ to address respondent inquiries

Telephone Interviewer Monitoring

- Monitor a minimum of 10% of telephone interviews across all survey languages
- Provide feedback on telephone interviewer performance
- Retrain or replace interviewers who consistently fail to follow telephone protocols
- Document outcomes of all telephone interviewer monitoring in writing

Guidelines for Reaching Members

Scenario	Action
Wrong telephone number	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make every effort to obtain a correct number• If the person answering the phone provides contact information for the sampled member, use the new information
Sampled member away temporarily	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attempt to recontact the member upon return• If a sampled member will be gone for the entire data collection period and there is no forwarding phone number, attempt to identify a proxy• If no proxy is available, assign a final disposition code of <i>T33 – Nonresponse: respondent unavailable</i>

Guidelines for Reaching Members (Cont'd)

Scenario	Action
Sampled member temporarily ill	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attempt to recontact the member• If the member is too ill to complete the survey, attempt to identify a proxy• If no proxy is available, assign a final disposition code of <i>T33: Nonresponse: respondent unavailable</i>
Sampled member institutionalized	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If member is able to complete the survey, ask for his or her contact information• If a member cannot complete the survey, attempt to identify a proxy• If no proxy is available, assign a final disposition code of <i>T35: Nonresponse: respondent institutionalized</i>

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- HOS FAQ document provided in Appendix C in the QAG
- Interviewers and customer support personnel reference this document to respond to member inquiries

Distressed Respondents

- Survey vendors may encounter respondents who are in crisis or potentially suicidal
- Survey vendors must have established processes in place for handling distressed respondents that cover the various modes of contact (e.g., sending a letter with the survey, emailing customer support, stating concerns during a telephone interview)
- Survey vendors must document their processes (including staff training procedures) in their QAPs
- Survey vendors must **not** share the information of beneficiaries reporting abuse or distress with MAOs

Distressed Respondents (Cont'd)

The following are suggestions for handling these types of situations:

- When respondents threaten to take their life immediately, attempt to keep the respondent on the line and call 911 or refer the individual to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline [1-800-273-TALK (8255)]
- When respondents express thoughts about taking their life, refer the respondent to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline [1-800-273-TALK (8255)]
- When respondents express abuse or neglect, refer the respondent to the National Domestic Violence Helpline [1-800-799-SAFE (7233)]



Data Coding

Overview

- File Layouts
- Text File Specifications
- Data Coding Guidelines
 - Percent Complete
 - Disposition Codes
 - Vendor-Assigned Variables
- Data Retention

File Layouts

- File Layouts (Appendix D in the QAG)
 - Header Record Layout
 - Sample File Layout
 - Survey File Record Layout
 - Supplemental File Layout
- Provides field descriptions and specifies field positions, field length, and valid values

Text File Specifications

- Submit survey data in .txt file format
- One text file for each MA contract with record-level data for sampled members
- Sample file data included in data submission files must match original sample file data
 - Seven sample file variables included in submission files
 - Beneficiary Link Key, Medicare Beneficiary Identifier, Contract Number, First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name, Date of Birth
 - No changes or modifications permitted

Text File Specifications (Cont'd)

- Two Records
 - **Header Record:** Contract-level information
 - **Member-Level Record:** Member-level information
 - Sample File Layout
 - Survey File Layout

Percent Complete

- HOS contains 84 potential response items
- Exclude 12 skip pattern items from calculation
 - Q14, Q35a-Q35e, Q43, Q44, Q45, Q47, Q64, Q66
 - **Note:** Q56b is excluded from percent complete calculation because it is only asked in the telephone survey as part of a skip pattern
- Denominator is 72 items

$$\% \text{ Complete} = \frac{\text{Total Number of Answered Items (Exclude Skip Pattern Items)}}{\text{Total Response Items} - \text{Excluded Items}} \times 100$$

Percent Complete (Cont'd)

- Q12, Q13
 - Any value except “99 = Missing” is complete
- Q57, Q58, Q62
 - If one or more responses checked, then complete
 - If all not checked (i.e., 0), then not complete
- Q55, Q59
 - Only one of the two fields must be complete

Disposition Codes

- Tracks survey status of each sampled member
 - Interim: Survey status during data collection
 - Survey vendors may use their own internal disposition codes
 - Final: Survey status at end of data collection
- Only final disposition codes are reported in data files
- Must provide mapping of interim to final disposition codes in Quality Assurance Plan (Report #1)
- See **Table 9** in QAG for details

Disposition Codes (Cont'd)

“Complete” Disposition Group Code:

Final Disposition	Disposition Code	Definition/Explanation
Complete Survey	M10/T10	Must meet the following two criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 80% or more complete (58 items or more).• All six ADL items (Q10a-f) answered.

