



Medicare Health Outcomes Survey—Modified 2026 Survey Vendor Update Training

Welcome! Training will begin shortly.

For attendance purposes, please be sure your name appears in Zoom as your first and last name, followed by your organization name in parentheses.

Please link your audio to the Zoom webinar.

If you have trouble connecting audio, click the arrow to next to microphone icon labeled “Unmute” in the bottom left of the Zoom window.

Select a Microphone

- ✓ Microphone Array (Realtek Audio)
Same as System

Select a Speaker

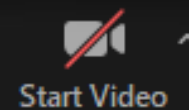
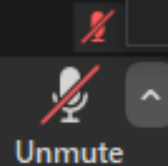
- ✓ Speakers / Headphones (Realtek Audio)
Same as System

Test Speaker & Microphone...

Switch to Phone Audio...

Leave Computer Audio

Audio Settings...





Medicare Health Outcomes Survey—Modified 2026 Survey Vendor Update Training



*Wednesday,
March 11*



Welcome and Introduction

NCQA

Alyssa Hart, MPH
HOS-M Project Director

2026 HOS-M Survey Vendor Training Agenda

Time (ET)	Agenda Item	Presenter
3:00–3:05 p.m.	Welcome and Introduction	Alyssa Hart
3:05–3:20 p.m.	Overview of the HOS-M	Erik Krause
3:20–3:30 p.m.	PACE Sampling	Kevin Zhang
3:30–3:50 p.m.	HOS-M PACE and FIDE SNP Protocols	Megan Coomes
3:50–3:55 p.m.	Break	
3:55–4:10 p.m.	Data Coding and Submission	Nicole Herdzik
4:10–4:30 p.m.	Quality Oversight and Project Reporting	Courtney Utter
4:30–4:40 p.m.	Questions and Closing	Alyssa Hart
4:40–5:00 p.m.	Post-Training Test	



Overview of the HOS-M

NCQA

Erik Krause, MPH, PMP, CHES
HOS-M Project Manager

Overview

- Introduction to the HOS-M
- HOS-M Primary Goals
- PACE vs. FIDE SNP
- HOS-M QAG Addendum and FIDE SNP QAG Addendum
- HOS-M Questionnaire and Telephone Script
- Survey Integrity and Data Use Agreement (DUA) Process

Introduction to the HOS-M

- The Health Outcomes Survey—Modified (HOS-M) is an abbreviated version of the HOS
- Administered to vulnerable Medicare beneficiaries at greatest risk of poor health outcomes
- Administered to members of Programs of All Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) and Fully Integrated Dual Eligible (FIDE) Special Needs Plans (SNP)
- Cross-sectional measure of mental and physical health

HOS-M Primary Goals

- Gather valid, reliable, and meaningful data that are used to:
 - Estimate frailty and adjust payments for PACE organizations
 - Estimate frailty and adjust payments for FIDE SNPs based on the minimum PACE plan frailty
 - Provide metrics that allow plans to monitor the health of their enrollment and to target quality improvement activities for vulnerable subgroups

HOS-M Results Disseminated to PACE Organizations

- HOS-M survey results are reported to PACE organizations in the Medicare HOS-M Report
- Beneficiary level HOS-M data files are distributed to PACE organizations after they are requested from HOS Technical Support at hos@hsag.com
- Data dissemination schedule can be found on the HOS website (www.hosonline.org)

PACE vs. FIDE SNP

	PACE	FIDE SNP
Telephone Protocol	6–12 telephone attempts; 6 telephone attempts to the member and 6 telephone attempts to the proxy	Five telephone attempts to each available telephone number <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After five attempts to a single number, no further call attempts are made to that telephone number • Must dial each available telephone number five times
Sample	Random sample at the contract level	Random sample at the PBP level
Contact Information	Enhanced contact information of organizations with enrollment $\leq 1,200$	No enhanced contact information protocol
Sample Updates: Decedents & Disenrolled Members	Death & Disenrollment files sent at three points during survey administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coded as M26/T26 • If a disenrolled member re-enrolls, reintroduce the member to the current protocol phase and code accordingly 	Decedent file sent prior to telephone administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coded as M26

Quality Assurance Guidelines Addenda

- Survey vendors are required to follow the protocols and procedures in the *Medicare HOS Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications V2.10* (QAG)
- Reference the HOS-M QAG Addendum for additional requirements that apply specifically to HOS-M administration for PACE
- Reference the FIDE SNP QAG Addendum for additional requirements for administering HOS-M for FIDE SNP

HOS-M Questionnaire

- Abbreviated version of the HOS
 - 19 total questions
- The HOS-M is comprised of:
 - Veterans RAND 12-Item Health Survey questions
 - Activities of Daily Living questions
 - Other health questions about memory loss and difficulty controlling urination
 - Proxy questions (e.g., How did you help complete the survey?)

HOS-M Telephone Script

- Telephone interviewers ascertain who is being interviewed at the beginning of the call
 - Questions 16, and if applicable 17–19, are asked at the beginning
- Introduction language included for inbound telephone interviews
- Interviewer instructions and language included to address proxy HIPAA concerns

HOS-M Telephone Script (Cont'd)

- Proxy script included for English, Spanish, and Chinese
 - Survey vendors must program systems to align with language in the member and proxy scripts

Electronic Telephone Interviewing System Specifications	
Member Script	Proxy Script
>Q1< In general, would you say your health is:	>Q1< In general, would you say [MEMBER NAME]'s health is:
<1> Excellent,	<1> Excellent,
<2> Very good,	<2> Very good,
<3> Good,	<3> Good,
<4> Fair, or	<4> Fair, or
<5> Poor?	<5> Poor?
<9> NOT ASCERTAINED	<9> NOT ASCERTAINED
[Q2]	[Q2]

