

Medicare Health Outcomes Survey 2026 Survey Vendor Update Training

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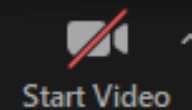
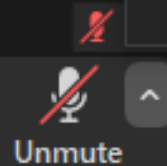
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Test Speaker & Microphone...

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Medicare Health Outcomes Survey 2026 Survey Vendor Update Training



*Wednesday,
March 11*



Welcome and Introduction

NCQA

Alyssa Hart, MPH
HOS Project Director

2026 HOS Survey Vendor Update Training Agenda

Time (ET)	Agenda Item	Presenter
11:30–11:40 a.m.	Welcome and Introduction	Alyssa Hart
11:40–11:50 a.m.	HOS CMS Update	Alyssa Rosen
11:50–12:05 p.m.	HOS 2026 Administration Updates	Erik Krause
12:05–12:25 p.m.	HOS 2025 Survey Results	Patrick Leon Jael Rodriguez
12:25–12:40 p.m.	Survey Material Updates	Louie Amog
12:40–12:50 p.m.	Break	
12:50–1:05 p.m.	Data Coding and Submission	Nicole Herdzik
1:05–1:30 p.m.	Data Management	Patrick Leon Jael Rodriguez
1:30–2:00 p.m.	Quality Oversight and Project Reporting	Courtney Utter
2:00–2:10 p.m.	Questions and Closing	Alyssa Hart
2:10–2:30 p.m.	Post-Training Test	



HOS CMS Update

CMS

*Alyssa Rosen, MS
Contracting Officer's
Representative (COR)*

Overview

- Introduction to the HOS
- HOS Primary Goals
- Public Reporting of HOS Data
- Star Ratings
- Data Integrity
- Requirements for CMS-Approved Survey Vendors
- Data Use Agreements (DUA)

Introduction

- The HOS monitors quality of care provided to people with Medicare enrolled in Medicare Advantage Organizations (MAOs) at the contract level by measuring self-reported health status, physical and mental functioning, and outcomes of care
- The HOS is a 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
 - 2026 Round 29 will survey Cohort 29 (Baseline) and resurvey Cohort 27 (Follow-Up)

Introduction

- HOS Participants: Medicare members aged 18 or older who are currently enrolled in a Medicare Advantage (MA) contract and reside in the U.S. or its territories
 - Baseline: No continuous enrollment requirement
 - Follow-Up: Members resurveyed after two years if they are enrolled in the same plan

HOS Primary Goals

HOS Primary Goals

Provide Medicare enrollees and the general public with information to help them make more informed enrollment choices

Provide MAOs with metrics that allow them to identify problems and improve quality of care at the contract level

Enhance CMS's ability to monitor health plan performance

Measure quality of care from the enrollee's perspective for use in calculating MA Quality Bonus Payments (QBPs)

Estimate frailty for use in payment adjustment for Fully Integrated Dual Eligible (FIDE) Special Needs Plans (SNP) and Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)

Public Reporting of HOS Data

HOS results are publicly reported by CMS for each participating contract



Medicare Plan Finder is a consumer-friendly online tool that allows users to compare coverage options (www.medicare.gov)



HOS data are also included in the Part C and D Star Ratings and used to calculate QBPs (<http://go.cms.gov/partcanddstarratings>)

Star Ratings: Measures

- HOS measures for the 2027 Star Ratings:
 - Two Functional Health (Outcome) Measures:
 - Improving or Maintaining Physical Health*
 - Improving or Maintaining Mental Health*
- *Will have a weight of 3 starting in 2027
- Three HEDIS[®] Effectiveness of Care Measures:
 - Monitoring Physical Activity
 - Improving Bladder Control
 - Reducing the Risk of Falling

Star Ratings: Data Sources

- HOS data sources for 2027 Star Ratings
 - Functional Health (Outcome) Measures:
 - 2023–2025 Cohort 26 Performance Measurement Results (2023 HOS Baseline and 2025 HOS Follow-Up data)
 - Effectiveness of Care measures:
 - Cohort 26 Follow-Up (2025) and Cohort 28 Baseline data (2025)

Data 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
- Survey vendors must attest to:
 - Validity of HOS data submitted
 - Conformance with HOS protocols
 - Prompt reporting of any discrepancies

Data Integrity (Cont'd)

- MAOs and HOS vendors **MAY NOT**:
 - Attempt to influence responses to HOS survey questions
 - Imply that positive feedback will reward or benefit the MAO
 - Offer incentives of any kind
 - Show the HOS questionnaire and cover letter to members
- MAOs and HOS vendors **MAY**:
 - Notify all members of a contract that they may be asked to participate in the 2026 HOS
- **Reminder:** Encouraging participation without biasing results can be tricky. To avoid jeopardizing a client's results, consult the HOS Project Team if you have questions or concerns.

Requirements for CMS-Approved Survey Vendors

- Adhere to the HOS Minimum Business Requirements, Rules of Participation, and Program Requirements outlined in the *Medicare HOS Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications V2.10 (QAG)*
- Execute an HOS Data Use Agreement (DUA) with CMS and keep up to date
- Verify authorization to submit data on behalf of MAOs
- Perform quality checks on sample files

Requirements for CMS-Approved Survey Vendors (Cont'd)

- Administer HOS and oversee the organization's staff, subcontractors, and external partners
- Conform with HOS protocols and promptly report discrepancies (within one business day)
- Refrain from providing any data from sample files, HOS measure results, or calculations other than contract-level response rates to MAOs
- Participate in quality oversight activities with NCQA
- Submit data files and attest to data quality

Data Use Agreement (DUA) Terms and Restrictions

- Each HOS survey vendor must maintain a current, updated, and fully-executed DUA
- By signing the DUA Addendum, the vendor's subcontractors and all personnel agree to ensure integrity, security, and confidentiality of CMS and HOS data
- Survey vendors and subcontractors may not release CMS or HOS data to any entity not listed on the CMS DUA, **including MAO clients and MA members**
- Survey vendors are prohibited from using HOS sample files for any other purpose, **including de-duplicating samples for other client surveys**

DUA Terms and Restrictions (Cont'd)

- **NEW:** Only subcontractors with access to personally identifiable information (PII) or protected health information (PHI) are required to be included in the survey vendor DUAs
 - **Note:** All subcontractors and external partners, regardless of access to PII/PHI, must be included in the survey vendor's Participation Form and Quality Assurance Plan (QAP)

2026 DUA Updates

- CMS-approved HOS vendors must complete the following steps in Enterprise Privacy Policy Engine (EPPE):
 - Verify only current staff and subcontractors are listed; update if needed
 - Submit signed [Addendum](#) to add individuals or organizations to DUA
 - Update DUA to add 2026 HOS data by **Wednesday, March 25**

DUA Timeline

- Submit updated DUA to the HOS Project Team by **Wednesday, April 8**
- Notify the HOS Project Team immediately of any changes in key personnel or subcontractors that occur after initial submission
 - Update DUA to add or remove individuals or organizations within three business days of change and send the updated DUA to the HOS Project Team
- Extend DUA when prompted and submit an extended DUA to the HOS Project Team by **Friday, September 25**

Helpful DUA Links

- Change contacts: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/cont-03.pdf>
- Update subcontractors: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/cont-08.pdf>
- Add new data files: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/cont-12.pdf>
- Upload supporting documents:
<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/cont-13.pdf>
- Extend DUA: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/cont-15.pdf>
- Addendum: <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/CMS-Forms/CMS-Forms/Downloads/CMS-R-0235A.pdf>
- EPPE Help Desk: 844-EPPE-DUA (844-377-3382)

Questions?





HOS 2026 Administration Updates

NCQA

Erik Krause, MPH, PMP, CHES
HOS Project Manager

Overview

- Data Collection Overview
- Data Collection Timeline
- HEDIS Volume 6 Updates
- Fielding Non-CMS Surveys with HOS Questions

Data Collection Protocol

- Mixed mode data collection
- Longitudinal design to assess health over time
 - Sample member at Baseline, then resurvey 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 *Medicare HOS Quality Assurance Guidelines and Technical Specifications V2.10* (QAG)
- Standardized data collection ensures survey data collected across contracts by CMS-approved HOS survey vendors are comparable
- Survey vendors may **NOT** change the wording or order of HOS questions, mailing materials, or the telephone script

Mail Protocol

- Standardized mailing materials and questionnaire
 - Prenotification letter
 - Two survey mailings containing survey cover letter, questionnaire, and business reply envelope
- Survey vendors send mailing materials as assigned by the member's protocol path
- Survey vendors may **NOT** send materials to a member that differ from the member's assigned protocol path

Telephone Protocol

- Members in telephone phase:
 - Did not respond to mail questionnaire
 - Returned a blank or partially complete questionnaire
- Standardized telephone interviewing script and specifications
- Must have enough interviewers to support data collection timeline

Telephone Protocol (Cont'd)

- Survey vendors must make multiple telephone attempts to reach nonrespondents
 - The maximum attempts to a single dialed telephone number is **five**
 - 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

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 the telephone protocol
- The fifth attempt must occur no sooner than 21 calendar days after the first call attempt
- Interviewers may not leave voicemail messages

Telephone Protocol (Cont'd)

- Survey vendors are responsible for properly implementing the telephone protocol, including:
 - Proper training of interviewers
 - Following CATI script verbatim
 - Making calls in a quiet environment
 - Properly programming telephone specifications
- Interviewers must be trained on how to address technical issues (e.g., system failure) during a telephone interview
 - All processes must be documented in the survey vendor's Quality Assurance Plan (QAP)

Telephone Protocol (Cont'd)

- Caller ID Enhancement
 - Caller IDs may be programmed, with the permission of the health plan's HIPAA/Privacy Office with “on behalf of [Health Plan Name]”
 - May **NOT** code display as:
 - Only “[Health Plan Name]”
 - “on behalf of [Medicare]”
- Survey vendors may begin obtaining telephone numbers from MAOs as soon as contracting agreements are in place

Decedent File

- Prior to telephone administration, survey vendors will receive a decedent file which identifies members in the sample that are deceased and must be excluded from the remaining protocol
 - Survey vendors should ensure the identified members and their families are **NOT** contacted during the telephone protocol
- A disposition code of M26 is assigned to members with a populated date of death in the decedent file

Determining Language Preferences

- Survey vendors work with MAOs to determine language preferences for the Baseline survey
- Survey vendors **must** use the Protocol Identifier Flag to determine which language to contact the member or proxy for the Follow-Up protocol unless the member or proxy requests otherwise

Russian Survey Administration

- Russian is a mail-only protocol
 - Two standardized mailing materials and questionnaires
 - There are no reminder/thank you postcard mailings after each questionnaire mailing
- Survey vendors must allow a member who received a mail survey questionnaire in Russian to take the survey over the phone in English, Spanish, or Chinese, if requested

Customer Support Services

- Survey vendors must institute processes to accommodate English and Spanish incoming calls and email correspondence
- Survey vendors who field Chinese and Russian must institute processes to respond to calls and email correspondence in Chinese and Russian

Member Confidentiality

- Sampling procedures are designed so MAOs cannot identify members selected to participate in the survey
- Maintain confidentiality of sampled members and do **NOT** provide MAOs with member names or other member-identifying information
 - Survey vendors will not be provided a supplemental file
 - MAOs will provide addresses and telephone numbers for their entire membership
- Provide only the **minimum data necessary** to subcontractors to perform activities

Subcontractors

- The following tasks may be subcontracted to another organization:
 - Customer support services
 - Printing, sorting, and mailing HOS materials
 - Data entry
 - Telephone interviewing
- Document all subcontractors in the survey vendor QAP and DUA
- Any subcontractor with access to PII or PHI must be included on the survey vendor's DUA

Subcontractor Oversight

- Store electronic images, files, and recordings on the survey vendor's systems and retain per QAG record storage requirements
- Conduct onsite and remote quality checks and monitoring
- Ensure subcontractors participate in quality oversight activities conducted by the HOS Project Team

Subcontractor Oversight (Cont'd)

- Survey vendors who use telephone subcontractors must participate in call monitoring in addition to the subcontractor's independent monitoring
 - Survey vendors must conduct telephone interviewer monitoring to identify issues with interviews completed by its subcontractors
 - Survey vendors must monitor at least 10 percent of internal telephone interviews and 10 percent of each subcontractor's telephone interviews (if applicable)

Sharing Data with Clients

- Limit data reported to MAOs to sample size and frequency distributions for each final disposition code at the contract level only, which are the data elements contained in biweekly summary status reports
- Do not share any sample file variables
- Do not report any calculations or results of HOS measures to MAOs
- Survey vendors may share their overall response rates, at the survey vendor-level with MAOs
- Survey vendors may not share any member-level data with MAOs

Data Collection Timeline

Task	Date (2026)
Send sample files to vendors	Monday, June 22
Mail Baseline and Follow-Up prenotification letter	Monday, July 13
Open survey vendor customer support telephone and email	Monday, July 13
Open inbound electronic telephone interviewing	Monday, July 13
Mail Baseline and Follow-Up first questionnaire	Monday, July 20
Mail Baseline and Follow-Up second questionnaire	Monday, August 24

Data Collection Timeline (Cont'd)

Task	Date (2026)
Receive decedent file	Friday, August 28
Conduct Baseline and Follow-Up outbound telephone interviewing	Monday, September 14– Monday, November 2
Submit interim data files	Tuesday, September 29– Thursday, October 1
End Baseline and Follow-Up data collection	Monday, November 2
Prepare and submit final data files	Monday, November 2– Monday, November 16
Final data files due	Monday, November 16

Data Retention

- Retain all data files, audio recordings, questionnaires (electronic or paper) onsite for a minimum of **three years**
 - Paper questionnaires: Must be retained onsite through **December 31 of the following survey administration year**
 - May destroy after one year following electronic imaging and QA
 - Retain for three years if an electronic image is not created
 - Telephone data: Retain onsite all telephone survey data and recordings in all fielded languages, including subcontractor telephone interview recordings
- Establish a process for data destruction after **three years** and complete attestation of data destruction



HEDIS Volume 6 Updates

Summary of Changes

- **NEW:** Added new disposition codes for ineligible members
- **NEW:** Updated HOS and HOS-M Questionnaires (**Appendix 1 and 2**) to include new OMB expiration date
- **NEW:** Updated HOS and HOS-M Mailing Materials (**Appendix 3–5**) to remove the Group Director's signature



Fielding Non-CMS Surveys with HOS Questions

Fielding Non-CMS Surveys with HOS Questions

- NCQA prohibits survey vendors and organizations from fielding surveys containing HOS questions **eight weeks** prior to and during the official HOS administration (July through November)
- In addition, CMS strongly discourages MA contracts and survey vendors from fielding other non-CMS surveys to enrollees eight weeks prior to and during the official HOS administration
- Fielding surveys similar to the HOS, even in the off-season, may negatively impact HOS response rates
 - If HOS response rates are too low, contracts risk not having enough data to calculate measure scores or Star Ratings, which could impact quality bonus payments

Fielding Non-CMS Surveys with HOS Questions (Cont'd)

- To download the HOS and HOS-M questionnaires and HEDIS Volume 6, visit NCQA's [HOS webpage](#)
- Survey vendors fielding off-cycle, non-CMS sponsored surveys using the HOS or HOS-M instruments or questions derived from the HOS must complete a HOS [Survey Use Application](#) and acknowledge and sign the HOS [Terms of Use](#)
- HEDIS Volume 6 is accessible from the [NCQA Store](#)

Fielding Non-CMS Surveys with HOS Questions (Cont'd)

- Example of a denied survey use request
 - A health plan requested to house a copy of the HOS on their virtual library of tools and resources
 - This request was denied as it violates NCQA's Terms of Use by making the survey available for use eight weeks prior to and during the official HOS administration, the project not having an established end date, and the survey instrument being widely available without monitoring

Questions?