Disposition Codes (Cont'd)

Codes in “Nonresponse” Disposition Group:

Final Disposition	Disposition Code	Definition/Explanation
Partial Complete	M11/T11	Assign in the following two scenarios: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50% or more but less than 80% complete (36-57 items).• 80% or more complete (58 or more items) with one or more ADL items unanswered.
Break-Off	M31/T31	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less than 50% complete (0-35 items).• Independent of whether ADL items answered.

Disposition Codes (Cont'd)

Codes in “Nonresponse” Disposition Group:

Final Disposition	Disposition Code	Definition/Explanation
Refusal	M32/T32	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incomplete survey with a note that member does not want to participate.• Verbal refusal to complete the survey.
Respondent Unavailable	M33/T33	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member unavailable during data collection.• Survey vendor is unable to obtain a proxy.
Respondent Physically or Mentally Incapacitated	M34/T34	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member unable to complete survey due to physical or mental disabilities.• Survey vendor is unable to obtain a proxy.
Respondent Institutionalized	M35/T35	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member unable to complete survey due to institutionalization or residence in a group home or institution (e.g., hospice, nursing home).• Survey vendor is unable to obtain a proxy.

Disposition Codes (Cont'd)

Codes in “Nonresponse” Disposition Group:

Final Disposition	Disposition Code	Definition/Explanation
Nonresponse After Maximum Attempts	M36	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No evidence to suggest bad address.• No mail questionnaire returned.• Survey vendor unable to obtain viable phone number OR unable to contact member by phone because on internal corporate DNC list.
Nonresponse After Maximum Attempts	T36	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No evidence to suggest bad address but no mail questionnaire returned. No evidence to suggest bad phone number. Survey vendor makes at least six phone attempts but is unable to contact member.• Evidence to suggest bad address. No evidence to suggest bad phone number. Survey vendor makes at least six phone attempts but is unable to contact member.

Disposition Codes (Cont'd)

Codes in “Ineligible” Disposition Group:

Final Disposition	Disposition Code	Definition/Explanation
Deceased	M20/T20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Member is deceased.
Language Barrier	M23/T23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Member does not read or speak English, Spanish, or Chinese, and does not read Russian.Survey vendor is unable to obtain a proxy.
Bad Address & Mail-Only Protocol	M24	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Evidence of bad address AND member is in a mail-only protocol (Russian Follow-Up protocol).
Bad Address & Non-working/Unlisted Number or Member is Unknown at Dialed Number	T24	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Evidence of bad address AND survey vendor is unable to obtain a viable phone number.
Removed from Sample	M25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In rare instances (e.g., MAO is no longer eligible for the survey), survey vendors may be instructed to use this code.May only be used with prior approval.

Disposition Codes (Cont'd)

- Assume member address and phone number are viable unless sufficient evidence to the contrary

	Sufficient Evidence	Insufficient Evidence
Bad Address	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mailing material returned as “Address Unknown” or “Moved—No Forwarding Address”.• Unable to obtain a complete or updated address from the member.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address search does not result in “exact” match. Must attempt to contact member using the available address.
Bad Phone Number	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MAO does not provide number in supplemental file. Vendor is unable to obtain second source number.• Interviewer attempts number and receives message the number is nonworking/out of order and no updated number is available. No viable second source number.• Interviewer attempts number, speaks to a live person, and is told that the number is incorrect. No viable second source number.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviewer gets a busy signal every time he or she dials the number.

Disposition Codes (Cont'd)

Assigning M24, T24, M36, and T36

	Viable Address	Evidence of Bad Address
Viable Telephone Number (English, Spanish, or Chinese)	T36	T36
Evidence of Bad Telephone Number (English, Spanish, or Chinese)	M36	T24
Mail-Only Protocol (Russian)	M36	M24

Vendor-Assigned Variables

- Additional Vendor-Assigned Variables
 - Survey Round
 - Survey Language
 - Survey Completion Date
 - Survey Vendor Unique Telephone Interviewer ID
 - MAO Phone Flag
 - Exclude from Future Survey Samples Flag
 - Member Telephone Number
- Must meet logic agreement specifications across select variables
- See Tables 11-20 in the QAG

Vendor-Assigned Variables (Cont'd)

Survey Round (Table 11 in the QAG)

- Associated with attempt in which data collected
 - Mail: M1, M2
 - Phone: T1-T9
 - Phone: MT
 - Partially complete mail survey later completed by phone
 - Phone: TN
 - Inbound attempt
 - TN must be used if a phone survey is completed prior to start of outbound dialing
- See Table 15 in the QAG for examples