HOS-M Survey Integrity

- PACE organizations and HOS-M survey vendors **MAY**:
 - Notify all members of a contract that they may be asked to participate in the 2026 HOS-M
- PACE organizations and HOS-M survey vendors **MAY NOT**:
 - Attempt to influence members' responses to HOS-M survey questions in any way
- Encouraging participation without biasing the results is tricky
 - Please consult with the HOS-M Project Team rather than jeopardizing your clients' results by having them labeled as biased

Permissible PACE Staff Involvement

- PACE organizations receive guidelines for permissible and impermissible PACE staff involvement in the HOS-M survey
- The guidelines are provided in a [memo](#) and are posted to the [HOS website](#)
- Email the HOS-M Project Team at hos@ncqa.org with questions, comments, requests, or concerns
 - Call to report/discuss urgent matters immediately and follow up with email
 - Alyssa Hart, HOS Project Director
 - Erik Krause, HOS Project Manager

Annual DUA Process

- CMS-approved HOS-M survey vendors must execute the following steps in EPPE:
 - Verify only current staff and subcontractors are listed; update if needed
 - Submit signed [DUA Addendums](#) for contract changes
 - Submit an update request to add **2026** data by **Wednesday, March 25**
- Submit fully-executed DUA to the HOS-M Project Team by **Wednesday, April 8**

Questions?



Polling Question 1

True or False: Survey vendors should assist PACE organizations with influencing members' responses to the HOS-M survey questions.



PACE Sampling

RTI HOS-M

Kevin Zhang

Economist

Overview

- Enrollment Criteria and Program Eligibility
- RTI's Role
- Sample Selection
- Sample File Layout
- Sample File Processing
- Death and Disenrollment Updates

PACE Enrollment Criteria

- To qualify for PACE, beneficiaries must be 55 years and older, live in the community in a PACE service area, and be certified by the state to need a nursing home level of care

Program Eligibility for HOS-M

- Every year, CMS determines which PACE organizations are eligible for HOS-M
- PACE organizations required to participate in 2026 HOS-M include all organizations with:
 - Medicare contracts in effect on or before January 1, 2025
 - At least 30 beneficiaries enrolled as of February 2026

Enrollee Eligibility for HOS-M

- Frailty adjustment is applied only to Medicare members who are eligible for the survey
 - Community-residing, non-End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) PACE enrollees, aged 55 or older
- PACE enrollees not eligible for HOS-M and not eligible for frailty adjustment:
 - Enrollees who are institutionalized (live in nursing homes long-term)
 - Enrollees who only have Medicaid, but not Medicare
 - Enrollees under age 55
 - Enrollees with ESRD

RTI's Role

- Draws PACE sample from CMS enrollment files for the HOS-M
- Receives contact data files for Medicare enrollees from small PACE organizations to provide updated contact information for members and potential proxies
- Verifies the enrollment periods and eligibility and combines the Medicare enrollment data with contact information provided by the PACE organizations to develop the HOS-M sample frame
- Periodically provides sample updates by checking CMS enrollment data for enrollees who disenroll or pass away

Collecting Data for Sampling

- PACE organizations follow different protocols to prepare for the HOS-M survey:
 - Small organizations generate up-to-date enrollee contact information for their Medicare enrollees as well as information to be used if proxies are needed
 - Large organizations are no longer required to provide any data

PACE Organizations Participating in the 2026 HOS-M

- 185 PACE organizations will participate in the HOS-M in 2026
 - 171 are small organizations (<1,200 Medicare members) participating in the full HOS-M protocol
 - 14 are large organizations ($\geq 1,200$ Medicare members) participating in the limited HOS-M protocol

PACE Sample Data Elements Helpful for Survey Vendors

- Do enrollees receive their own mail?
- What is the enrollee's preferred language?
- Who are their primary contacts?

Field Description	Field Position Start	Field Position End	Field Length	Valid Values
<i>Participant Primary Language</i>	545	579	35	<i>Primary Language</i>
<i>Participant Receives Own Mail</i>	580	614	35	<i>1 = Yes, Participant Receives Own Mail 2 = No, Participant Does Not Receive Own Mail This field may also be left blank</i>
<i>Contact 1 First Name</i>	670	709	40	<i>First Name</i>

PACE Sample File Layout

- CMS provides the Sample Layout document for the HOS-M PACE sample file to survey vendors
 - The sample file contains:
 - Names, contact information, and other variables for sampled members
- RTI appends proxy contact information provided by PACE organizations to the sample file developed by CMS
- When survey vendors generate HOS-M member-level data file, they should **NOT** include PACE organization-provided data elements that are indicated in italics
- The sample file variables are appended to the member-level data file by survey vendors and must be identical to the sample file
- Refer to **Appendix B** in the HOS-M QAG Addendum for the complete HOS-M PACE Sample File Layout

Sample File Processing

- After collecting and cleaning data from PACE organizations, RTI conducts data quality checks:
 - After the PACE organization submits the data file, RTI will contact them if there are any errors or additional questions about specific elements in the data file, such as:
 - Incomplete or missing Medicare Beneficiary ID (MBI) numbers
 - Incomplete or missing addresses
 - Incomplete or missing phone numbers
 - Incorrect formatting of the initial file and misalignment of data

Sample File Processing

- RTI has established a file transfer portal (FTP) site for plans to send and receive contact data quality check files
- The primary contact for each PACE organization has received from RTI a link to access the FTP site

Quality Check Process

- After RTI has processed a PACE organization's file, RTI sends a quality check (QC) document of five random enrollees to be sure the submitted information on enrollees and their next of kin was aligned properly
- This file will be sent using RTI's FTP site
- PACE organizations are asked to review the five enrollee records against the original file submitted to RTI and their medical records for accuracy
- The purpose of the quality check is **NOT** to update information but to verify that the organization's information as submitted is correct (previously had misalignments)

Death and Disenrollment Updates

- For deaths and disenrollments, RTI checks the Medicare database at three points in the survey cycle to exclude these participants from the remaining protocol
- RTI generates a list of enrollees that are deceased or have disenrolled for exclusion from data collection and sends it to NCQA
- NCQA distributes the death and disenrollment data files to the survey vendors on a timeline established by the HOS-M Project Team

Questions?