Polling Question 1

Which disposition code should survey vendors use for members who have a populated date of death in the HOS Decedent File?

- a) T24
- b) T30
- c) M25
- d) M26



HOS 2025 Survey Results

*Health Services
Advisory Group (HSAG)*

*Patrick Leon, MPH
Healthcare Analyst*

*Jael Rodriguez, MBA, MPH
Healthcare Analyst*

Overview

- HOS 2025 Survey Administration
- Response Rate Trends
- Survey Response Rates
 - Cohort 28 Baseline
 - Cohort 26 Follow-Up
- Survey Disposition Components
 - Cohort 28 Baseline
 - Cohort 26 Follow-Up
- Highlights

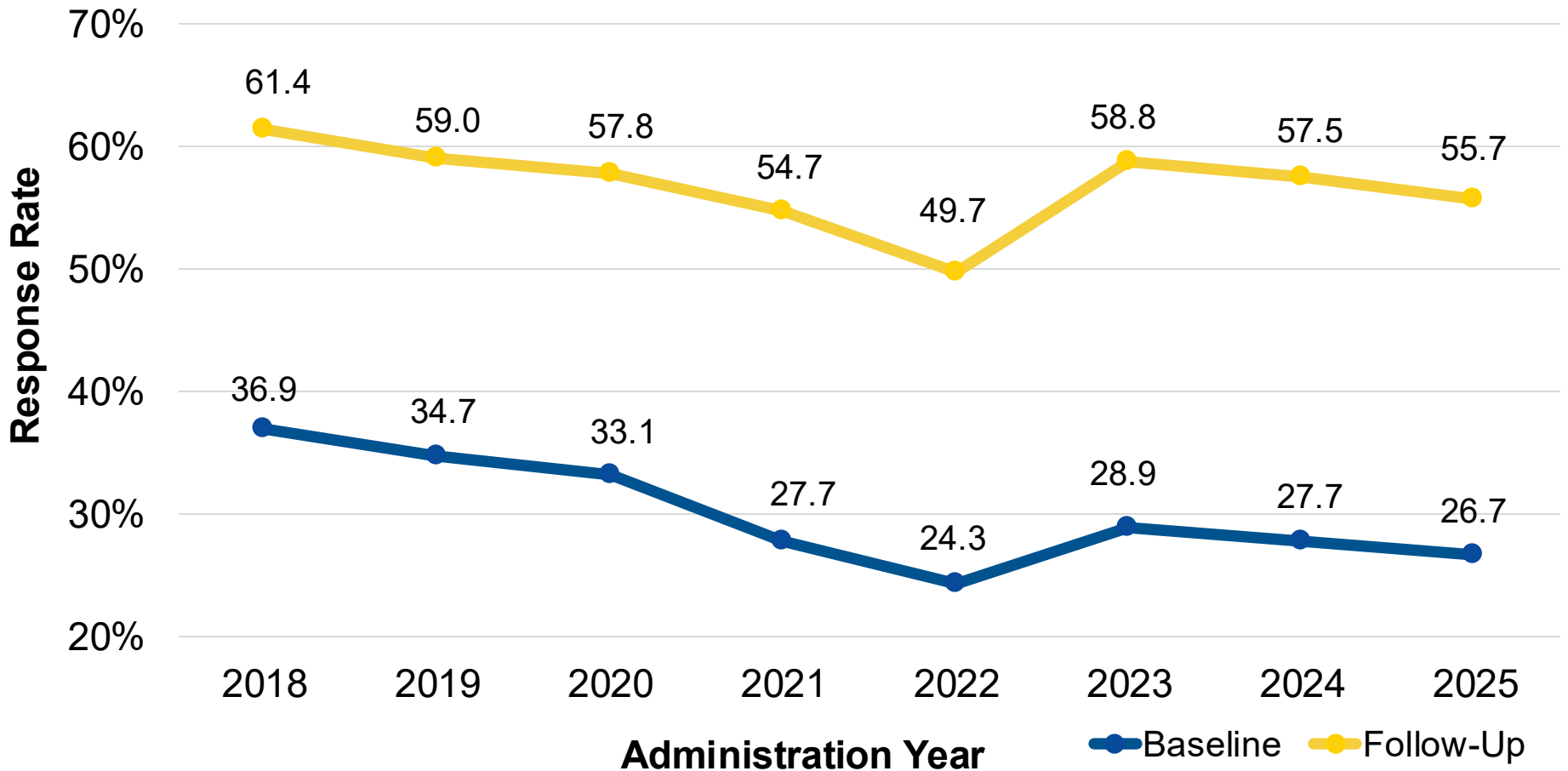
HOS 2025 Survey Administration

- Four survey vendors were approved to administer the HOS
- Survey vendors are randomly assigned a letter (A–D) in this presentation

Survey	Number of Contracts
Total Unique Contracts	603
Cohort 28 Baseline	592
Cohort 26 Follow-Up	526