Vendor-Assigned Variables (Cont'd)

Survey Round by Disposition (Table 12 in the QAG)

Disposition Code	Survey Round
M10, M11, M31	M1, M2
T10, T11, T31	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, MT, TN
M20, T20, M23, T23, M24, T24, M25, M32, T32, M33, T33, M34, T34, M35, T35, M36, T36	NC

Vendor-Assigned Variables (Cont'd)

Survey Round by Completion Date (Table 13 in the QAG)

Survey Completion Date	Survey Round
MMDDYYYY 07192021 – 11012021 <i>July 19, 2021 – November 1, 2021</i> <i>Where “MM” is the month, “DD” is the day, and “YYYY” is the year.</i>	M1, M2, T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, MT, TN
99999999	NC

Vendor-Assigned Variables (Cont'd)

Survey Language

1 = English

2 = Spanish

3 = Not Applicable

- All surveys with dispositions other than M10/T10, M11/T11, or M31/T31

4 = Chinese

5 = Russian

- Valid for mail disposition codes only

Vendor-Assigned Variables (Cont'd)

Survey Round by Survey Language
(Table 14 in the QAG)

Survey Language	Survey Round
1 = English 2 = Spanish 4 = Chinese	M1, M2, T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, MT, TN
5 = Russian	M1, M2

Vendor-Assigned Variables (Cont'd)

Survey Language by Disposition
(Table 16 in the QAG)

Disposition Code	Survey Language
M10, M11, M31	1 = English 2 = Spanish 4 = Chinese 5 = Russian
T10, T11, T31	1 = English 2 = Spanish 4 = Chinese
M20, T20, M23, T23, M24, T24, M25, M32, T32, M33, T33, M34, T34, M35, T35, M36, T36	3 = Not Applicable

Vendor-Assigned Variables (Cont'd)

Survey Completion Date

- Date survey completed or partially completed
- MMDDYYYY format
 - M10, M11, M31: Date survey received
 - T10, T11, T31: Date interview conducted
- All other dispositions coded as 9999999999

Vendor-Assigned Variables (Cont'd)

Survey Completion Date by Disposition (Table 17 in the QAG)

Disposition Code	Date Survey Completed
M10, T10, M11, T11, M31, T31	MMDDYYYY 07192021 – 11012021 <i>July 19, 2021 – November 1, 2021</i>
M20, T20, M23, T23, M24, T24, M25, M32, T32, M33, T33, M34, T34, M35, T35, M36, T36	99999999

Vendor-Assigned Variables (Cont'd)

Unique Telephone Interviewer ID

- 11-digit ID
- Links telephone contact to specific interviewer
- Included for all “T” dispositions other than T24 and T36
- Must be associated with telephone attempt corresponding to final disposition code

Vendor-Assigned Variables (Cont'd)

Unique Telephone Interviewer ID by Disposition (Table 18 in the QAG)

Disposition Code	Unique Telephone Interviewer ID
T10, T11, T20, T23, T31, T32, T33, T34, T35	001413NNNNN = CSS 022255NNNNN = Data Recognition Corporation 001415NNNNN = DataStat, Inc. 290721NNNNN = Market Decisions Research 001463NNNNN = SPH Analytics
M10, M11, M20, M23, M24, M25, M31, M32, M33, M34, M35, M36, T24, T36	999999999999

Vendor-Assigned Variables (Cont'd)

MAO Phone Flag

- Indicates whether MAO provided phone number for sampled member in supplemental file

Description	MAO Phone
The MAO provided the survey vendor with a phone number for the sampled member in the SUPPLEMENTAL file. <i>Code “1 = Yes” even if the number is wrong.</i>	1 = Yes
The MAO did NOT provide the survey vendor with a phone number; OR provided an invalid phone number for the sampled member in the SUPPLEMENTAL file.	2 = No

Vendor-Assigned Variables (Cont'd)

Exclude from Future Survey Samples Flag

- Identifies members requesting to be removed from the mailing list and never contacted again for exclusion from future HOS samples
- May **NOT** be assigned based on information provided by MAO or included on vendor's internal corporate DNC list
- 1 = Member specifically requested: *Take me off your list and never contact me again*
 - Never contact me again
 - Take me off your mailing list
- 2 = Member did **NOT** request: *Take me off your list and never contact me again*
 - I do not want to participate in this survey
 - Please stop calling me

Vendor-Assigned Variables (Cont'd)

Member Telephone Number

- Telephone number at which interviewer successfully contacted member

Member Telephone Number by Disposition
(Table 20 in the QAG)