HOS-M PACE and FIDE SNP Protocols

NCQA

*Megan Coomes, MPH
HOS-M Project Analyst*

Overview

- Data Collection Protocol and Timeline
- Administering HOS-M
- HOS-M PACE Protocol
- HOS-M FIDE SNP Protocol

Data Collection Protocol

- Mixed mode data collection
- English, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian
 - Russian protocol: mail only

Standardized Data Collection

- Survey vendors must use the standardized data collection protocol outlined in the HOS-M QAG Addendum and FIDE SNP QAG Addendum
- Standardized data collection ensures survey data collected across the CMS-approved HOS-M 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 (2026)
Send sample files to vendors	Monday, June 22
Mail prenotification letters	Monday, July 13
Open survey vendor customer support telephone and email	Monday, July 13
Open inbound electronic telephone interviewing	Monday, July 13
Mail first questionnaire	Monday, July 20
Mail reminder/thank-you postcard	Monday, July 27

Data Collection Timeline (Cont'd)

Task	Date (2026)
First death and disenrollment file*	Monday, August 10
Mail second questionnaire	Monday, August 24
Second death and disenrollment file*	Friday, August 28
Decedent file**	Friday, August 28
Mail second reminder/thank-you postcard	Monday, August 31
Conduct outbound telephone interviewing	Monday, September 14– Monday, November 2

*PACE only

**FIDE SNP only

Data Collection Timeline (Cont'd)

Task	Date (2026)
Submit interim data files	Tuesday, September 29– Thursday, October 1
Third death and disenrollment file*	Wednesday, October 21
End data collection	Monday, November 2
Prepare and submit final data files	Monday, November 2– Monday, November 16
Final data files due	Monday, November 16

*PACE only

Administering the HOS-M

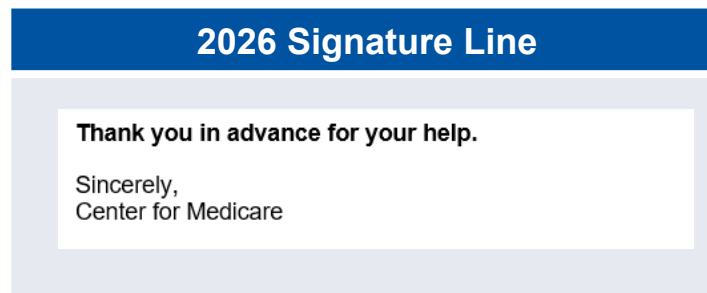
- Sampled members are kept in the protocol until a final disposition code is achieved or the protocol is exhausted
 - All sampled members receive a prenotification letter and first questionnaire mailing
 - Members who return a completed questionnaire are excluded from the remainder of the protocol
 - 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

Sharing Data with Clients

- Survey vendors may share their overall response rates, at the survey vendor-level with PACE organizations or MAOs
- Survey vendors may not share any member-level data with PACE organizations or MAOs

Mail Material Updates

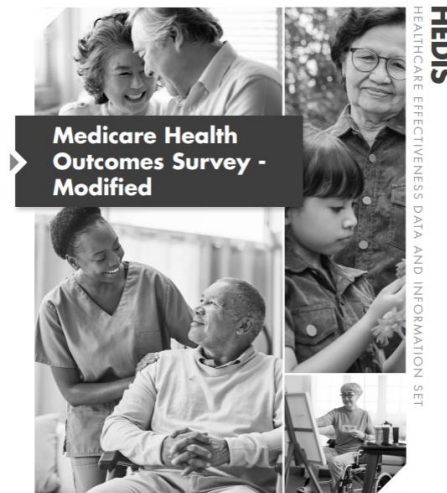
- **NEW:** All logos must be printed in black and white for all mailing materials
 - **NEW:** Removed printing in color for the optional tag lines in the reminder/thank-you postcard
- **NEW:** Director signature removed from all mailing materials



Mailing Material Updates (Cont'd)

Questionnaire Formatting Guidelines

- **NEW:** NCQA recommends including the member's unique ID on the bottom left of the survey questionnaire cover



Mailing Material Reminders

- All mailing materials, including letters and envelopes, should be printed in black and white, including logos
- All letters must have **centered** margins, and margin sizes must be **consistent** across all letters
 - Left/Right margins may **NOT** be smaller than **0.75”**
 - Top/Bottom margins may **NOT** be smaller than **0.5”**
- Reminder/thank-you postcards should be printed on 4” X 5.5” or larger postcard-weight paper
 - If there is a major difference to the postcard dimensions than the recommended size, please notify the HOS Project Team. NCQA will request updates via email ahead of survey administration

Telephone Specification Updates

- **NEW:** Added guidance for using empathetic language in the INTRO-OUT and INTRO-IN sections
 - Interviewers should be prepared to respond with empathetic language at any point throughout the interview

Interview Note for Empathetic Language

Interviewers should be prepared to respond with empathetic language when respondents share difficult or sensitive personal information. Appropriate empathetic phrases may include, but are not limited to, “Thank you for sharing”, “I’m sorry to hear that”, and/or “I understand that must be difficult.”

FAQ Updates

- **NEW:** New FAQ which asks how an individual can access results from the survey

14. How can I access the results from the survey?

Thank you for contacting the Medicare Health Outcomes Survey (HOS). Answers from all Medicare beneficiaries who complete the HOS are grouped, analyzed, and reviewed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Each health plan's HOS results are utilized in the Star Ratings that are publicly reported on the Medicare Plan Finder website, www.medicare.gov/plan-compare. Members and their families can use the results to help them compare and select a health plan. Your answers to the HOS help improve the quality of health care for people with Medicare.