Response Rate Trends

Rounds 21–28, Baseline and Follow-Up Surveys: 2018–2025



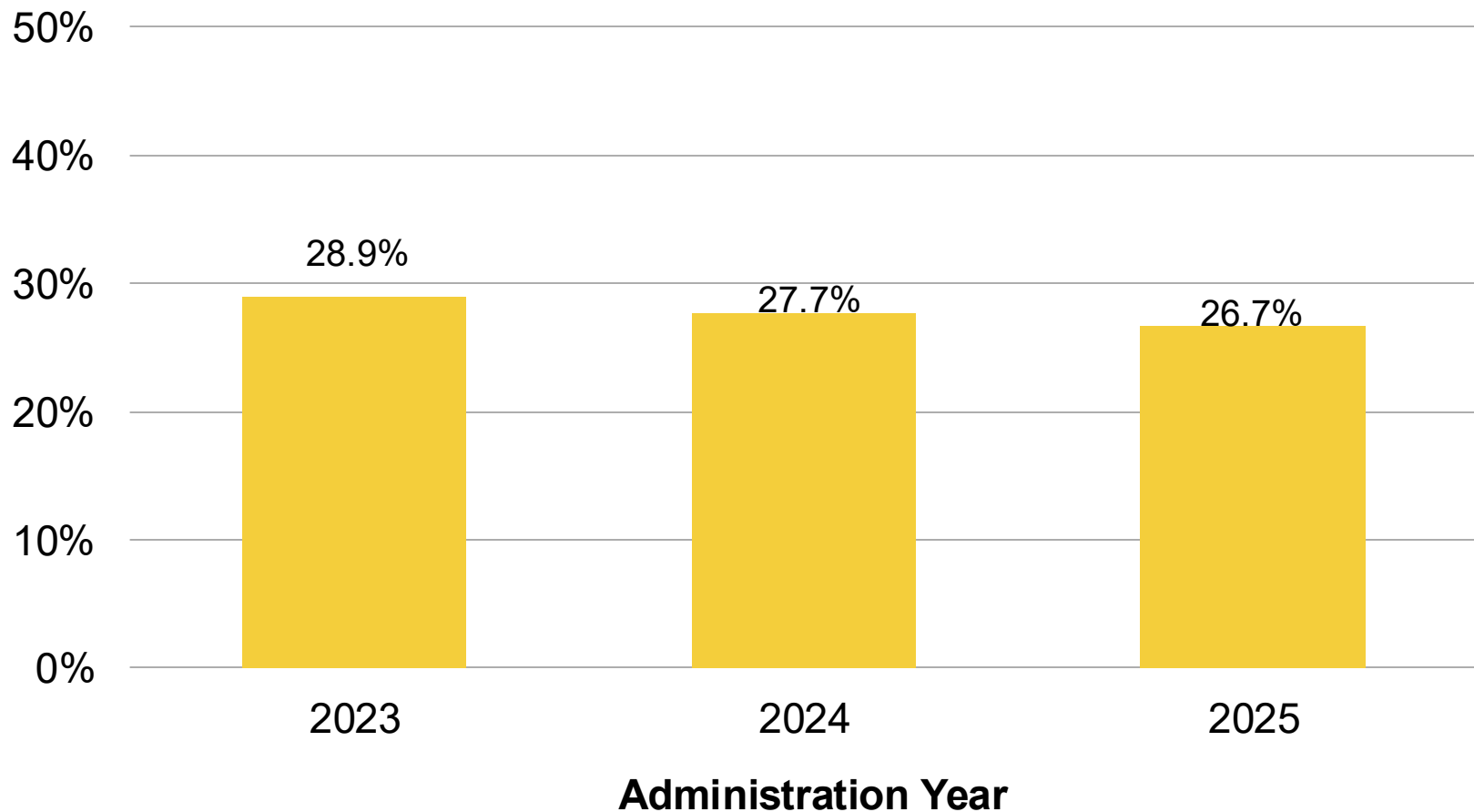


Survey Response Rates

Cohort 28 Baseline

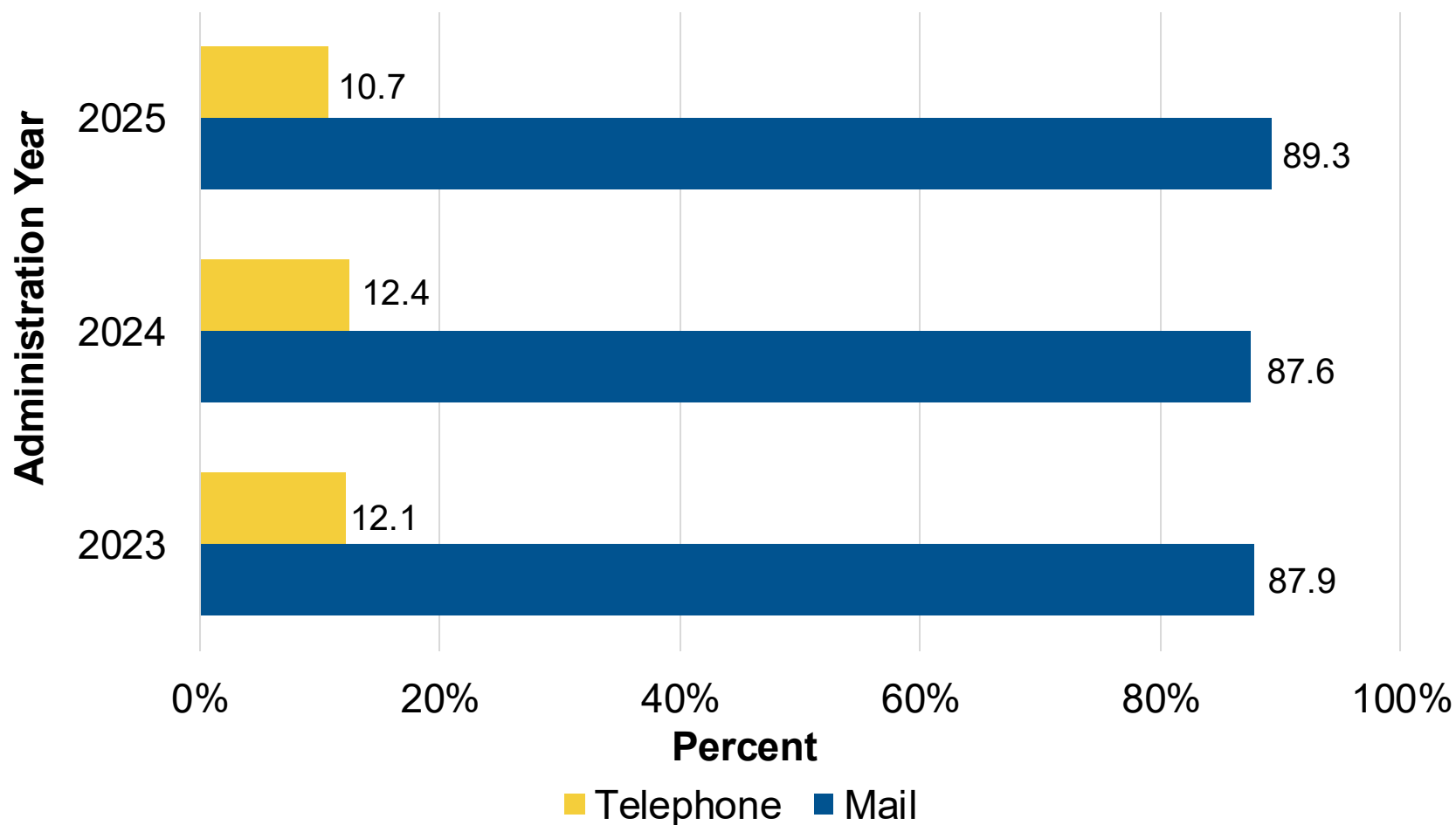
Baseline Response Rates Trend

Cohorts 26–28, Survey Years: 2023–2025



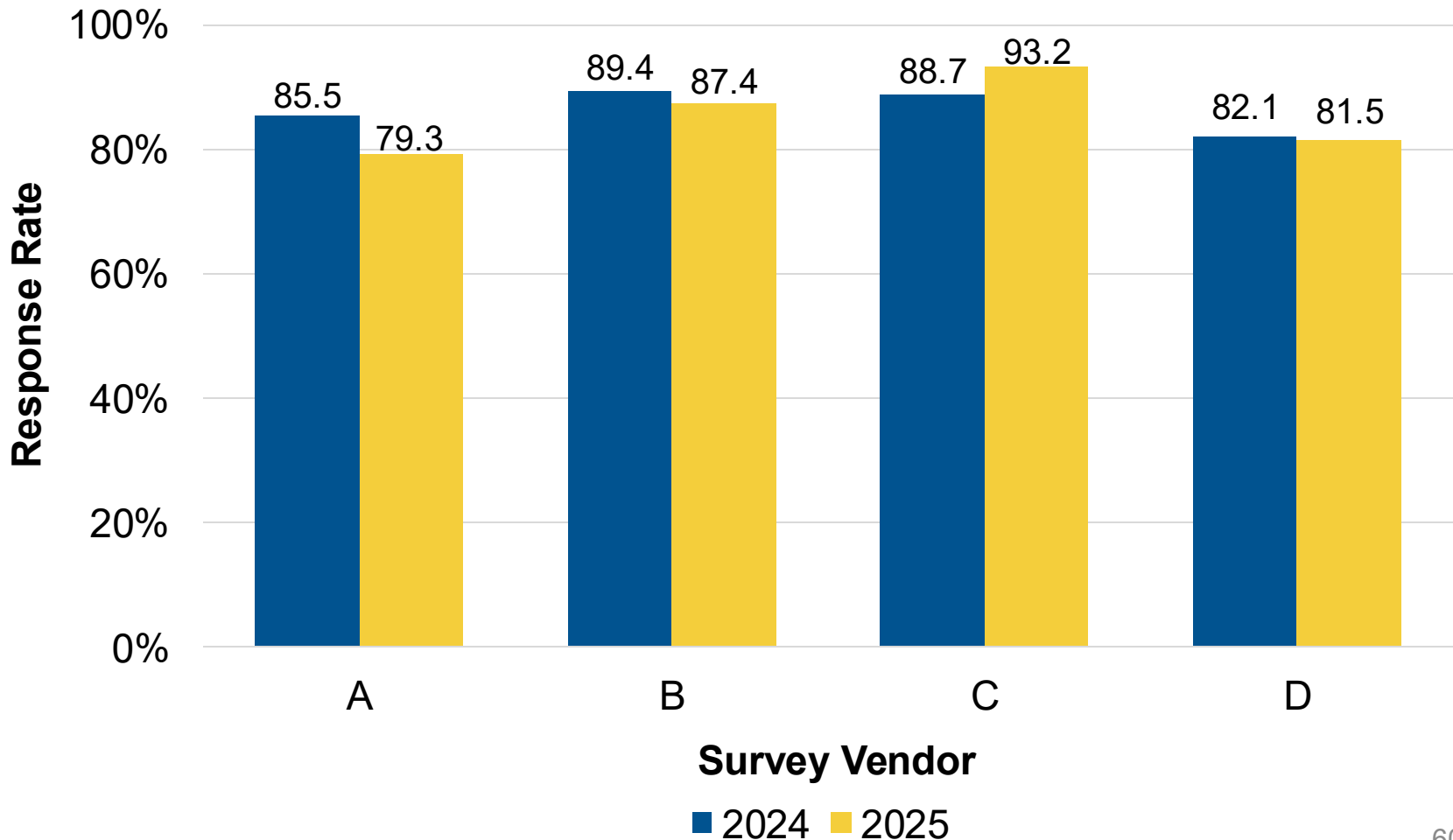
Completed Baseline Surveys by Mode

Cohorts 26–28, Years: 2023–2025



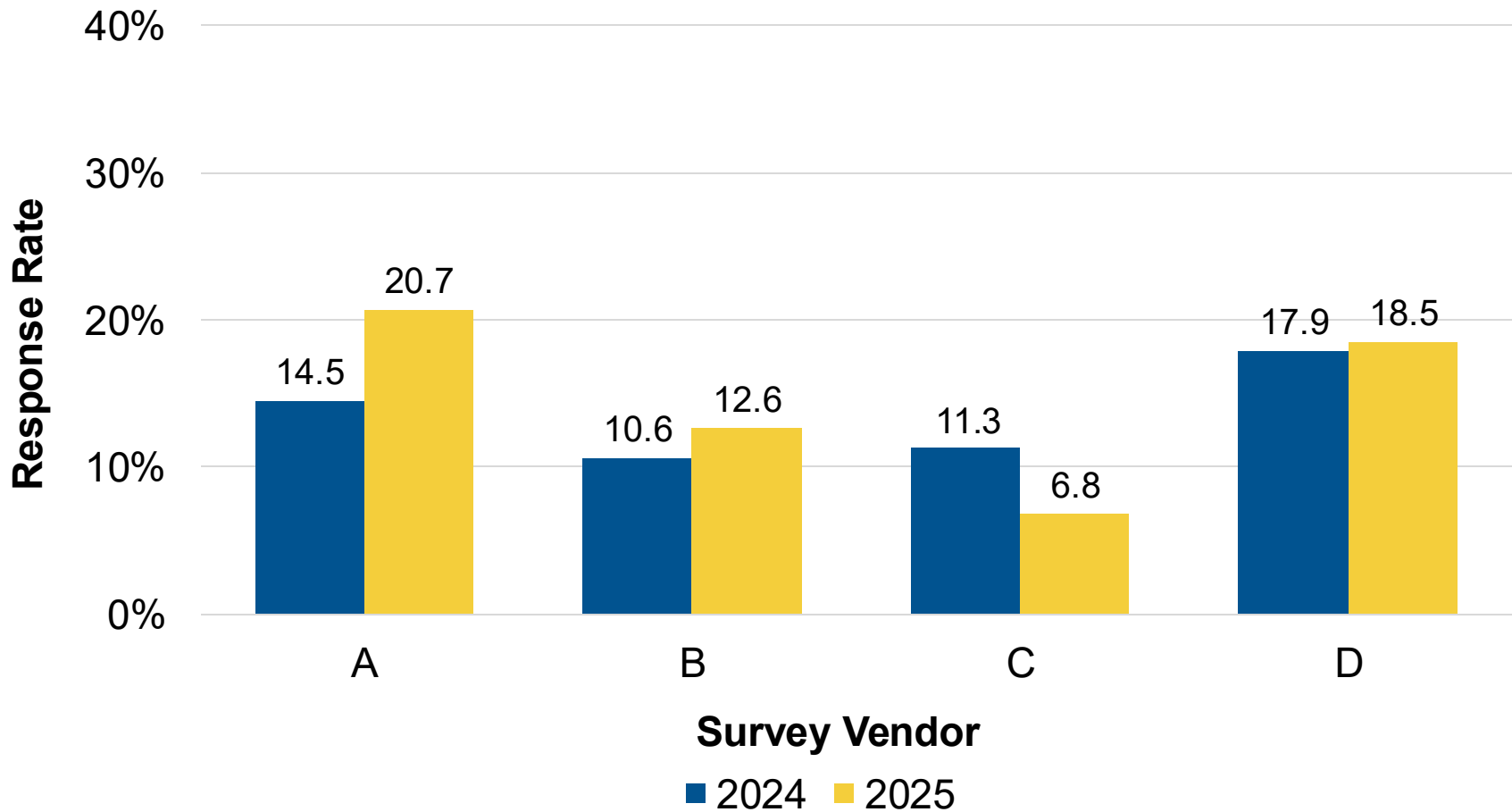
Completed Mail Survey Rates by Vendor

Cohorts 27–28, Baseline Surveys: 2024–2025



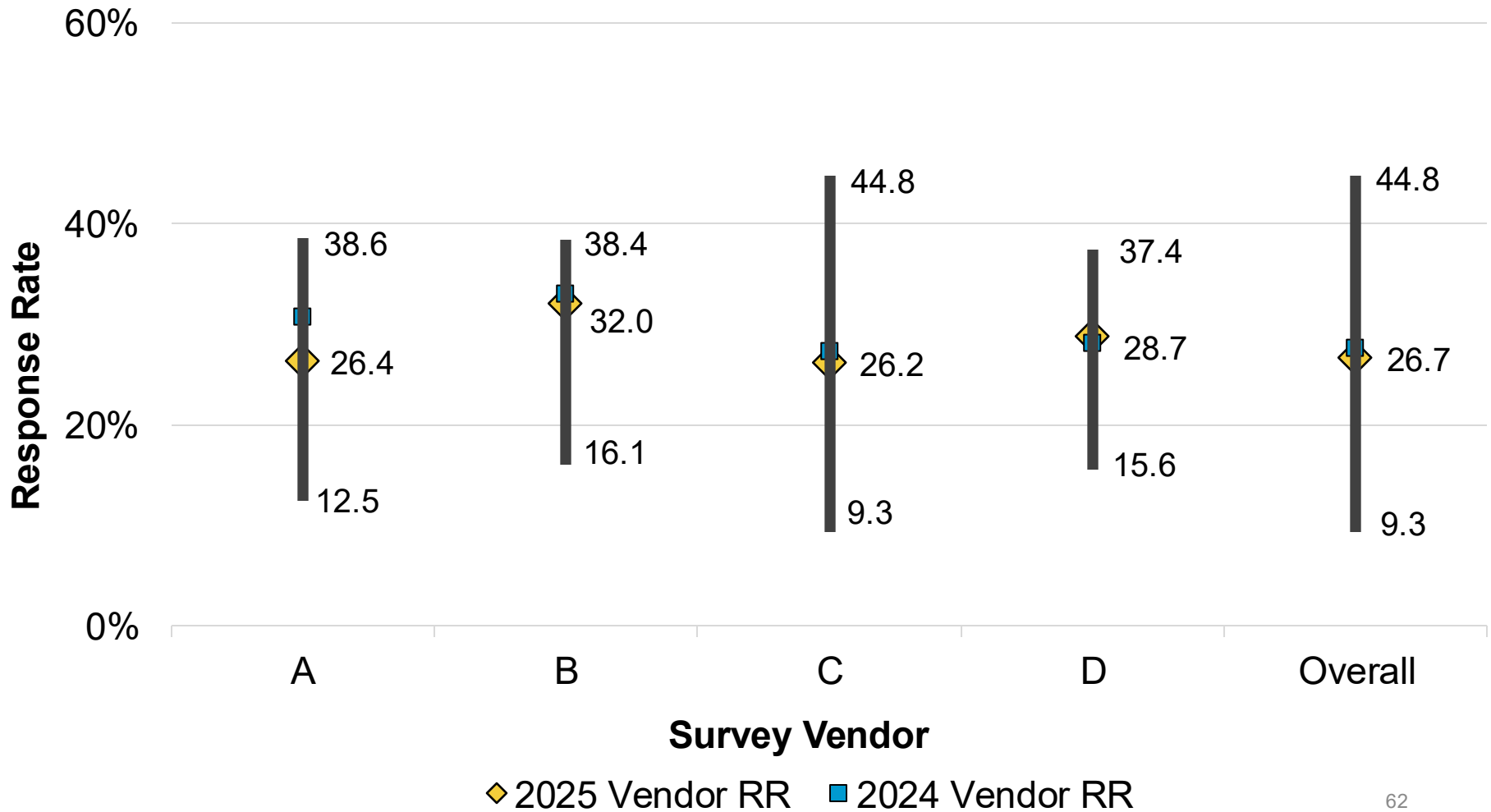
Completed Telephone Survey Rates by Vendor

Cohorts 27–28, Baseline Surveys: 2024–2025



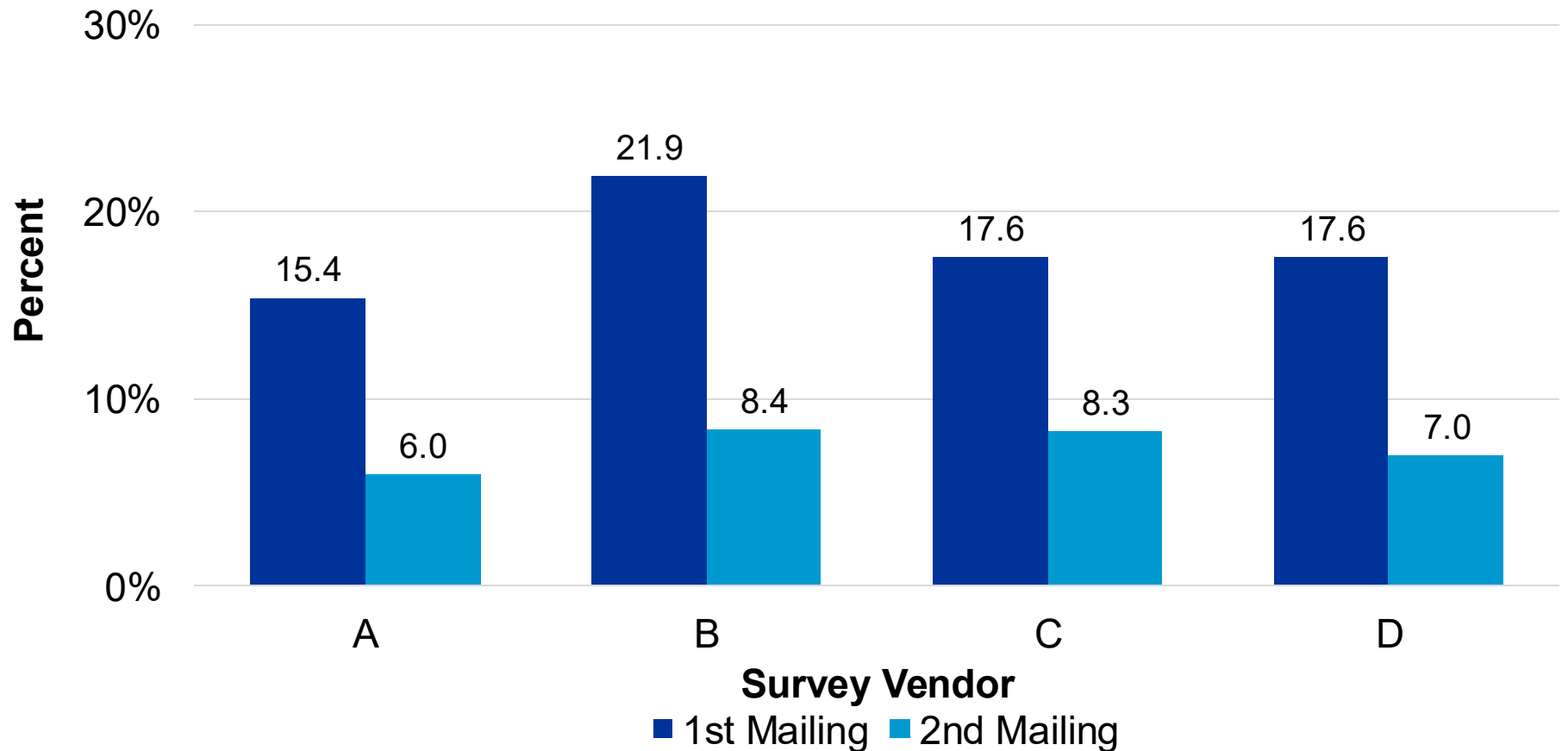
Variability of Completed Survey Rates by Vendor