Disposition	Telephone Number
T10, T11, T31	NNNNNNNNNN (10-digit numeric)
M10, M11, M31, M20, T20, M23, T23, M24, T24, M25, M32, T32, M33, T33, M34, T34, M35, T35, M36, T36	9999999999

Data Retention

- Retain all data files (electronic or paper) for a minimum of **three years** onsite at the survey vendor's facilities
 - Mail Data: Store returned paper questionnaires or scanned images of paper questionnaires in a secure and environmentally controlled onsite location for **three years**
 - Telephone Data: Retain all telephone survey data and recordings in all fielded languages onsite for **three years**
 - For survey vendors using subcontractors for telephone interviewing, recordings must be kept on the survey vendors' systems
- Establish a process for data destruction after **three years** and complete an attestation of data destruction



Data Submission

Overview

- Prepare and Submit Data Files
- Data Validation
- Data Submission
 - Interim
 - Final

Prepare and Submit Data Files

- Submission and organization IDs provided in the Header Record
- Submit all interim and final data files via the HOS Data Submission System
 - Survey vendors will receive instructions closer to the scheduled data submission periods
- Upload a maximum of 80 files across all folders within a zip file
- Allow each zip file to process before uploading another

Prepare and Submit Data Files (Cont'd)

- Survey vendors must attest that all HOS data collected and submitted to CMS are accurate, complete, and conform to the QAG
- Completed within the HOS Data Submission System prior to marking submissions “Final”
- Can only be completed by the designated HOS Project Director or Project Manager
- NCQA will coordinate signer designations with survey vendors prior to data submission

Prepare and Submit Data Files (Cont'd)

- Error Messages
 - Correct and re-upload data files
 - Cannot complete submission or mark files as “Final” unless all errors corrected
- Warning Messages
 - Review all warning messages
 - Verify accuracy of data

Data Validation

- Conduct record-level evaluations
- Confirm files contain a record for each member sampled in MA contract
- Compare data submission file to original sample file for an exact match across select variables
- Four general types of validations
 - Valid values, logic variable agreement, skip pattern logic, survey completion level

Data Validation (Cont'd)

- Check completeness level against Survey Disposition
 - **Table 9** in the QAG
 - Complete survey must have complete ADL data (Q10a-f)
 - Number of items with non-missing responses must correlate to disposition code

Data Validation (Cont'd)

- Files are designated with a status after automatic validation checks are complete
 - Validated: No errors or warnings; file can be marked “Final”
 - Review: Warnings but no errors; file can be marked “Final” once the vendor reviews and verifies all warnings
 - Revise: Errors; file cannot be marked “Final” until all errors are corrected

Data Validation (Cont'd)

- Survey vendors receive reports from the HOS Data Submission System after automatic validation checks are complete
 - Reports identify errors and warnings by row number in data file or by individual identifier
 - Errors must be corrected before the file can be marked “Final”
 - Warnings must be reviewed and verified before the file can be marked “Final”

Interim Data Submission

- Allows opportunity to investigate data submission issues before Final Data Submission
- System opens **Tuesday, October 5** and closes **Thursday, October 7**
- All data received up to **three business days** prior to the Interim Data Submission due date (**Monday, October 4**) must be processed and submitted

Interim Data Submission (Cont'd)

- Survey vendors review records thoroughly prior to submission to confirm all data are accurate
- Interim data files will be cleaned and analyzed
- HOS Project Team will provide findings to survey vendors, if applicable, prior to Final Data Submission
- Data collection issues identified during Interim Data Submission may warrant Discrepancy Reports
- Survey vendors must correct any issues identified prior to Final Data Submission

Final Data Submission

- Final Data Submission opens **Tuesday, November 2**
- Complete data attestation prior to marking files “Final”
- Final data files due **Friday, November 12**
 - Include all data collected through November 1
- Final data files will be cleaned and analyzed
 - Data collection issues identified during Final Data Submission may warrant Discrepancy Reports



Quality Oversight

Overview

- Mailing and Telephone Material Review
- Quality Assurance Plans (QAP/Report #1)
- Survey Vendor Conference Calls
- Seeded Mailing Review
- Customer Support Monitoring
- Telephone Interview Monitoring
- Site Visits
- Progress Reports
- Data Record Review
- Discrepancy Reports
- Feedback Reports