Optional: You can also visit the Medicare HOS website at www.hosonline.org and click the link for "Information for People with Medicare" for additional information.

FAQ Updates (Cont'd)

- **NEW:** Updated language for confirming a member's mailing address

1. ***Replacement Survey: I misplaced my survey. Can you please send me another one?***

Thank you for contacting the Medicare Health Outcomes Survey. You should receive a new survey in the mail soon. Please confirm **if the** mailing address **in which you received the mailing is still the best address to reach you.**

FAQ Updates (Cont'd)

- **NEW:** Updated language in Q33 to include responses specific to the mail survey or telephone survey

33. I do not want to answer a lot of personal questions.

For mail survey: I understand your concern. This is an important survey, but your answers will not be shared. You can skip any question that you don't want to answer. If it would be easier for you, we could do this interview over the telephone now, and then I could answer any questions you might have.

For telephone survey: I understand your concern. This is an important survey, but your answers will not be shared. You can skip any question that you don't want to answer. If a question bothers you, just tell me you'd rather not answer it, and I will move on to the next question. Why don't we get started and you can see what the questions are like?

FAQ Updates (Cont'd)

- **NEW:** Updated formatting of Q48 to accommodate mail and telephone surveys

48. How should I answer questions that do not apply?

You can skip any question that you don't want to answer.

Optional for mail survey: If it would be easier for you, we could do this interview over the telephone now, and then I could answer any questions you might have.

FAQ Updates (Cont'd)

- **NEW:** Added note to Q5 for online survey requests which should only be used if a member insists they know someone who completed the official HOS questionnaire online

5. **Online Survey: Please email me the survey or send me a link to complete it online.**
Thank you for your interest in completing the survey. The Medicare Health Outcomes Survey is not currently available online. Please complete and return the mail survey or if you'd prefer, I can do the interview with you over the telephone now.

Note: Respond with the following *only* if the member insists that they know someone who was invited to complete their HOS questionnaire online: The Medicare Health Outcomes Survey is currently available to be completed online for a small subset of Medicare members as part of a pilot test to improve the HOS. We apologize for any confusion and ask that you complete and return the mail survey, or if you'd prefer, I can do the interview with you over the telephone now.



HOS-M PACE Protocol

Protocol Paths

- Protocol Path determined by language preferences
- Survey vendors assign the Protocol Path based on the *CMS Language Code* or *CMS Language Preference* flag in the sample file
 - If both flags are blank, then vendors should review the Participant Primary Language (*BeneLanguage*) variable provided

Protocol Paths (Cont'd)

- Use of the Chinese and Russian questionnaires is optional for survey vendors
- If the survey is requested in Chinese or Russian and the survey vendor is not fielding the survey in that language, then attempt to have the member or proxy complete the survey in one of the approved, fielded languages

Proxy Respondents

- Members are encouraged to respond
- Proxies can be family members, friends, caregivers, other responsible parties, program staff, or home staff
- **Facility or program staff should only serve as proxies at the request of the participant, family member, or other caregiver**
- No PACE staff should independently contact the survey vendor to provide answers to the HOS-M survey on behalf of any sampled member

Proxy Respondents (Cont'd)

- Multiple proxy respondents may be included in the sample file

Priority	Person to Survey
First Priority	Member or first proxy if member does not receive his/her own mail
Second Priority	Proxy recommended by the member
Third Priority	Proxy contained in sample frames in the order listed
Last Priority	Proxy recommended by another proxy

Members in a Common Facility

- If contacting a common facility where members reside, survey vendors may make calls to gatekeepers who may complete the survey at the member's request
 - Gatekeepers (i.e., a representative of an institution) are permitted to refuse to complete the survey on behalf of the member
 - A gatekeeper is not permitted to request that a member be added to the Do Not Survey (DNS) list and excluded from future surveys
- Survey vendors must document processes for contacting members in a common facility in their HOS-M QAPs

Mail Protocol

- Refer to the HOS QAG for instructions on producing mail materials and requirements
- The HOS-M questionnaire is formatted in one column
- Survey vendors may include the PACE organization logo on outgoing letters and envelopes
- HOS-M mailing materials can be found in **Appendix C** of the HOS-M QAG Addendum

Telephone Protocol

- For large PACE organizations, survey vendors will obtain telephone numbers by requesting full Medicare enrollment information from PACE organizations
 - Survey vendors may **NEVER** send the sample files to PACE organizations
- Small PACE organizations provide a telephone contact list to RTI prior to survey administration
- Survey vendors must obtain “second source” telephone numbers and document processes in QAP

Telephone Attempts

- HOS-M PACE telephone protocol consists of a maximum of **12 telephone attempts**
 - First six attempts are made to the member
 - If member does not receive his/her own mail, first six attempts are made to the first proxy
 - Up to six telephone attempts may be made to proxies
- If member refuses to participate, do not contact proxies
- If proxy refuses, contact other proxies

Telephone Specifications

- Program telephone interviewing systems using the HOS-M Telephone Specifications (**Appendix D** of the HOS-M QAG Addendum)



HOS-M FIDE SNP Protocol

Protocol Paths

- Protocol Path determined by language preferences
- Survey vendors assign the Protocol Path based on the *CMS Language Code* or *CMS Language Preference* flag in the sample file

Protocol Paths (Cont'd)

- Use of the Chinese and Russian questionnaires is optional for survey vendors
- If the survey is requested in Chinese or Russian and the survey vendor is not fielding the survey in that language, then attempt to have the member or proxy complete the survey in one of the approved, fielded languages
- Reminder/thank-you postcards remain as part of the HOS-M protocol