Cohort 28 Baseline Survey: 2025



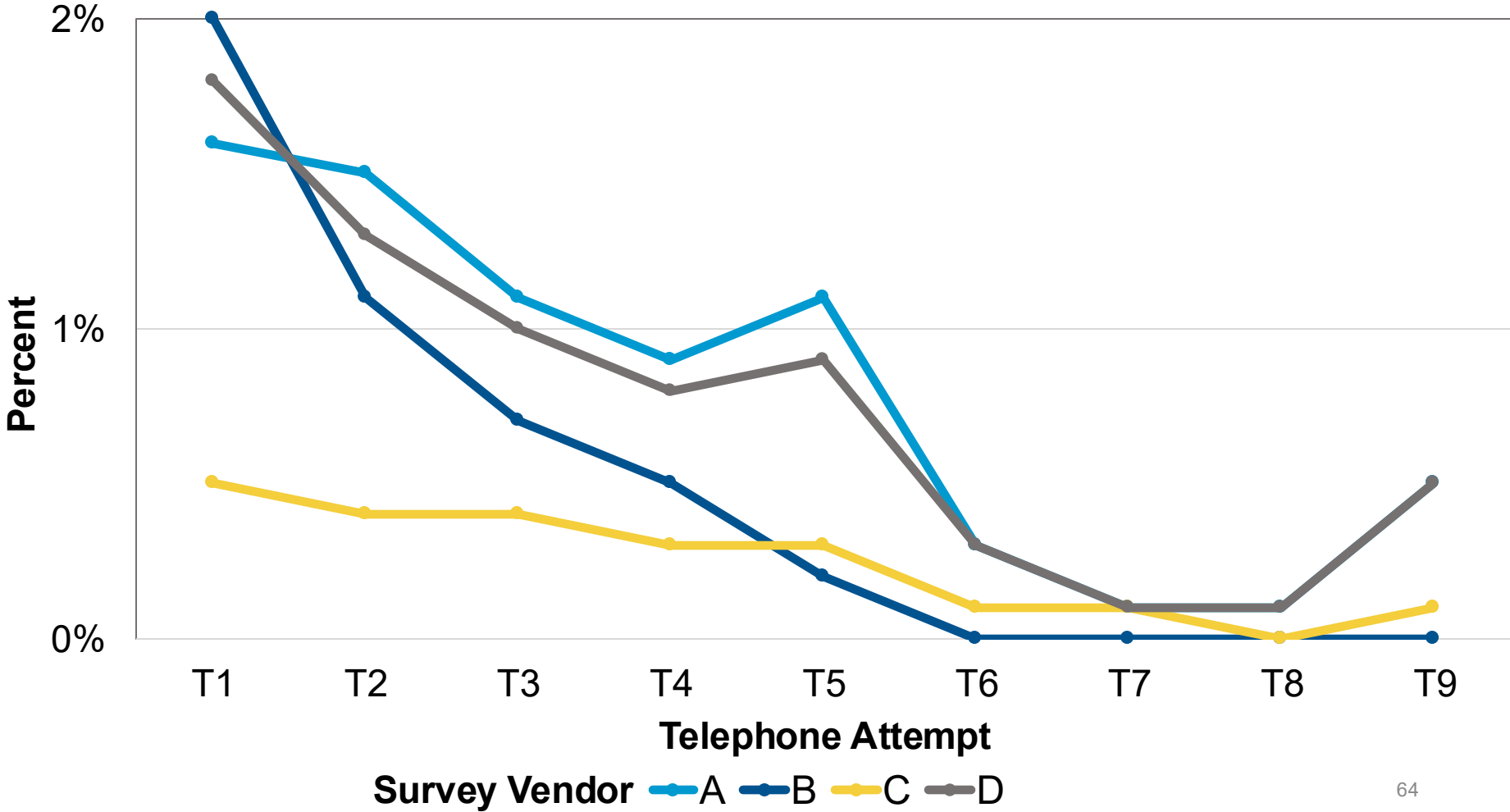
Percent of Sample Responding by Mail

Cohort 28 Baseline Survey: 2025



Percent of Sample Responding by Telephone

Cohort 28 Baseline Survey: 2025



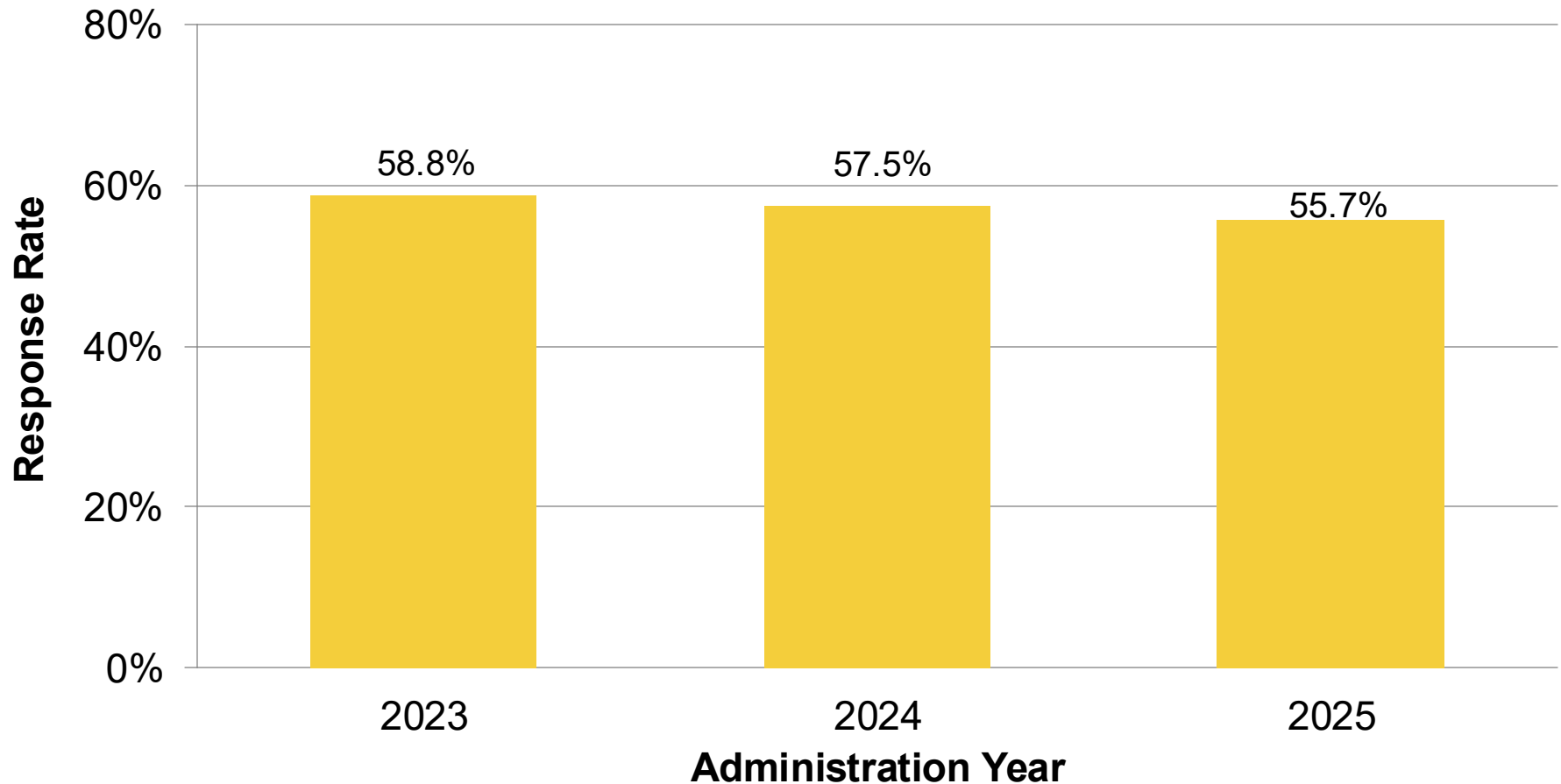


Survey Response Rates

Cohort 26 Follow-Up

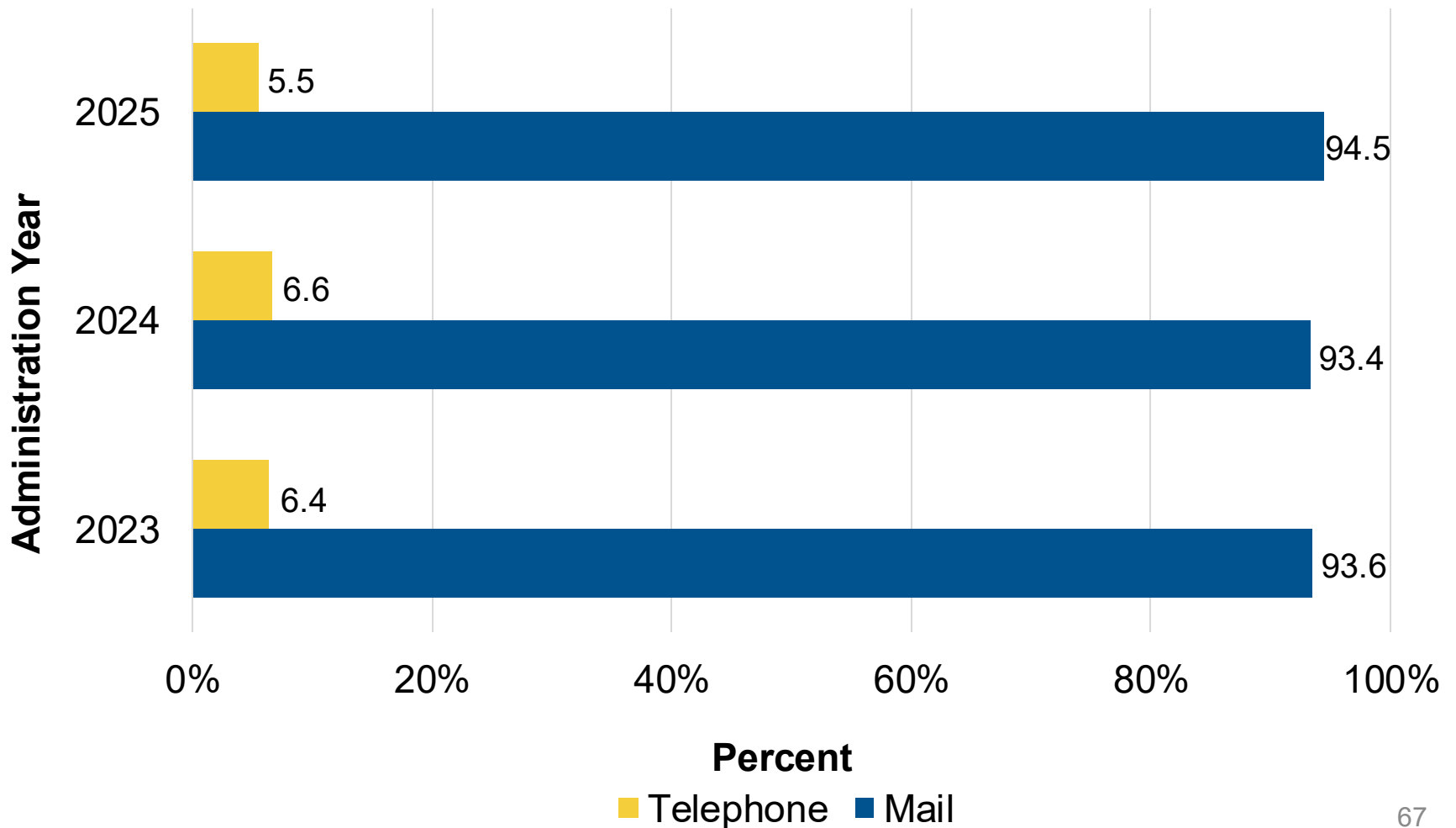
Follow-Up Response Rates Trend

Cohorts 24–26, Survey Years: 2023–2025



