



The USPI Physician and Care Provider’s Guide to Effective Communication

KNOW HOW PATIENTS WILL EVALUATE PROVIDER SKILLS

The Clinician and Group CAHPS®- *Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems* survey is a standardized tool to assess patient perception of care provided by physicians and medical groups.

Medical Group and individual provider performance will be based on patients’ perception of the care they received while in your office. The following questions make up the Physician Communication component of the survey – only the top box response of “Yes, definitely” will be used to determine performance and percentile ranking.

CAHPS® Physician Communication Questions

<p>During your most recent visit, did this provider explain things in a way that was easy to understand?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Yes, definitely <input type="radio"/> Yes, somewhat <input type="radio"/> No
<p>During your most recent visit, did this provider listen carefully to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Yes, definitely <input type="radio"/> Yes, somewhat <input type="radio"/> No
<p>During your most recent visit, did you talk with this provider about any health questions or concerns?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<p>During your most recent visit, did this provider give you easy to understand information about these health questions or concerns?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Yes, definitely <input type="radio"/> Yes, somewhat <input type="radio"/> No
<p>During your most recent visit, did this provider seem to know the important information about your medical history?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Yes, definitely <input type="radio"/> Yes, somewhat



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<input type="radio"/> No
During your most recent visit, did this provider show respect for what you had to say? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Yes, definitely <input type="radio"/> Yes, somewhat <input type="radio"/> No
During your most recent visit, did this provider spend enough time with you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Yes, definitely <input type="radio"/> Yes, somewhat <input type="radio"/> No

Overall Assessment of Provider Question

In addition to the Physician Communication questions, patients will also provide an overall assessment of their care provider using a scale of 0 – 10. As with the physician communication questions, only top box responses of 9 or 10 will be used to determine performance and percentile ranking.

0 – Worst provider possible	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	Top Box response
10 - Best provider possible	Top Box response



USE EFFECTIVE VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Breaking Down the Visit – Opening and Introduction

First impressions are formed in less than a minute. A solid introduction sets the stage not only for a good first impression, but puts patients at ease. Patients who are comfortable with their care provider are more likely to fully disclose their health concerns and ask questions, leading to a collaborative plan of care and better patient outcomes.

AIDET®

AIDET® is an acronym for Acknowledge, Introduce, Duration, Explanation and Thank you. Developed by the Studer Group and used throughout many healthcare organizations and medical practices. AIDET® establishes the foundation for a good first impression. Here's what AIDET® looks like when used by care providers:

Acknowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greet patient at the point of contact• Smile and shake hands if appropriate• Knock before entering exam room• Safety Cue: Wash or gel hands in front of patient
Introduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give your name and role• Share information about your experience, specialty, training or skill set• Manage up colleagues and staff to patients by giving positive comments about their skills and experience
Duration and Explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the purpose of the visit with the patient• Provide easy to understand explanations avoiding medical jargon and acronyms• Give specific information regarding length of tests or treatments, wait time for lab results or how long before patient may see change in their condition
Thank You	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank the patient and family and show appreciation (thank you for your trust, for letting me care for you)• Ask if there is anything you can do for patient before leaving exam room• Shake hands if appropriate and provide business card to new patients



Breaking Down the Visit – Words and Actions to Impact Communication Questions

<p>During your most recent visit, did this provider explain things in a way that was easy to understand?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Yes, definitely <input type="radio"/> Yes, somewhat <input type="radio"/> No 	
Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use easy to understand words and instructions • Break down complex information • Avoid medical jargon and acronyms • Explain words that might be used frequently for patient’s condition • Check for understanding by asking patient to explain back to you OR Provide opportunity for follow up by using open ended questions, for example <i>“We’ve discussed a lot of new information, what questions do you have for me?”</i> • Use an encouraging and welcoming tone of voice
Non-Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use visual aids such as models, diagrams or patient education materials • Avoid facial and hand gestures that may come across as hurried or exasperated with questions; frown or tapping of pencil, looking at watch

<p>During your most recent visit, did this provider listen carefully to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Yes, definitely <input type="radio"/> Yes, somewhat <input type="radio"/> No 	
Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask open ended questions to solicit information <i>“Tell more about that” “Describe to me . . .” “Is there anything else you would like to tell me?”</i> • Paraphrase back the information to demonstrate understanding • Use follow up questions to clarify ambiguous or non-specific information • Thank the patient for providing detailed information
Non-Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain good eye contact • Allow patient to speak without interruption • Don’t multi-task (phone, computer, tablet) • Use positive posture, upright, leaning forward • When lengthy information is given, listening followed by



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	documentation then listening again may be required. Use the following model: Listen and Ask patient if you may document in medical record, Record your notes, Return full attention to patient and Listen again
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During your most recent visit, did you talk with this provider about any health questions or concerns? Yes No

During your most recent visit, did this provider give you easy to understand information about these health questions or concerns?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, somewhat
- No

Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use positive tone of voice to encourage questions and dialogue • Express appropriate empathy, <i>“I can see this concerns you”</i> • Ask open ended questions to fully understand concerns • Don’t discount or trivialize information the patient may have picked up from non-medical sources (internet, etc.) – Explain correct information in a respectful way • Use easy to understand words and instructions • Break down complex information • Avoid medical jargon and acronyms • Explain words that might be used frequently for patient’s condition • If patient requires more detailed education or information outside of normal appointment time, provide responsive alternatives – additional appointment the next day or education by nurse or mid-level the same day
Non-Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use visual aids such as models, diagrams or patient education materials • Avoid facial and hand gestures that may come across as hurried or exasperated with questions; frown or tapping of pencil, looking at watch



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During your most recent visit, did this provider seem to know the important information about your medical history? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Yes, definitely<input type="radio"/> Yes, somewhat<input type="radio"/> No	
Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review chart prior to entering exam room• Ask nurse or medical assistant for pertinent information before entering exam room• Ask new patients to review and confirm history prior to starting the exam• Ask returning patients to briefly update you since their last visit• Ask open ended questions to encourage update <i>“Tell me what’s been going on since your last visit” “My notes say that you are having issues with _____, tell me more about that” “Is there anything else I should know before I start your exam?”</i>
Non-Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain good eye contact• Use affirmative and positive tone of voice• Demonstrate verification of history by reviewing chart or electronic medical record in front of patient

During your most recent visit, did this provider show respect for what you had to say? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Yes, definitely<input type="radio"/> Yes, somewhat<input type="radio"/> No	
Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use positive and encouraging tone of voice• Acknowledge patient’s comments and questions <i>“Thank you for providing such specific information” “That’s very helpful, thank you” “I appreciate ...”</i>• Check your understanding by paraphrasing back to patient• Ask follow up questions to clarify information as needed• Use tactful language and words to clarify misleading or wrong information the patient may have from non-medical sources
Non-Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actively listen without interrupting• Use positive non-verbals such as smiling or nodding in acknowledgement when listening• Use positive posture, upright, leaning forward• Don’t multi-task or allow non-emergency interruptions or phone calls during appointment



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<p>During your most recent visit, did this provider spend enough time with you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Yes, definitely<input type="radio"/> Yes, somewhat<input type="radio"/> No	
Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a positive and encouraging tone of voice• Speak at a normal, non-rushed pace• Ask open ended questions. They demonstrate that you care and have time for the patient• Close every exam with key words <i>“Thank you. Is there anything else I can do for you today?”</i>• If an exam becomes unusually long and must end, acknowledge the importance of the patient’s issue and ask patient to schedule additional time. <i>“Mr. Smith, we covered a lot of information today and it’s important to me that I have more time with you to answer your questions and explain a few items further. I’d like to schedule more time with you tomorrow or another day that works for you this week. Is that OK?”</i> Walk the patient to the appointment desk to reschedule and thank them for their time today.
Non-Verbal	<p>Non-verbals have a significant influence on the patient’s perception of time spent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sit down for the entire visit except for the physical exam• Maintain good eye contact• Demonstrate active listening and positive body posture• Avoid distractions such as phone, watch, computer, tablets• Don’t multi-task• Eliminate nuisance gestures if you have them such as toe or pencil tapping – these communicate inattention and boredom• Check that other non-verbals don’t signal that you don’t have time for the patient – Jumping up from the chair, walking to the door and placing hand on the door knob



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Breaking Down the Visit – Summarize and Close

Create a positive lasting impression at the end of the exam. Patients will forgive slight appointment delays and other things that can pop up from time to time when Providers have built a strong relationship through good communication and respect. Very few individuals select a physician without asking friends or neighbors who they see and like. Communicating effectively is as important as diagnosing and treating when it comes to delivering good patient outcomes.

Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize the plan of care • Review new medications or dosage changes • Ask open ended question to finalize the visit <i>“What questions can I answer for you? Is there anything else I can do for you today?”</i> • Thank the patient for their time, their trust,
Non-Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smile • Shake hands if appropriate • Give business card to new patients • Best practice – Walk the patient to the check-out desk

Other factors that may impact Overall Provider assessment

In addition to strong communication skills, other factors may influence the overall provider score (0 – 10 scale).

Late appointments	<p>Most patients understand that every now and then a medical appointment may run late.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask receptionist to keep patients informed about wait times, provide alternatives such as rescheduling and always apologize for delays. • Apologize to any patient who has had a delay as you enter the exam room. Acknowledge that their time is valuable.
Ease of making and getting appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask a friend to call the office to schedule an appointment. Was the phone answered professionally and pleasantly? Was it easy to make an appointment? Were appointments readily available?
Helpful, courteous and respectful staff	<p>Every member of the office is a reflection of the medical practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire for attitude • Ask patients if they were greeted with a smile and if the office staff has been friendly and courteous • Don’t accept unprofessional behavior from any member of the team – no matter how long they have been with the practice