Proxy Respondents

- Members are encouraged to respond
- Proxies are permitted
- Must follow guidance in the HOS QAG for appropriate contact of proxies
- No proxy information is included in the sample file

Mail Protocol

- Refer to the HOS QAG for instructions on producing mail materials and requirements
- HOS-M questionnaire is formatted in one column
- HOS-M mailing materials can be found in **Appendix C** of the FIDE SNP QAG Addendum

Telephone Protocol

- Must follow HOS guidelines for telephone attempts
- Maximum of **five** telephone attempts to a single telephone number
 - After five attempts to a single number, no further attempts are made to that number
- If a second or third telephone number is available, survey vendors must dial these numbers
 - Each of these numbers must be attempted up to five times

Telephone Protocol (Cont'd)

- Telephone attempts must occur on
 - Different times of day
 - Different days of the week
 - Different weeks (at least three calendar weeks)
 - 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. call window (member local time)
- The first call attempt must occur within the first 10 calendar days of dialing
- The fifth attempt must occur no sooner than 21 calendar days after the first call attempt
- Interviewers may not leave voicemail messages

Telephone Specifications

- Program telephone interviewing systems using the HOS-M Telephone Specifications (**Appendix D** of the FIDE SNP QAG Addendum)

Questions?



Polling Question 2

True or False: All letters must have centered margins that are consistent across all letters.

Break





Data Coding and Submission

NCQA

*Nicole Herdzik, MPH
HOS-M Project Analyst*

Overview

- File Specifications Review
- File Layouts
- Data Coding Guidelines
 - Decision Rules
 - Disposition Codes
 - Percentage Answered
- Data Submission Process
 - Prepare and Submit Data Files
 - Interim and Final Data Submission

File Specifications Review

- Submit survey data in .txt file format
- Sample file data included in data submission files must match original sample file data
 - No changes or modifications permitted
- Two records
 - **Header Record:** Contract-level information
 - **Member-Level Record:** Member-level information
 - Sample File Layout
 - Survey File Record Layout

File Layouts

- Provide field descriptions and specify field positions, field length, and valid values
- HOS-M PACE and HOS-M FIDE SNP use different sample file layouts
 - Review **Appendix B** of the QAG Addenda for the file layouts
- File Layouts:
 - Header Record Layout
 - Sample File Layout – PACE
 - Sample File Layout – FIDE SNP
 - Survey File Record Layout

File Layout Changes

Survey File Record Layout

- **NEW:** Removal of Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI)
 - Sample File and Survey File Record field positions have new end positions.
Refer to materials for exact field positions
- **NEW:** Added M26/T26 disposition codes
 - HOS-M PACE = Respondent Deceased Per Death and Disenrollment File
 - HOS-M FIDE SNP = Respondent Deceased Per Decedent File
- **NEW:** Clarified M25/T25 disposition code (Ineligible: Data Collection Suspended)
- **NEW:** Increased interviewer ID field positions to 15
 - The interviewer ID **can** be alphanumeric
 - Specified disposition codes (T24 and T36) that can have an interviewer ID of 9s
- **NEW:** Survey Completion Date valid values
 - Updated valid values to align with 2026 survey administration dates

Decision Rules

- Refer to the HOS QAG for the decision rules guidelines
- Contact the HOS-M Project Team if a situation is not addressed by the decision rules

Disposition Codes

- Tracks survey status of each sampled member
- Only final disposition codes are reported in data files
- See **Table 6** (PACE) or **Table 5** (FIDE SNP) in QAG Addenda for details

Disposition Codes (Cont'd)

Coding Complete Surveys

- A survey is considered complete if **all** six ADL items (Q4a-f) are answered
 - Survey vendors code a record M10 if a mail survey has all ADL items answered
 - Survey vendors code a record as T10 if all ADL items are answered during a telephone interview or telephone recontact
 - All questions must be asked during the telephone recontact
- No further attempts are made to reach the member once a survey is received with all ADL items answered

Percentage Answered

- HOS-M contains 34 potential response items
- Exclude three skip pattern items from calculation
 - Q17, Q18, Q19
- Denominator is 31 items

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

Data Submission

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

Prepare and Submit Data Files

- Survey vendors use NCQA's secure file transfer system Kiteworks to submit HOS-M data to the HOS-M Project Team
- NCQA will provide survey vendors a secure file upload link prior to the opening of the interim and final data submission periods

Prepare and Submit Data Files (Cont'd)

- Survey vendors use the following file naming conventions when submitting final HOS-M data files
 - Use unique file names with a “.txt” extension for each data file
 - Begin the file name with “HOSMPACE” or “HOSMFIDESNP”
 - Follow the prefix with respective vendor name
 - For example: HOSMPACE_[Vendor Name].txt

Interim Data Submission

- Allows opportunity to test the data submission process and correct errors prior to submitting final data files
- Interim data files are due **Thursday, October 1**
- All data received up to **three business days** prior to the Interim Data Submission due date (**Monday, September 28**) must be processed and included in the interim data files

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
- The HOS-M 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 files due **Monday, November 16**
- Final data files will be cleaned and analyzed
 - Data collection issues identified during Final Data Submission may warrant Discrepancy Reports

Questions?