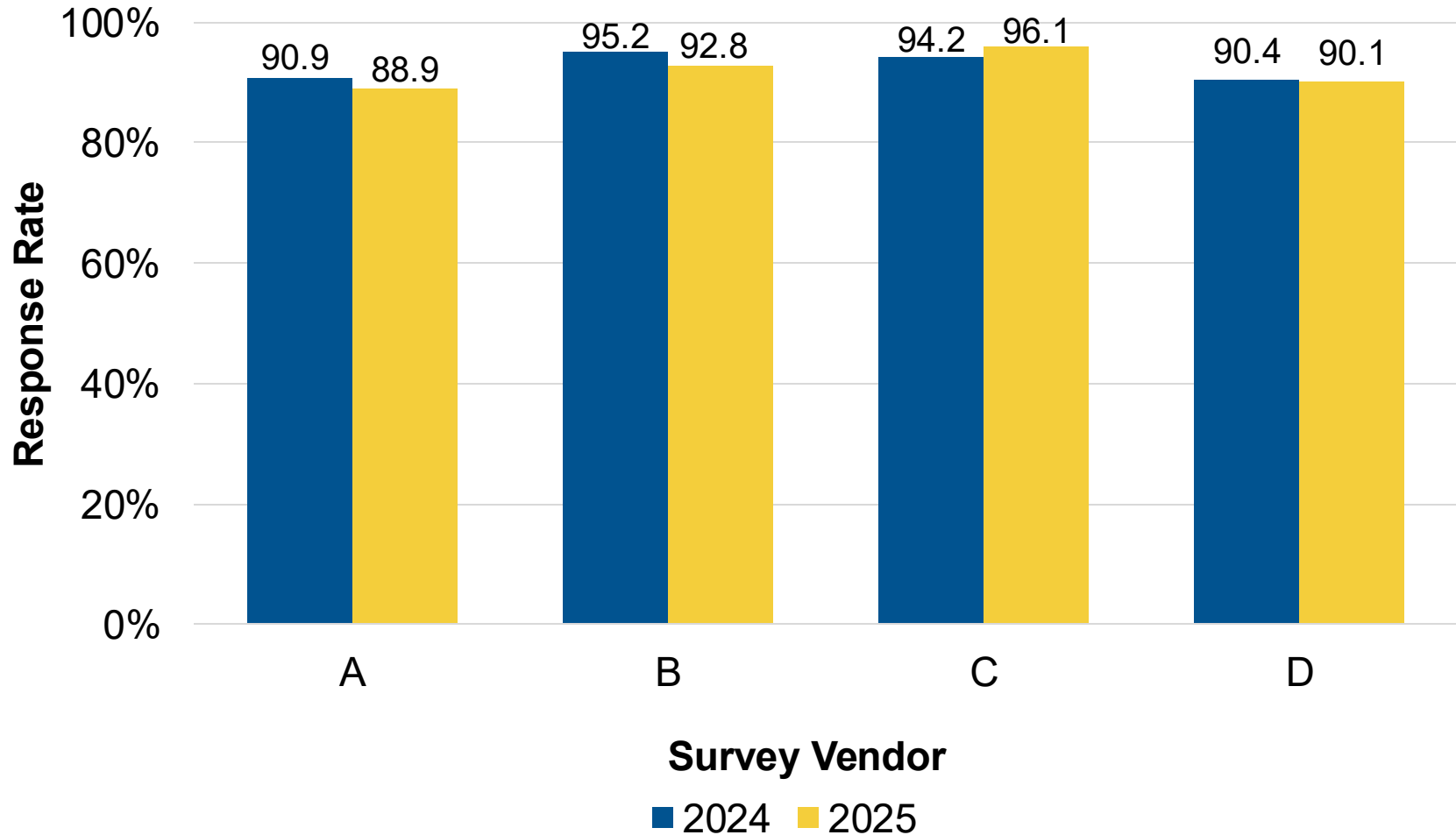
Completed Follow-Up Surveys by Mode

Cohorts 24–26 Years: 2023–2025



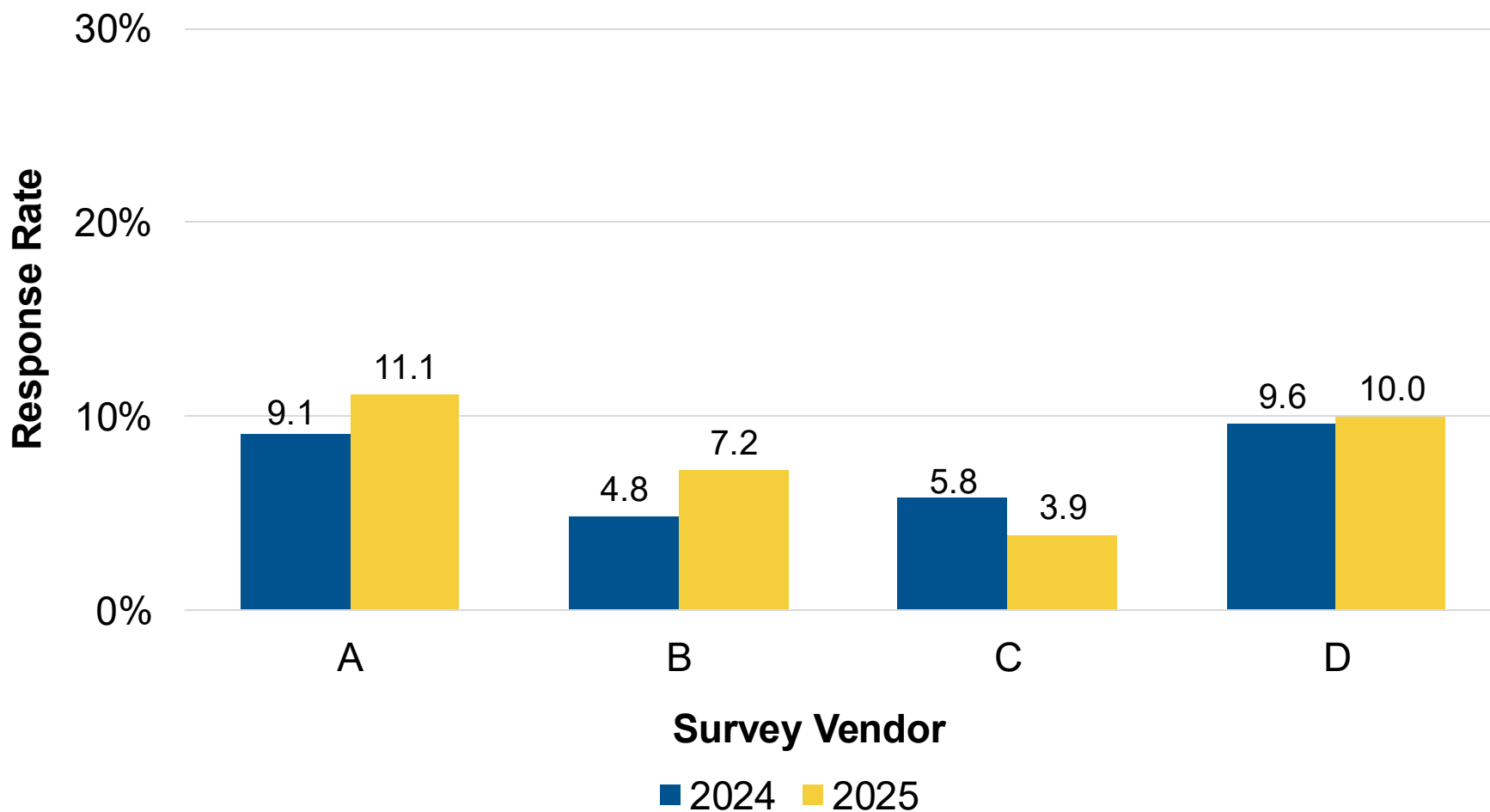
Completed Mail Survey Rates by Vendor

Cohorts 25–26 Follow-Up Surveys: 2024–2025



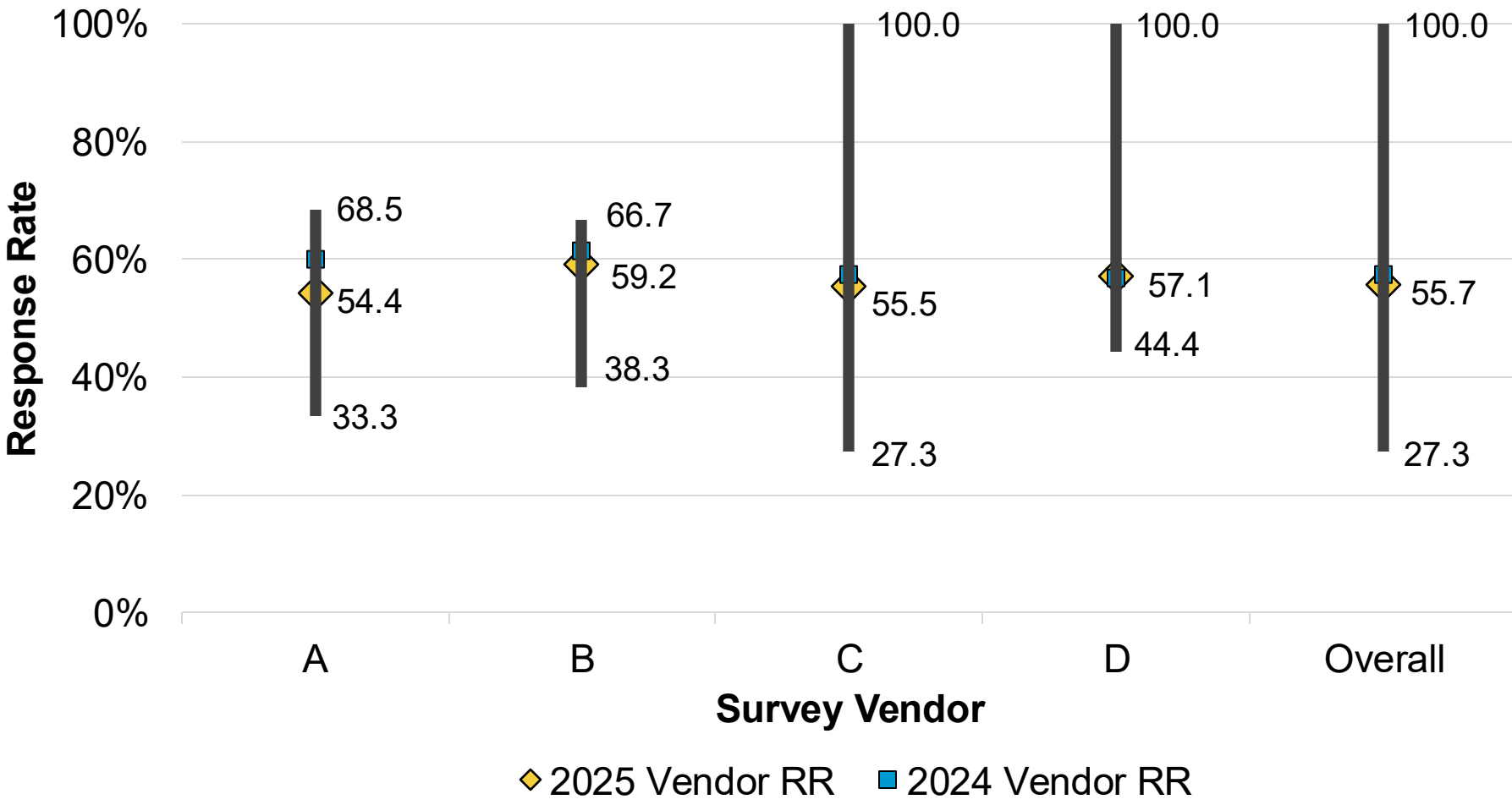
Completed Telephone Survey Rates by Vendor

Cohorts 25–26 Follow-Up Surveys: 2024–2025



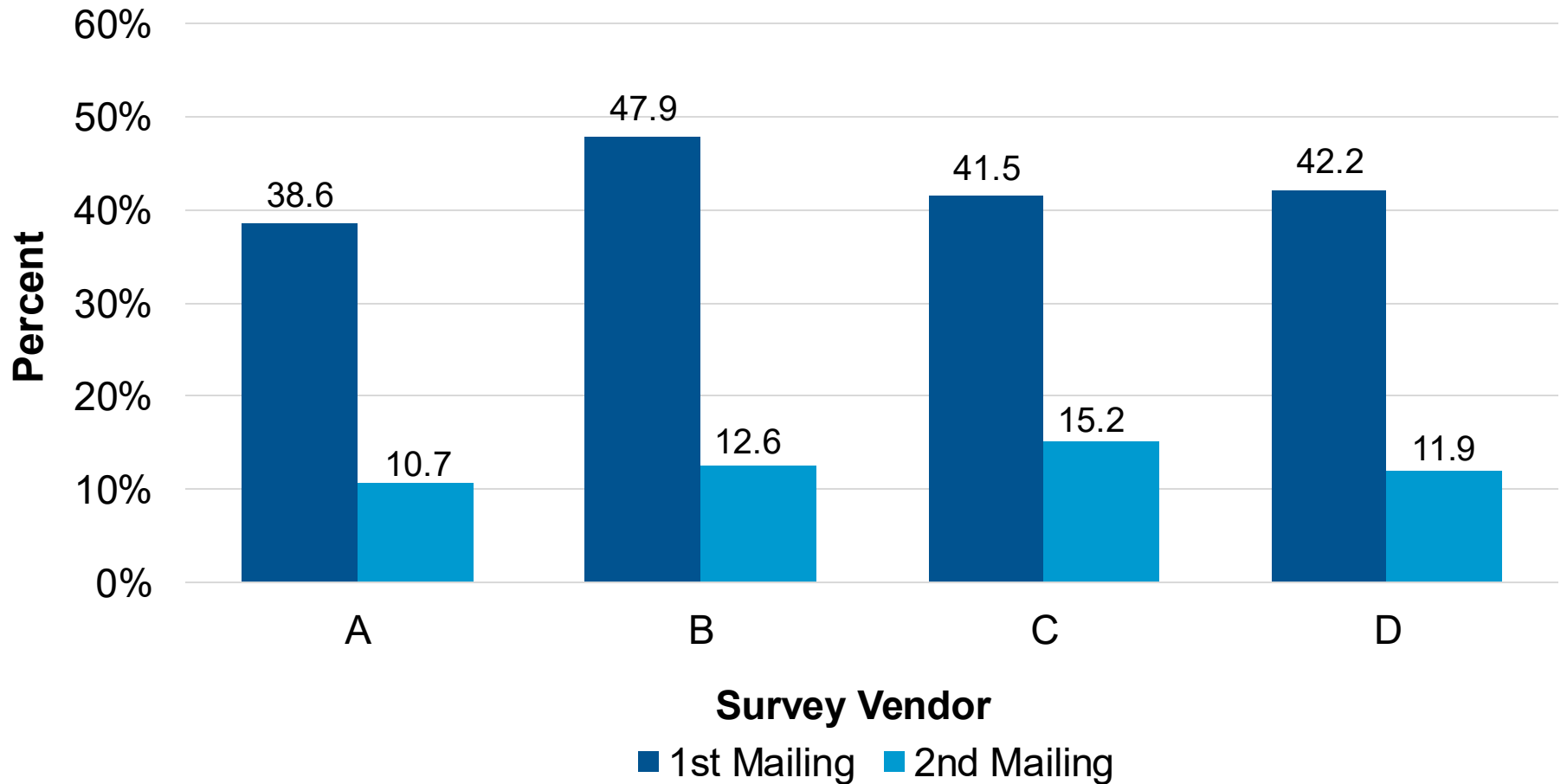
Variability of Completed Survey Rates by Vendor

