

# The CAHPS® Item Set for Addressing Health Literacy



**Beverly Weidmer, RAND Corporation**

**Health Literacy Annual Research Conference  
October 21, 2009  
National Academy of Sciences  
Washington, DC**



# What is CAHPS?



- CAHPS: Consumer Assessment of Health Providers and Systems

***<https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/>***

- Program funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)
- Aim is to produce a set of standardized, evidence-based surveys for assessing patients' experiences with the health care system

# CAHPS Family of Surveys



- Ambulatory level surveys (Health Plan, Clinician and Group, Dental Plan, etc.)
- Facility level surveys (hospitals, dialysis facilities, nursing homes)
- Supplemental item sets on special topics (health literacy, cultural competence, chronic conditions, mobility impairment, etc.)
- Publicly available in both English and Spanish

# CAHPS Item Set to Address Health Literacy



- Designed to measure patients' perspective on how well health information is communicated to them by healthcare professionals
- Designed as a supplemental item set for the CAHPS Clinician and Group Survey
- Developed by CAHPS grantees under the leadership of RAND



# Development and testing



- Adapted from validated measures that are publicly available
- Reflects input from health literacy stakeholders
- Validated via cognitive interviews and a field test conducted by mail with phone follow up



# Purpose

Provide data that can be used to:

- Identify areas for quality improvement at the clinician and group level
- Evaluate QI activities designed to improve communication with patients
- Report quality data back to physicians
- Provide information to consumers



# Content

Twenty nine items that users can choose from on:

- Communication with doctors and nurses
- Communication about health problems/concerns
- Communication about medications
- Communication about tests
- Communication about forms
- Disease self management
- One reporting composite: *How Well Doctors Communicate About Medications*

# Availability



- Publicly available in both English and Spanish

([https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/CAHPSkit/files/1311\\_About\\_Health\\_Lit.pdf](https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/CAHPSkit/files/1311_About_Health_Lit.pdf))

- All items linked to AMA Foundation's:  
*"Health literacy and patient safety: help patients understand." (Refer to the QI Strategies Crosswalk in the CAHPS C&G Survey and Reporting Kit 2008)*





## Next steps....

- Currently developing Health Literacy supplemental item set for HCAHPS
- Expected release date in Summer 2010
- Domains include:
  - Patient-provider communication
  - Discharge planning
  - Communication about medications
  - Communication about test results
  - Communication about forms

# Questions?



## *Contact:*

*Beverly Weidmer  
RAND Corporation  
1776 Main St.  
Santa Monica, CA 90401  
(310) 393-0411, ext. 6788  
Beverly\_Weidmer@rand.org*



# Acknowledgments



- Funding for this project was provided by the Agency for Healthcare Policy and Research
- Our thanks go to the stakeholders who provided input on the content of the item set
- Our thanks also go to Affinity Health Plan and the University of Mississippi Medical Center for participating in the field test of the item set and to DataStat, Inc., our data collection partner.