Quality Oversight and Project Reporting

NCQA

*Courtney Utter, MHA
HOS-M Project Analyst*

Overview

- HOS-M Oversight Activities
 - Before Survey Administration
 - During Survey Administration
 - After Survey Administration
 - Ongoing Activities
- Technical Support
- Kiteworks

Before Survey Administration

Oversight Activity	Due Date (2026)	Comments from NCQA	Finalize Materials
Mailing Material Review	Monday, June 8	Tuesday, June 23	Wednesday, July 1
Telephone Interviewing Material Review	Thursday, June 18	Tuesday, June 30	Friday, July 10
Survey Vendor QAP	Friday, June 26	Survey Vendor Conference Call (Monday, July 13–Friday, July 24)	Within five business days of call

NEW: *Please note that survey vendors should notify NCQA of any fielding changes (survey languages, subcontractors, etc.) before submitting mailing and telephone materials for review. NCQA will request updates via email ahead of survey administration*

Mailing Materials

- Review final print-ready HOS-M mailing materials
- Survey vendors should title their questionnaires with tracking numbers when submitting to NCQA for review
- Survey vendors must submit materials for review in the format in which they will be printed
- Naming conventions:
 - Survey Vendor Name_Tracking # (CMS Logo).pdf
 - Survey Vendor Name_Tracking # (CMS and HP Logo).pdf
- Due **Monday, June 8**
 - Send electronic copies to hos@ncqa.org
 - Comment/approve by **Tuesday, June 23**
 - All materials must be final by **Wednesday, July 1**

Electronic Interviewing Materials

- Review proxy and non-proxy telephone interviewing screenshots and skip pattern logic or live website links
- **Due Thursday, June 18**
 - Two weeks after submitting mailing materials
 - Send electronic copies to hos@ncqa.org
 - Comment/approve by **Tuesday, June 30**
 - All materials must be final by **Friday, July 10**
- Survey vendors may also send website links to functioning telephone systems for the HOS-M Project Team to review
- Subcontractor(s) must follow the same review schedule

Survey Accessibility

- Individuals with disabilities must have an equal opportunity to participate in the survey
- Survey vendors should be prepared to provide auxiliary aids, if requested
 - All requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis
 - Survey vendors must provide TeleType/Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TTY/TDD) via 711
- CMS can assist survey vendors with more complex requests (e.g., Braille)
 - Please reach out to the HOS-M Project Team (hos@ncqa.org) with these requests for CMS assistance

Survey Vendor QAP

- Describes survey vendor compliance with the HOS-M protocols and quality oversight processes
- Survey vendors must submit separate HOS and HOS-M QAPs
- QAPs must follow the Model QAP format (**Appendix B** in the HOS QAG; **Appendix G** of the QAG Addendum)
 - Due **Friday, June 26**

During Survey Administration

Oversight Activities	Dates (2026)
Survey Vendor Conference Calls	Monday, July 13–Friday, July 24
Data Record Review	June–July
Customer Support Reviews	July–August
Seeded Mailings	July–September
Survey Vendor Progress Reports	July–November
Electronic Telephone Interviewing Monitoring	September–October
Interim Data File Submission Deadline	Thursday, October 1
Site Visits	October

Survey Vendor Conference Calls

- Held **Monday, July 13–Friday, July 24**
- Provide feedback on QAPs
 - If QAP revisions are needed, vendors must submit revisions within **five business days**
- Review major issues from previous year and discuss updates to survey administration

Seeded Mailings

- Assess timeliness of delivery and accuracy of mailing materials
- Include designated HOS-M Project Team in *all* survey mailings that are sent to members (including prenotification letters)
 - Vendors should seed HOS-M Project Team members in both standard mailing materials and those formatted with the optional health plan logo
 - **NCQA will provide seeded mailing contact information via email following training**
- Document seeded mailing process in detail in QAP
- Seeded mailings must be created in the member mailing database as a QA tool

Customer Support Review

- Assess customer support responses to the specifications in QAG, HOS-M QAG Addendum, FIDE SNP QAG Addendum, and FAQ
- Customer support review: *Telephone*
 - HOS-M Project Team makes anonymous calls to customer support line
- Customer support review: *Email*
 - **Securely** forward all customer support emails with responses on a weekly basis
 - Survey vendors may be asked to send member contact information and/or English translations of emails to HOS-M Project Team

Customer Support Review (Cont'd)

Survey Vendor Requirements

- Telephone lines must be staffed live from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (survey vendor local time) Monday through Friday
- Lines must have sufficient capacity so that 90% of incoming calls each day are answered “live.” The average speed of answer must be 30 seconds or less
- An automated attendant or voice mailbox must be available after hours and on weekends
- Voicemails must be returned within 24 hours (or the next business day)
- Survey vendors must monitor the quality of responses provided by customer support personnel and provide feedback and additional training as necessary

Survey Vendor Progress Reports

- Tracks survey vendor status for adherence to the HOS-M protocols during survey administration
 - Submit progress reports to hos@ncqa.org
- Deadlines and report requirements in QAG
 - Recurring deliverables
 - Narrative Reports (Reports #2–8)
 - Summary Status Reports (Reports #3–10)
 - Telephone Attempt Reports (Reports #6–10)
 - Member Correspondence (Reports #2–10)

Narrative Reports

- Survey Progress and Vendor Experience
 - Overview of mail and telephone protocols
 - Verification of mail-out dates
 - Summary of challenges/difficulties encountered
 - Experience to date
 - Customer support summary statistics

Summary Status Reports

- Synthesis of data collected to date
- Monitor response rates for each protocol phase and processing of returned mail surveys
- Submit two files (PACE and FIDE SNP, if applicable) with naming conventions:
 - [Vendor Name]_HOS-M_SSR_PACE_MM-DD-YY.xls
 - [Vendor Name]_HOS-M_SSR_FIDESNP_MM-DD-YY.xls
- Use 2026 SSR template provided prior to fielding

Telephone Attempt Report

- Summary Status Report includes template to report on progress with telephone attempts to date
 - Submit with Progress Reports #6–10
 - Report contract name, contract number, total number of cases to receive calls, number of cases with 1–9 or more telephone attempts (FIDE SNP) or 1–12 telephone attempts (PACE), and number of closed cases

Plan Details				
Plan H-Number	Plan Name	Total Number of Cases to Receive Calls	Number of Active Cases with No Attempts	Number of Active Cases with One Attempt