Cohort 26 Follow-Up Survey: 2025



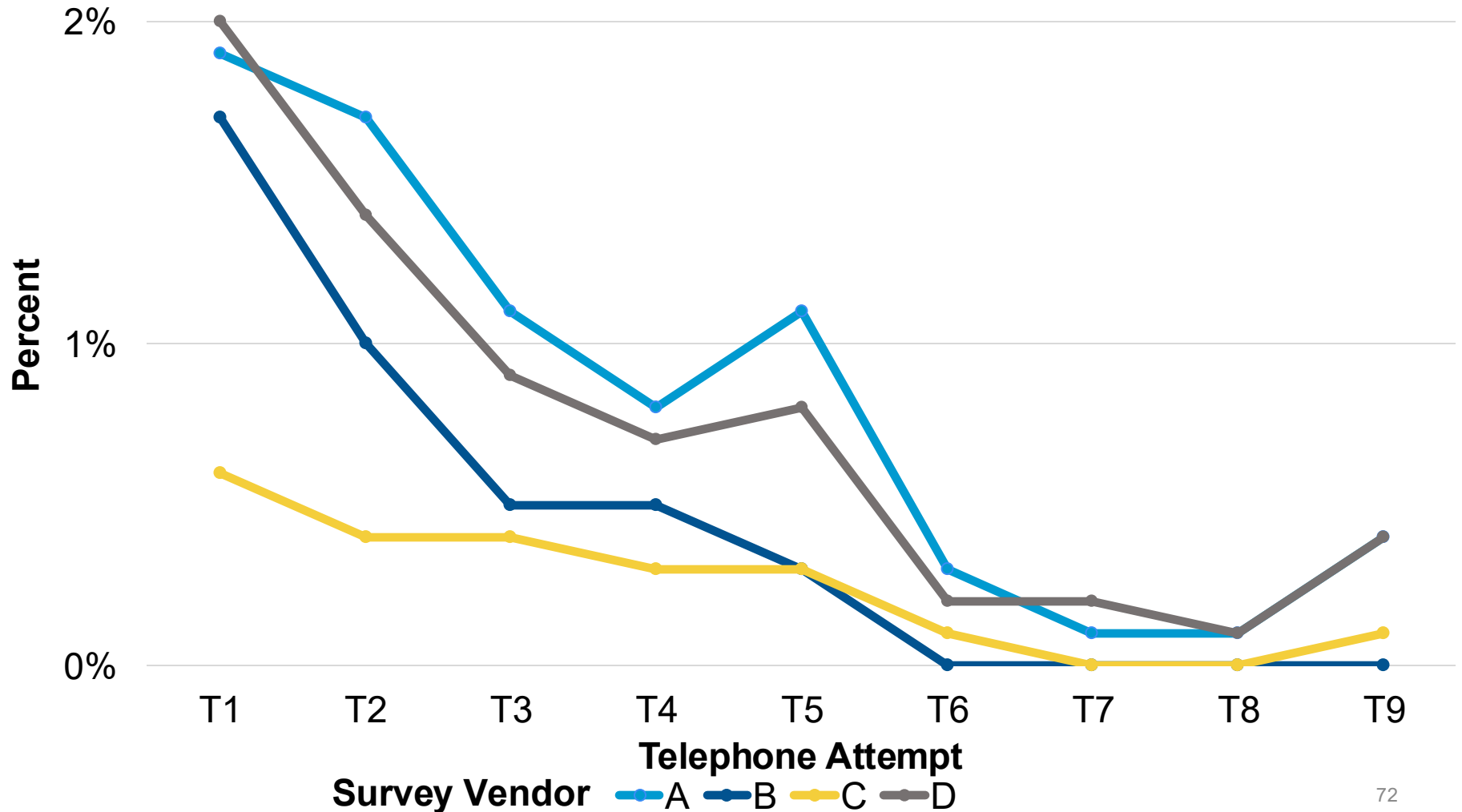
Percent of Sample Responding by Mail

Cohort 26 Follow-Up Survey: 2025



Percent of Sample Responding by Telephone

Cohort 26 Follow-Up Survey: 2025

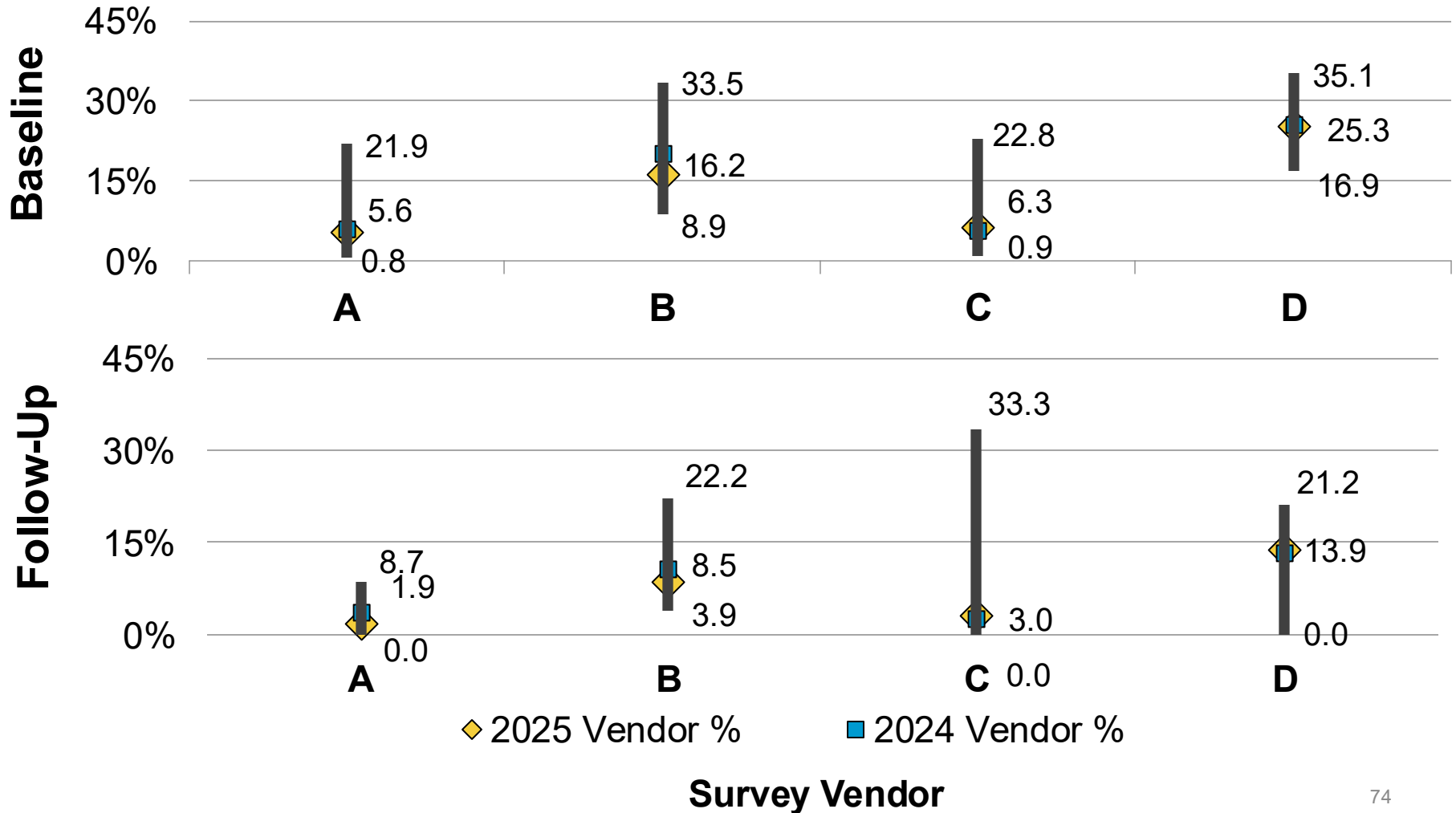




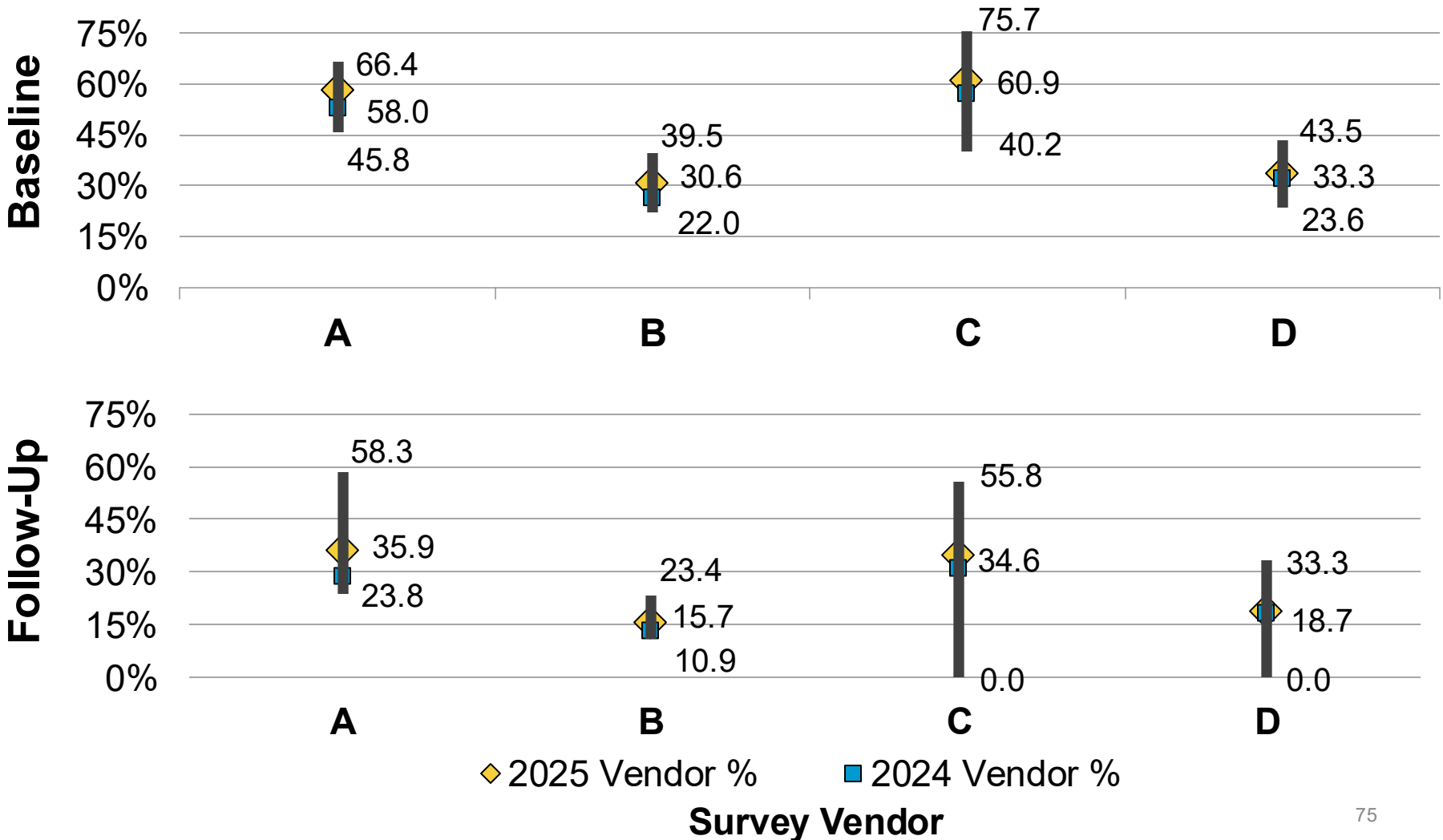
Survey Disposition Components

Cohort 28 Baseline and Cohort 26 Follow-Up

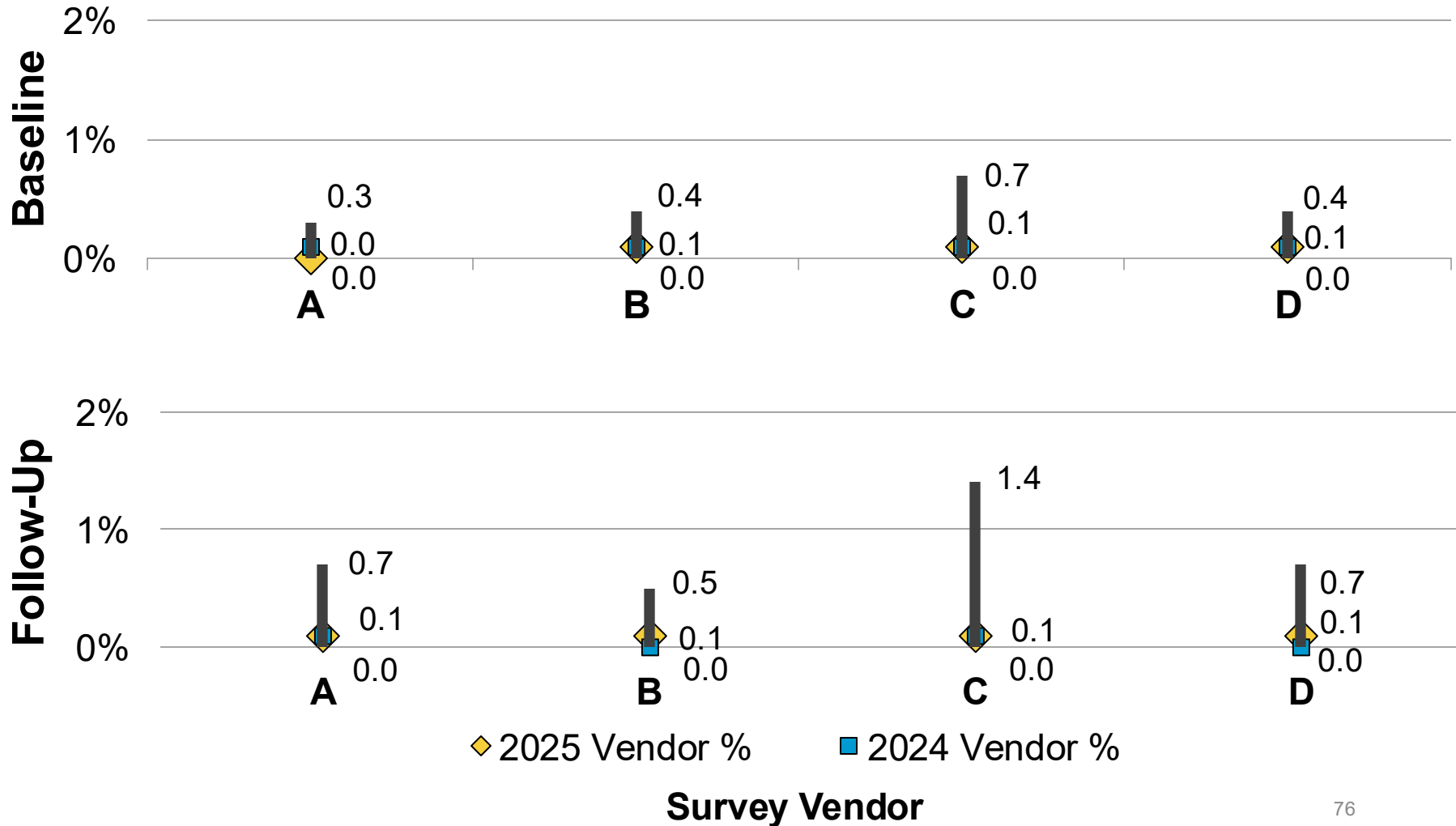
Mail Nonresponse After Max Attempts: M36



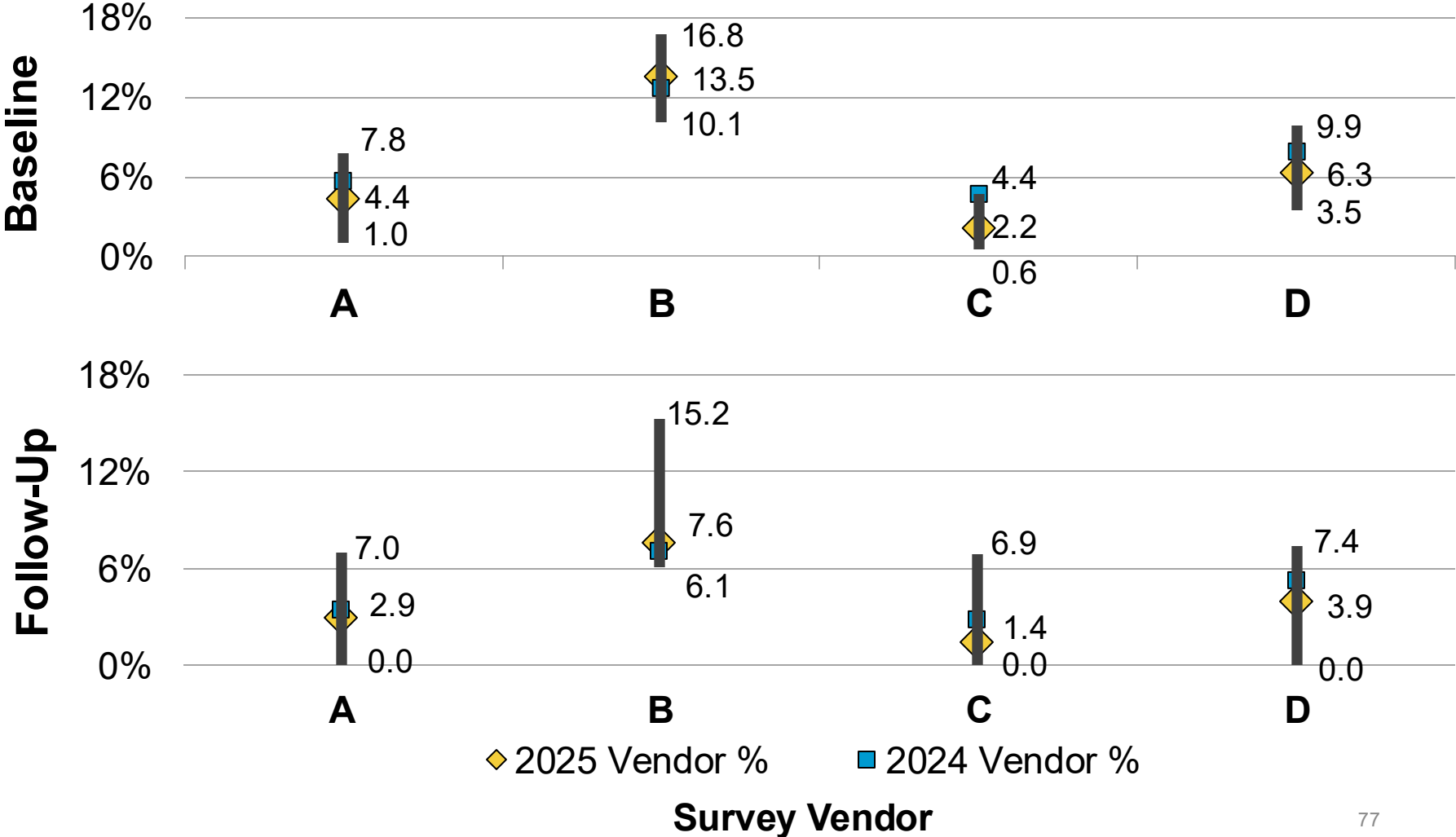
Telephone Nonresponse After Max Attempts: T36



Mail Refusal: M32



Telephone Refusal: T32



Highlights

- 2025 showed a decrease in response rates for both Baseline and Follow-Up
- The majority of surveys were completed by mail (89% Baseline, 95% Follow-Up)
- First mailing captures more than twice the respondents compared to the second mailing
- First telephone attempt has the most responses, and for three survey vendors, the ninth telephone attempt shows a slight increase over the declining trend of the other attempts
- Three survey vendors had smaller ranges of variability in response rates across contracts for Baseline, while two survey vendors had a smaller range at Follow-Up

Questions?