Mailing Material Review

- Survey vendors submit electronic copies of all mailing materials in all languages to hos@ncqa.org by **Friday, June 11**
 - Include prenotification letters, survey cover letters, reminder/thank-you postcards, envelopes, and questionnaires
 - Naming convention: Survey Vendor Name_Tracking #_MM-DD-YY.pdf.
 - Mailing material tracking numbers provided in the QAG and on survey material templates
- HOS Project Team reviews the materials to confirm proper language and formatting
 - Provides comments and edits on **Friday, June 25**
 - Mailing materials must be finalized by **Tuesday, July 6**

Telephone Material Review

- Survey vendors submit electronic copies (screenshots) of telephone interviewing program in all languages to hos@ncqa.org by **Friday, June 25**
 - Include a screenshot of every interview screen, including introduction scripts and every survey question
 - Include both member and proxy versions of telephone interviewing scripts
 - Submit skip pattern logic or a link for the HOS Project Team to test skip patterns within the telephone interviewing system
- HOS Project Team reviews the materials to confirm proper language and programming
 - Provides comments and edits on **Friday, July 9**
 - Telephone materials must be finalized by **Monday, July 19**

Quality Assurance Plans

- Survey vendors submit QAP to hos@ncqa.org by **Friday, July 2**
 - Documents plan for survey administration and compliance with all HOS protocols
 - Include all information requested in the Model QAP in Appendix B in the QAG
- HOS Project Team reviews the QAP to confirm compliance with protocols
 - Questions discussed during conference call
 - If requested, revised QAP must be submitted within **five business days**

Survey Vendor Conference Calls

- HOS Project Team and Survey Vendor discuss plan for survey administration and review QAP
- HOS Project Team sends agenda prior to meeting
- Conference calls held **Monday, July 19 – Friday, July 30**

Seeded Mailing Review

- Survey vendors send “seeded mailings” to the HOS Project Team in each HOS protocol and in each language (**July – September**)
 - Must be created in the member mailing database rather than in a separate mailing list
 - Must be treated in the same manner as member mailings
- HOS Project Team reviews all mailings to confirm alignment with previously accepted mailing materials and timeliness of delivery

Seeded Mailing Review (Cont'd)

- Proxy name for use in Follow-Up—Proxy at Baseline protocol: John Smith

Customer Support Monitoring

- HOS Project Team conducts anonymous customer support monitoring
 - Calls to customer support line to confirm appropriate responses and professionalism
 - Emails to customer support email address to confirm appropriate and timely responses
- Survey vendors *securely* send copies of all email customer support inquiries and responses on a **weekly basis**

Telephone Interview Monitoring

- HOS Project Team conducts silent telephone monitoring sessions with survey vendors and subcontractors (**September – October**)
 - Listen to interviews and call attempts through web conference and screen sharing
 - Confirm adherence to the electronic interviewing system script and proper coding
 - Confirm that interviewers employ proper probes, remain objective and courteous, speak clearly, and maintain an appropriate pace
- HOS Project Team and survey vendors discuss each interview and share feedback

Site Visits

- HOS Project Team evaluates survey vendor compliance with HOS protocols (**October**)
 - Potential topics of discussion:
 - Survey management system
 - Staff training
 - Sample file processing
 - Mail, telephone, and customer support operations
 - Subcontractor oversight
 - Data preparation and submission
 - Data security, confidentiality, and storage
 - Review of select survey records

Progress Reports

- Survey vendors submit 10 progress reports throughout fielding (**July – November**)
 - Narrative Report: Discussion of progress of select survey milestones
 - Summary Status Report: Response rates by cohort
 - Member Correspondence: White mail (i.e., notes from members written on separate pieces of paper, cover letters, separately mailed letters)
- Other Deliverables: Sample progress report sent to MAOs, Final Detailed Status Report, Report of HOS Records Stored
 - Report requirements detailed in QAG

Data Record Review

- HOS Project Team reviews prior year's submitted data with survey vendors (**September – October**)
 - New survey vendors will have their first data record review session in 2022
 - Conducted in-person during a site visit or remotely using web conference
 - Tracks records through the SMS during each phase of survey administration
 - Survey vendors provide additional files for review including printed or scanned questionnaires, audio recordings, and customer support correspondence

Discrepancy Reports

- Survey vendors must submit a Discrepancy Report form within **one business day** of becoming aware of a discrepancy
 - Discrepancy Report template provided in Appendix G in the QAG
 - Must include the nature of the discrepancy, the impact of the discrepancy, the corrective action plan, and timeline for implementation
 - Send to HOS Project Team at hos@ncqa.org
 - If additional information is needed, survey vendors submit an updated report within **one week**

Feedback Reports

- Delivered to vendors after survey administration and data submission are completed
- Summarizes performance throughout 2021 fielding, including major and minor issues identified by the HOS Project Team
- Includes recommendations for future administrations