Biweekly Progress Reports

Reporting Requirements	Due Date (2026)
<p>REPORT #2</p> <p>Narrative Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of prenotification letter and first questionnaire printing, fulfillment, and mailing processes.• Verification of mail out dates of prenotification letter and first questionnaire mailing (e.g., USPS generated report).• Status of staff training and SMS development.• Confirmation of customer support functionality and testing.• Outstanding issues or concerns. <p>Other Deliverable: Member correspondence (white mail), if applicable.</p>	Friday, July 24

Biweekly Progress Reports (Cont'd)

Reporting Requirements	Due Date (2026)
<p>REPORT #3</p> <p>Summary Status Report:</p> <p>Narrative Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of reminder/thank-you postcard mailing.• Verification of mail-out date of reminder/thank-you postcard mailing (e.g., USPS generated report).• Outstanding issues or concerns. <p>Other Deliverable: Member correspondence (white mail), if applicable.</p>	Friday, August 7
<p>REPORT #4</p> <p>Summary Status Report:</p> <p>Narrative Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of progress with protocol to date.• Detail problems or issues to date.• Outstanding issues or concerns. <p>Other Deliverable: Member correspondence (white mail), if applicable.</p>	Friday, August 21

Biweekly Progress Reports (Cont'd)

Reporting Requirements	Due Date (2026)
<p>REPORT #5</p> <p>Summary Status Report:</p> <p>Narrative Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of second questionnaire mailing and second reminder/thank-you postcard mailing.• Verification of mail out dates of second questionnaire mailing and second reminder/thank-you postcard mailing (e.g., USPS generated report).• Overview of progress with protocol to date.• Detail problems or issues to date.• Provide high-level summary statistics on respondent calls to customer support line or email (summarize FAQ) and number of requests for Spanish, Chinese, and Russian versions of the instrument. Specify number of calls and/or emails requesting information regarding an internet version of the survey.• Describe telephone protocol and training.• Outstanding issues or concerns. <p>Other Deliverable: Member correspondence (white mail), if applicable.</p>	Friday, September 4

Biweekly Progress Reports (Cont'd)

Reporting Requirements

Due Date (2026)

REPORT #6

Summary Status Report:

Narrative Report:

- Overview of progress with protocol to date.
- Detail problems or issues to date.
- Describe process of converting partially completed surveys to complete, and progress.
- Report on progress of electronic telephone interviewing implementation.
- **NEW:** Report on whether telephone protocol is on track to make a first telephone attempt to all members within the first 10 calendar days of dialing (by Thursday, September 24). Provide the number and percentage of first telephone attempts completed to date for each subcontractor, if applicable.

Other Deliverable: Member correspondence (white mail), if applicable.

Friday, September
18

Biweekly Progress Reports (Cont'd)

Reporting Requirements	Due Date (2026)
<p>REPORT #7</p> <p>Summary Status Report:</p> <p>Narrative Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outstanding issues or concerns.• Detail problems or issues to date.• Report on progress of electronic telephone interviewing implementation.• NEW: Confirm whether all members have received a first telephone attempt within the first 10 calendar days of dialing. Provide the number and percentage of first telephone attempts completed by Thursday, September 24, for each subcontractor, if applicable.• Report on experience with submitting interim data files. <p>Other Deliverable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member correspondence (white mail), if applicable.	Friday, October 2

Biweekly Progress Reports (Cont'd)

Reporting Requirements	Due Date (2026)
REPORT #8 Summary Status Report: Narrative Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of progress with protocol to date.• Detail problems or issues to date.• Report on progress of electronic telephone interviewing implementation. Other Deliverable: Member correspondence (white mail), if applicable.	Friday, October 16
REPORT #9 Summary Status Report Other Deliverable: Member correspondence (white mail), if applicable.	Friday, October 30

Member Correspondence

- Member correspondence should be sent via Kiteworks **ONLY**
- **NEW:** If a member expresses signs of abuse or neglect or signs of a distressed respondent, survey vendors must forward to the HOS Project Team immediately upon receipt for appropriate follow-up
- **NEW:** Survey vendors should send a standard follow up email to NCQA confirming that member correspondence has been uploaded to Kiteworks

White mail sent biweekly to HOS Project Team:

- Written notes/letters, notes on cover letters, prenotification letters, survey covers, or envelopes must be sent
- To facilitate follow up, survey vendors should include contact information with each piece of submitted white mail
 - Use the template provided by NCQA when forwarding white mail

Member Correspondence (Cont'd)

- Survey vendors must include all white mail received in the previous two weeks as defined below:
 - Forward any member correspondence that appears to be directed at CMS or the government
 - Not required to forward white mail that indicates a member is ineligible (e.g., deceased, institutionalized, wrong address, language barrier)
 - Not required to forward marginal comments written on the survey

White Mail Examples To Send	White Mail Examples To NOT Send
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Messages intended for CMS• Comments about MAO/provider• Personal problems• Requests for medical assistance and supporting documentation• Opinions about the survey instrument or federal government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Death notices• Address changes• Language barrier• Institution notice• Comments written on or throughout the survey, including marginal comments

Telephone Interviewer Monitoring

- Survey vendors monitor 10%, at a minimum, including subcontractors and across all survey languages
- HOS-M Project Team will conduct silent monitoring of interviewers and interviewing system
 - HOS-M Project Team will conduct separate monitoring sessions with each subcontractor and separate sessions for HOS and HOS-M telephone interviewing

Telephone Interviewer Monitoring (Cont'd)

General Interviewing Guidelines for Conducting Telephone Surveys

- Interviewers should be trained to maintain key principles of telephone interviewing:
 - Establishing rapport by listening attentively and responding appropriately to respondent responses, concerns, and questions
 - Gaining respondent cooperation by projecting a warm but professional demeanor and soothing uneasiness about survey participation
 - Using phrases that convey empathy and understanding when respondents share difficult personal information, such as a health problem or a death in the family
 - For example, “I’m sorry to hear that,” or “I understand that must be difficult”