Survey Material Updates

NCQA

Louie Amog, BS
HOS Project Analyst

Overview

- QAG Updates
- Mailing Material Updates
- Instrument Updates
- Telephone Specification Updates
- FAQ Updates

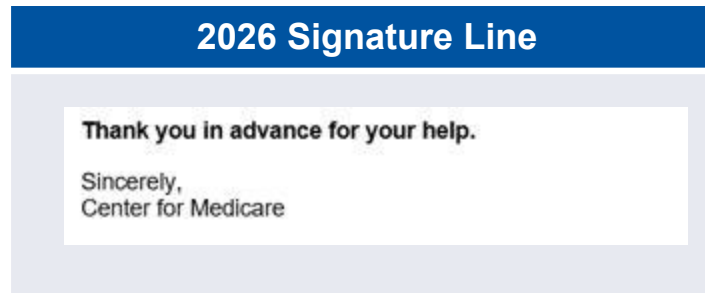
QAG Updates

- **NEW:** Added guidance that survey vendors and their associated subcontractors must have processes in place for tracking telephone attempts throughout the telephone protocol
 - Updated Narrative Report requirements for Progress Reports #6 and #7 in Quality Oversight section
- **NEW:** Updated Data Coding section to include new disposition codes (M26/T26) for the decedent file
- **NEW:** Added guidance that privacy managers are insufficient evidence of a nonviable telephone number
- **NEW:** Updated Data Analysis and Public Reporting section to include examples of what types of HOS data survey vendors can and cannot share with health plans

Mailing Material Updates

Prenotification and Cover Letters

- **NEW:** Director signature line removed from all mailing materials

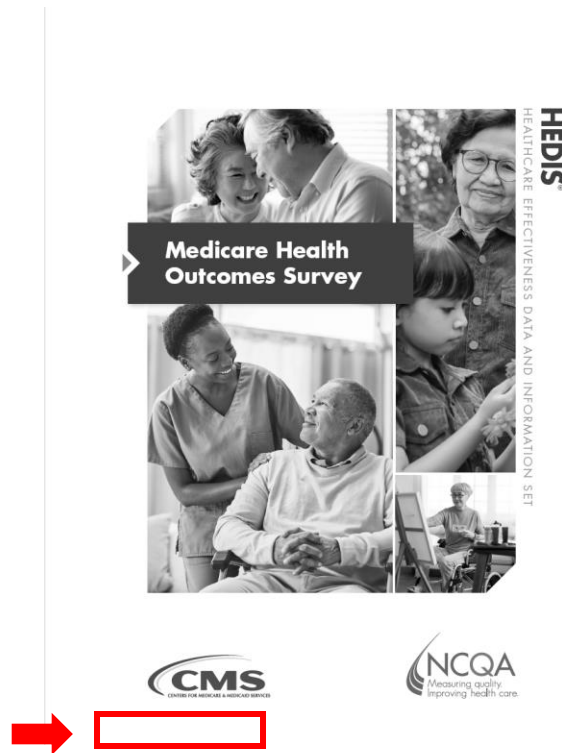


- All letters must have **centered** margins, and margin sizes must be **consistent** across all letters
 - Left/Right margins may **NOT** be smaller than **0.75”**
 - Top/Bottom margins may **NOT** be smaller than **0.5”**

Mailing Material Updates (Cont'd)

Questionnaire Formatting Guidelines



- **NEW:** Survey vendors may include the member's unique ID on the bottom left of the survey questionnaire cover



Mailing Material Updates (Cont'd)

Logo Guidance

- Survey vendors have the option of placing the health plan logo on cover letters
 - CMS and health plan logos are the only logos that may appear on the cover letters
 - Logos must be printed in **black and white** on **ALL** applicable materials (including envelopes)

CMS Logo Only	CMS and Health Plan Logos
<p>Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services c/o Survey Processing [SURVEY VENDOR RETURN ADDRESS]</p>  <p>The CMS logo consists of a stylized swoosh above the letters 'CMS'. Below 'CMS' are the words 'CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES' and 'CENTER FOR MEDICARE' in smaller text.</p>	<p>[Insert health plan logo here]</p>  <p>Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services c/o Survey Processing [SURVEY VENDOR RETURN ADDRESS]</p> <p>The CMS logo is identical to the one in the first column, positioned to the right of the health plan logo placeholder.</p>

Mailing Material Updates (Cont'd)

- On all outgoing envelopes survey vendors will use the following block format
 - Prenotification envelopes and Business Reply envelopes may **NOT** include health plan logos

Mailing Material	Logo/Letterhead
Prenotification Outgoing Envelope	[CMS logo] c/o Survey Processing [Survey vendor mailing address]
First and Second Questionnaire Outgoing Envelope	[CMS logo; health plan logo, optional] c/o Survey Processing [Survey vendor mailing address]
Business Reply Envelope	[CMS logo] c/o Survey Processing [Survey vendor return address] or "Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services" c/o Survey Processing [Survey vendor mailing address]

Mailing Material Updates (Cont'd)

- Survey vendors may not use Z-fold or accordion-fold for prenotification letters
- Double-sided survey cover letters must be folded in such a way that only one language is visible
- The visible survey language must correspond to the sampled member's language preference

Instrument Updates

- **NEW:** Updated Instructions page and footers with new OMB expiration date
 - OMB 0938-0701 (Expires: 6/30/2027)

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.”

Telephone Specification Updates (Cont'd)

- **NEW:** Updated interviewer note for Q48a to replace “respondent” with “member” as the question is asking about the sampled member’s ethnicity
 - Interviewer Note: If the member is male, use “Latino” and “Chicano.” If the member is female, use “Latina” and “Chicana”

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.

Questions?



Polling Question 2

True or False: Survey vendors may not print logos in color on the outgoing letters and business reply envelopes.

Break





Data Coding and Submission

NCQA

*Nicole Herdzyk, MPH
HOS Project Analyst*

Overview

- File Specifications Review
- File Layout Changes
- Data Coding Guidelines
 - Decision Rules
 - Percentage Answered
 - Disposition Codes
- Data Submission Process
 - Data Validation
 - Prepare and Submit Data Files
 - 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 Layout Changes

File Layouts

- **NEW:** Removal of Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI)
 - Sample File field position ends at 331
 - Survey File Record field position ends at 280
- **NEW:** Added M26/T26 disposition codes (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

File Layout Changes

File Layouts

- **NEW:** Additional valid values for SNP Type
 - 5 = Fully Integrated Dual-Eligible (FIDE)
 - 6 = Highly Integrated Dual-Eligible (HIDE)
- **NEW:** Survey Completion Date valid values
 - Updated valid values to align with 2026 survey administration dates

Decision Rules

Open-ended Questions

- Q49b (Primary Language – Please Specify)
 - Code response exactly as provided, regardless of appropriateness
- Q56a and Q56b (Proxy First and Last Name)
 - Code response exactly as provided, regardless of appropriateness
 - Clean the data only in the following instances:
 - Separate Last Name and First Name into their own fields
 - Romanize Traditional Chinese or Cyrillic characters for interim and final data files

Decision Rules (Cont'd)

- Illegible data for Q49b and Q56
 - Record response as ILLEGIBLE
 - Use all caps
 - Do **NOT** use any punctuation

Percentage Answered

- HOS contains 71 potential response items
- Exclude 11 skip pattern items from calculation
 - Q28a–28e, Q34, Q35, Q36, Q38, Q54, Q56
- Denominator is 60 items

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

Percentage Answered (Cont'd)

- An HOS survey is considered complete if it is 80 percent or more complete with all six ADL questions (Q10a-f) answered
- Once an HOS survey reaches 80 percent or more complete with all six ADL questions, no further attempts are made to the member

Disposition Codes

Coding Demographic Fields

- Survey vendors do **NOT** code a record as T31 if only demographic information is collected from member or proxy
 - Only Q55 and Q56 answered
 - Interview ends before Q1
- Continue telephone attempts to reach the member or proxy to complete the survey. Survey vendors must make up to five telephone attempts to each available telephone number

Data Coding Guidance

Assigning Survey Vendor-Generated Variables

- All survey vendor-generated variables should be associated with the round in which the data were collected
- Telephone Interviewer ID variable should be associated with the telephone attempt corresponding to final disposition code and to the telephone interviewer who conducts the telephone interview

Data Submission Process

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

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

Prepare and Submit Data Files

- Submission and Organization IDs will be provided in the Header Record
- Submit all interim and final data files via the HOS Interactive Data Submission System (IDSS)
 - Survey vendors will receive instructions closer to the scheduled data submission periods
- Upload 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)

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

Interim Data Submission

- Allows opportunity to investigate data submission issues before Final Data Submission
- System opens **Tuesday, September 29** and closes **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 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
- The HOS Project Team will provide findings to survey vendors, if applicable, prior to Final Data Submission
- Some 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 **Monday, November 2**
- Complete data attestation prior to marking files “Final”
- 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?



Data Management

HSAG

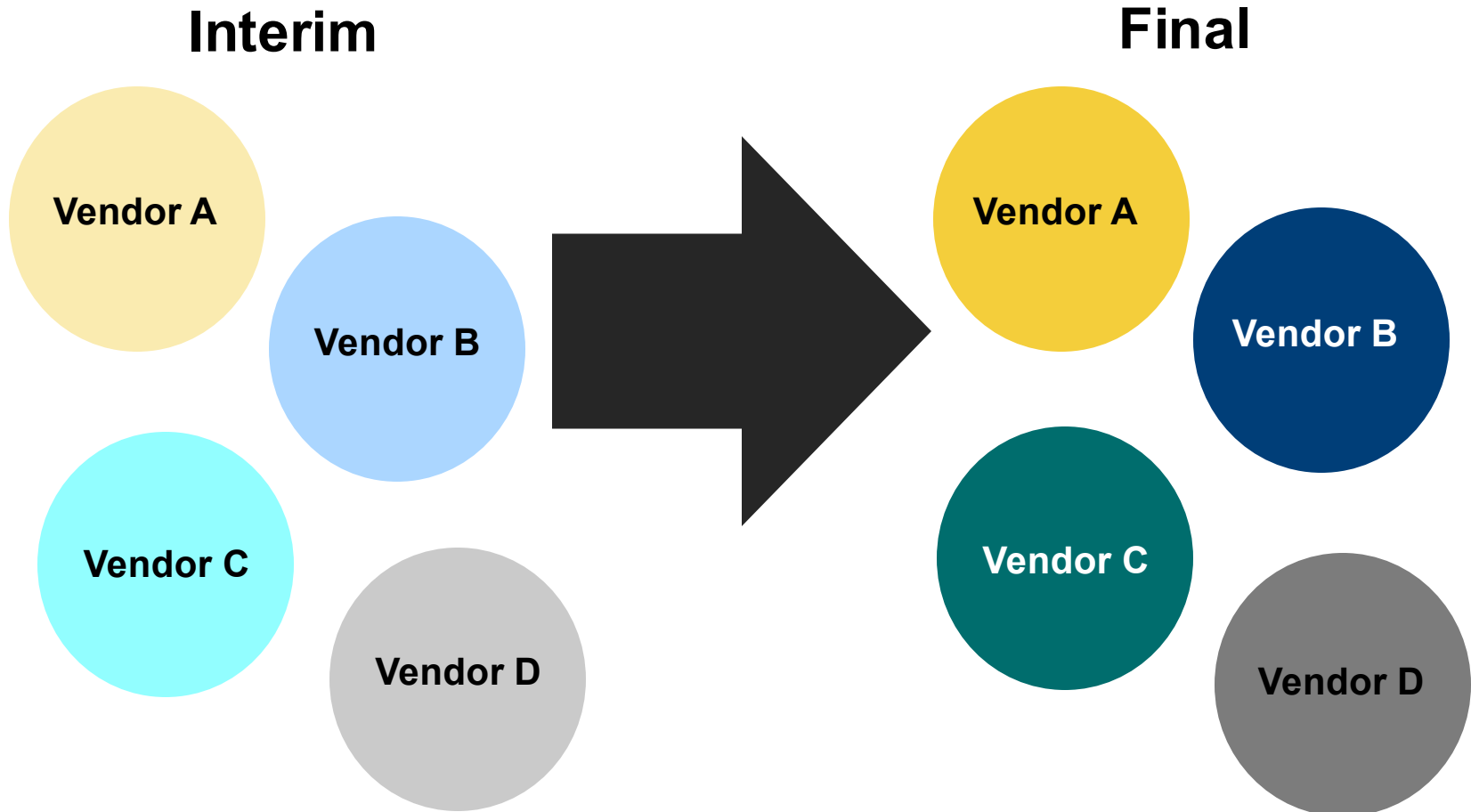
*Patrick Leon, MPH
Healthcare Analyst*

*Jael Rodriguez, MBA, MPH
Healthcare Analyst*

Overview

- Data Submission and Review Process
- HSAG's Data Evaluation Process
- Types of Discrepancies Investigated
- Suggested Quality Checks for Survey Vendors
- MA Contract Data Requests for Cohort 25
- HOS Case-Mix
- PFADL Change Score Measure

Data Submission and Review Process



HSAG's Data Evaluation Process

- HSAG combines the survey vendor files into one data set:
 - Examines vendor, mode, and language differences
- HSAG also:
 - Compares response distributions for missing values and variations from historical values
 - Identifies potential response issues for new and modified survey items

Types of Discrepancies Investigated

Questionable Data Distributions

Out of Range and Inappropriate Values

Inconsistent or Missing Data

Inappropriate Cleaning

Missing Sections

Skip Pattern Violations

Questionable Data Distributions

- Responses to each question by survey vendor
 - Overall
 - By survey mode: telephone and mail
 - By survey language
- Historical trends
- Open-ended questions
- Questions with multiple answers permitted
 - Hispanic ethnicity
 - Race
 - Living arrangement

Out of Range and Inappropriate Values

- Verify response validity by conducting range checks for survey fields
- Identify data value shifts due to field misalignment in survey vendor text files
- Verify dates are within survey administration window
- Verify appropriate values for the *height in feet* field
 - More likely between 4–6 feet than above 6 or below 4 feet

Inconsistent or Missing Data

- Verify administrative survey fields
 - Round Number
 - Survey Disposition
 - Survey Language
 - Survey Dates
 - Do Not Survey Flag
 - Electronic Telephone Interviewer ID

Inconsistent or Missing Data (Cont'd)

- Investigate inconsistencies across fields:
 - Frequency of “ineligible” surveys among survey vendors
 - Percent complete of the survey portion of each record
 - Percent complete vs. survey dispositions
 - Round numbers vs. survey dispositions
- Review similar survey fields for internal consistency:
 - Correlations between similar item responses

Inappropriate Cleaning: Mail Surveys

- Open-ended numeric questions (weight, height):
 - Enter as written by respondent, except as directed by QAG
 - Small number of invalid or inappropriate values expected
- Skip patterns:
 - Enter responses as marked on the survey
 - Small number of skip pattern violations expected
- Absence of respondent-generated errors may indicate inappropriate cleaning by survey vendor

Example 1: Inappropriate Cleaning

Q46 Height in Inches Portion (not corresponding to other examples)	Survey Vendor (percent)			
	A	B	C	D
Valid (00-98)	93.8	92.15	93.75	92.57
Inappropriate Answer (88)	1.23	0.33	0.77	0.00
Missing (99)	4.97	7.52	6.25	5.73

- Unexpected mail survey results with no inappropriate responses
- Mail survey responses should not be cleaned

Missing Responses

- Recognize gate questions
- Examine key questions like Veterans RAND 12-Item Health Survey (VR-12) and Activities of Daily Living (ADL) for unexpected sequences
 - Entire survey section is blank
- Missing data at contract and survey vendor levels
- Variations by survey language

Example 2: Missing Responses

Record	Q1	Q2a	Q2b	Q3a	Q3b	Q4a	Q4b	Q5	Q6a	Q6b	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10a	Q10b	Q10c	Q10d	Q10e	Q10f
54	2	3	1											1	2	1	1	1	2
55	1	2	1											3	3	3	2	2	3
56	3	1	1											1	1	2	2	1	2
57	1	2	2											2	2	3	2	1	1
58	1	2	2											2	1	2	3	3	2
59	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	2	1	2	2	3	3	2	1	2	2
60	3	2	2	3	3	2	1	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	2	2	1

- Responses missing for Q3a–Q9
- Identify and investigate missing response clusters

Skip Pattern Violations

- Mail Survey Data:
 - Skip pattern violations by members **are expected**
- Telephone Survey Data:
 - Skip pattern violations **are NOT expected**
 - Further investigation may be warranted in situations when violations do not follow the expected pattern

Example 3: Inappropriate Missing Pattern

Q53: Where do you live?