Site Visits

- Evaluate survey vendor's compliance with the QAG
 - Project organization
 - Survey management system
 - Staff training
 - Sample file processing
 - Oversight of staff and subcontractors
 - Mail and telephone operations
 - Data security
- Site visits may be conducted in person or remotely
 - Survey vendors share and present all required systems, processes, and documentation

Data Record Review

- Conducted June–July
- Review select records of varying survey dispositions and survey rounds
- Track record throughout survey timeline
 - Sample file
 - Address and telephone update
 - Mail phase
 - Data receipt and entry
 - Telephone phase
 - Data submission
- Provide documentation
 - Hard copy or scanned images
 - Telephone recording
 - Customer support logs

Data Record Review (Cont'd)

- Survey vendor systems/databases must be available to the HOS-M Project Team
- HOS-M Project Team will provide a list of requirements and records prior to the review
- Reviews conducted remotely

After Survey Administration

Oversight Activities	Dates (2026)
Survey Vendor Final Report	Friday, November 20
HOS-M Annual Records Storage Report	Monday, November 30

Final Detailed Status Report

- Three components:
 1. Data synthesis (required)
 2. Discussion component (required)
 - Survey implementation, issues encountered, lessons learned, recommendations
 - Continual updating of sample information with RTI
 - List any additional language translations requested by PACE organizations
 - List any additional survey modes requested by PACE organizations and/or respondents (e.g., internet, text) and number of requests
 3. Recommendations for 2027 HOS-M Administration

Ongoing Activities

- Discrepancy Reports and Corrective Action Plan
- Technical Support
- Subcontractor oversight
 - Survey vendors are responsible for overseeing the quality of all subcontractor operations

Discrepancy Report and Corrective Action Plan

- **Appendix G** of HOS 2026 QAG
- Complete and submit Discrepancy Report within **one business day** of discovering the discrepancy
 - Submit updated report as soon as possible but not later than **one week** after submitting the initial report
- Provide as much information as possible
 - Discrepancy Description
 - Corrective Action Plan

Discrepancy Report Form

Instructions: Submit the Discrepancy Report Form to the [HOS Project Team](mailto:hos@ncqa.org) (hos@ncqa.org). Initial discrepancy reports must be submitted within **one business day** of discovering the discrepancy occurred, regardless of whether the organization is still determining all relevant information. Complete as many fields in this report as possible. Information not known at the time of completing the initial report should be recorded as "Pending." Any information reported as "Pending" must be included in an updated Discrepancy Report Form due within one week of submitting the original report. More than one updated report may be required. Do **not** include any PHI/PII in the Discrepancy Report Form or in any emails to the HOS Project Team.

I. General Information		Select one: <input type="checkbox"/> Initial Report <input type="checkbox"/> Updated Report	
		Report Submission Date	MM/DD/YYYY
Name:		Organization:	
Title:		Address:	
Email:		Telephone:	
II. Description of Discrepancy			
Describe the discrepancy and include any additional information that may help the HOS Project Team understand what occurred. Provide as much detail as possible, including the discrepancy time frame (when the issue occurred during survey administration), how you identified the discrepancy, and causes of the discrepancy.			
Date Discrepancy Discovered:		Discrepancy Time Frame:	
Detailed Description of Discrepancy and How the Discrepancy Was Discovered:			
III. Impact of Discrepancy			
Provide a breakdown of affected surveys and impacted members by CMS Contract. Insert one row for each contract impacted. If the issue impacts your entire sample, write in "All" under each category.			
Survey Languages Impacted:		<input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Russian	
CMS Contract Number	Number of Affected Surveys	Number of Sampled Members Impacted	
H#### or All			
IV. Corrective Action Plan (CAP)			
Provide a description of the corrective action your organization proposes to take to address the discrepancy along with a proposed timeline.			

Technical Support

- Email hos@ncqa.org
 - Reports, updates, and questions
- Contact the HOS Project Team with questions, comments, requests, or concerns
 - Call to report/discuss *urgent* matters immediately and follow up with email
 - Alyssa Hart, HOS Project Director
 - Erik Krause, HOS Project Manager

NCQA's Secure Site Kiteworks

- NCQA uses a Kiteworks account system
 - All new users must register with the system
- All materials and documents sent are via Kiteworks
- Sample files will be sent via Kiteworks
- Survey vendors use Kiteworks to securely send member correspondence and other deliverables
- Kiteworks address: <https://acellion.ncqa.org>

NCQA's Secure Site Kiteworks (Cont'd)

- NCQA provides a Kiteworks file request to survey vendors
- The file request does not expire and should be used to send secure files to the HOS-M Project Team throughout survey administration
 - Access the file request by logging in to <https://acellion.ncqa.org>

Other Resources

- NCQA's Customer Support
 - 1-888-275-7585
 - To verify legitimacy or for questions about NCQA
- 1-800-Medicare
 - 1-800-633-4227
 - To verify legitimacy of the survey
 - Complaints, compliments, concerns about Medicare, MAOs, physicians, or care received

Questions?



Polling Question 3

True or False: Member correspondence should be sent via email.



Questions and Closing

NCQA

Alyssa Hart, MPH
HOS-M Project Director

Post-Training Evaluation

- Following training, survey vendors will receive an email with a link to an online training evaluation
- Intent is to collect feedback to improve future training sessions
- Designate one person from your organization to complete
- Required to obtain final approval
- Evaluation is due **COB Monday, March 16**



Post-Training Test

Post-Training Test Instructions

- Only **one** person from each survey vendor may complete the test
- The test will be administered immediately after training
- Survey vendors have 20 minutes to complete the test
- Survey vendors must complete to obtain final approval to administer the HOS-M