- House, apartment, condominium, or mobile home → **Go to Q54**
- Assisted living or board and care home → **Go to Q54**
- Nursing Home → **Go to Q55**
- Other → **Go to Q55**

*Examples have been formatted for illustrative purposes in this presentation only; they are not intended to reflect how questions or responses are organized in the HOS survey instrument

Inappropriate Missing Pattern (Cont'd)

Answer to Q53:

- House, apartment, condominium, or mobile home
→ **Go to Q54**
OR
- Assisted Living or board & care home
→ **Go to Q54**
OR
- Nursing Home
→ **Go to Q55**
OR
- Other
→ **Go to Q55**

Depending on the answer to Q53, the indication is to move forward to either Q54 or Q55.

Q54: Is the house or apartment you currently live in:

(five response options provided to Q54)

Answer & proceed to Q55

Q55: Who completed this survey form?

Select from the four options provided and proceed as indicated

Suggested Quality Checks for Survey Vendors

- Check for:
 - Skip pattern inconsistencies in telephone records
 - Missing responses indicating possible coding errors
 - Response distribution with improbable results in mail surveys
 - Coding errors in fields with extreme frequencies (0 percent or 100 percent) for any one response

Suggested Quality Checks for Survey Vendors (Cont'd)

- Verify:
 - Coding of responses has not been reversed
 - All HOS codes are present for each reporting field, rather than only flagging invalid codes
- Identify and investigate:
 - Clusters of missing responses
 - Revised data files for unexpected changes, and submit explanation for any unexpected changes with resubmitted files

Suggested Quality Checks for Survey Vendors (Cont'd)

- Verify:
 - Mail survey responses are not cleaned prior to submission
 - Electronic telephone interviewing program prevents skip pattern violations
 - Names do not have accents or other special characters

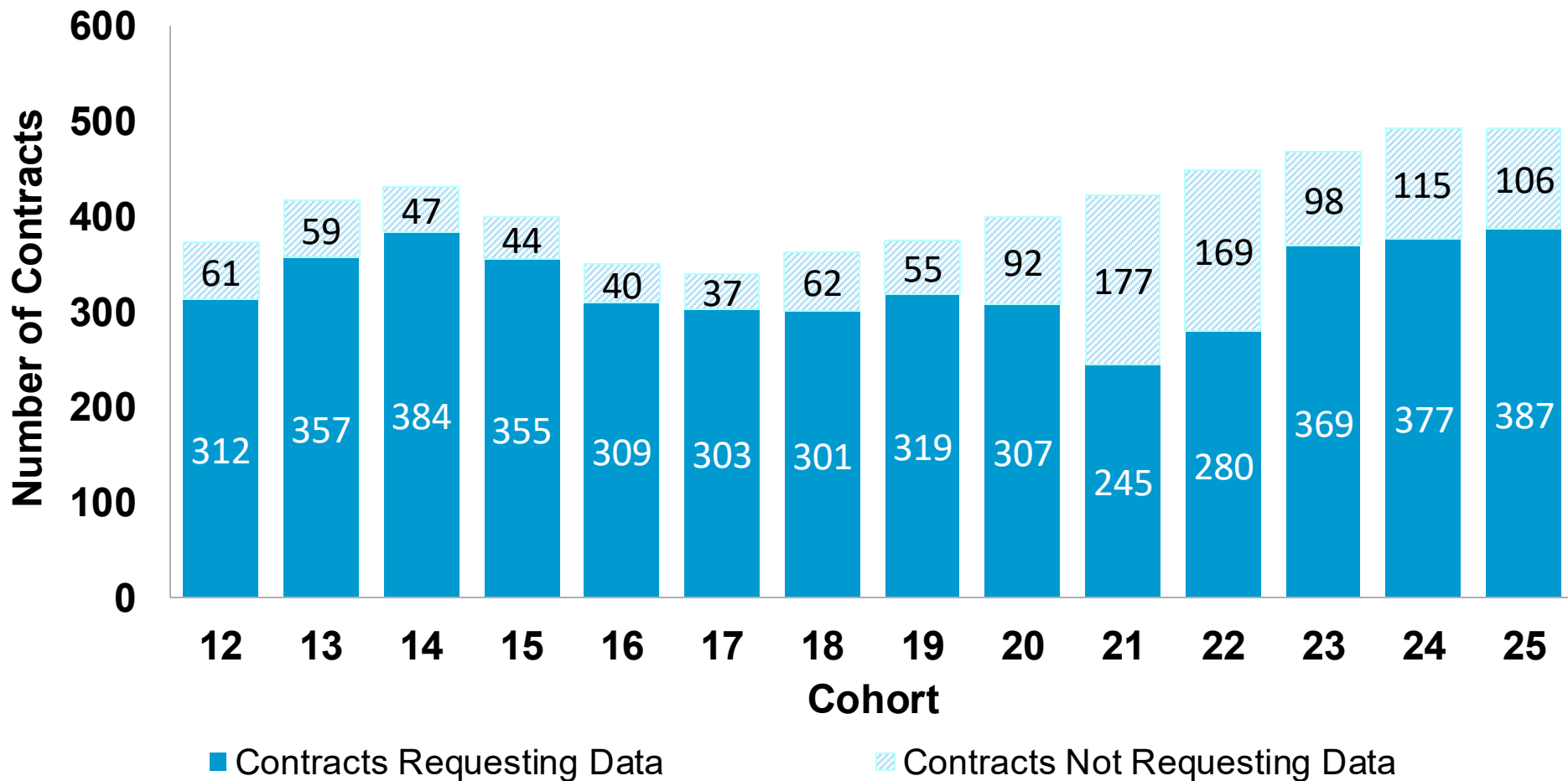
Performance Measurement (PM) Dataset

- Each year, CMS releases a new cohort of data
- The dataset includes Baseline and Follow-Up survey data
- MAOs are only provided with data after the contract's cohort is complete (i.e., Baseline & Follow-Up have been fielded and processed)
- Baseline data only are not available for request
- Not all plans will have PM data available

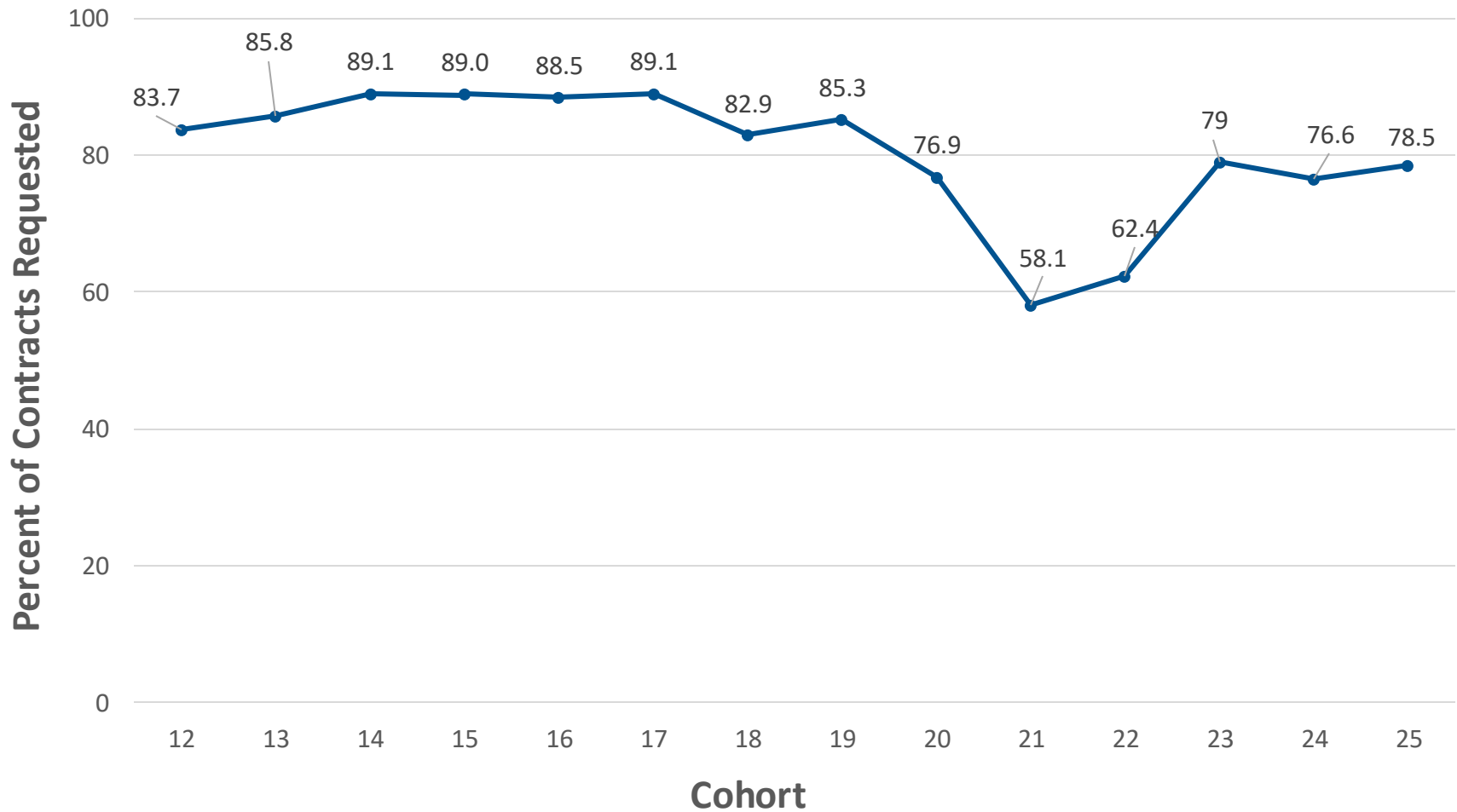
PM Data Request Process

- CMS Memo announces the release of new data
- Upon the memo's release, MAOs' designated data recipients can request their contract's data
- Requests for PM data are made to the hos@hsag.com mailbox
- Designated recipients must include information outlined in the HPMS memo to request their data
- Only one designated recipient per MAO
- The HOS team at HSAG will confirm data availability and delivery details

MA Contract Data Requests, Cohorts 12–25



Percent of MA Contract Data Requests, Cohorts 12–25



HOS Case-Mix

- HOS Performance Measurement outcomes are:
 - Death
 - Change in physical health from physical component summary (PCS) score
 - Change in mental health from mental component summary (MCS) score
- Actual health outcomes are assessed at Baseline and Follow-Up from the VR-12;
 - Members categorized as better, same, or worse at follow up
- Expected results are derived using logistic regression
- Baseline demographic and socioeconomic indicators, and baseline health status are included in case-mix adjustment models

HOS Case-Mix (Cont'd)

- National averages are calculated
- Actual and expected outcomes are aggregated percentages for each MAO
- Final HOS outcomes are adjusted by combining differences between actual and expected results for each MAO with national averages
- Performance Measurement Analysis determines percentages of members in an MAO who are better, the same, or worse than expected at two-year Follow-Up compared to national averages

PFADL Change Score Measure

- The Physical Functioning Activities of Daily Living (PFADL) change score measure is longitudinal
- PFADL is a display measure on the CMS website
- The measure combines two physical functioning questions with six ADL items to create a Likert-type scale
- PFADL score can be interpreted as approximating the percent of function retained over two years by the average MAO member
- Detailed methodology about the PFADL is available on the Survey Results page of the HOS website (www.HOSonline.org)

HOS Tech Support and Website

For inquiries, contact
Medicare HOS Information and Technical Support:

(888) 880-0077

or

hos@hsag.com

www.HOSonline.org

Questions?





Quality Oversight and Project Reporting

NCQA

*Courtney Utter, MHA
HOS Project Analyst*

Overview

- 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 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**

Mailing Materials (Cont'd)

Common Findings

- Omission of footnote about how sampled members may request materials in their preferred language
- Incorrect formatting (e.g., margins, bolding, spacing, logo and return address placement, etc.)
- Incorrect font and font size (e.g., survey vendor return address, oversized signature, etc.)
- Envelopes not fully sealed
- Use of colored font for CMS logos in place of black and white logo

Electronic Interviewing Materials

- Review telephone interviewing screenshots (or live website links) and skip pattern logic
- **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 Project Team to review, in addition to the screenshots
- Subcontractor(s) must follow the same review schedule

Electronic Interviewing Materials (Cont'd)

Common Findings

- Missing, misplaced, or incorrect instructions, interviewer notes, and probes
- Missing or incorrect coding instructions
- Missing emphasis (e.g., bolding) or capitalization on select words
- Grammatical errors
- Improper usage of parentheses
- Missing skip pattern documentation

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 Project Team (hos@ncqa.org) with these requests for CMS assistance

Survey Vendor QAP

- Describes survey vendor compliance with the HOS protocols and quality oversight processes
- QAPs must follow the Model QAP format (**Appendix B** in the HOS QAG)
 - Due **Friday, June 26**

Survey Vendor QAP (Cont'd)

Common Findings

- Outdated protocols
- Missing detail about protocols (e.g., data coding, data processing, telephone attempts, and subcontractor oversight)
- Omission of Spanish, Chinese, and Russian protocol details
- Incorrect or missing survey disposition code crosswalk
- Missing formula for calculating percentage answered

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 HOS Project Team in *all* survey mailings that are sent to members (including prenotification letters)
 - Survey vendors should seed HOS 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 the HOS QAG and FAQ
- Customer support review: *Telephone*
 - HOS 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 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 percent 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

Customer Support Review (Cont'd)

Common Findings

- Emails not responded to within 24 hours
- Repeated telephone attempts resulting in an answering machine
- Customer support representatives unable to answer questions according to the FAQ
- Long delays and pauses while responding

Survey Vendor Progress Reports

- Tracks survey vendor status for adherence to the HOS 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)
 - One-time deliverable
 - Sample of MAO progress reports (Report #7)

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 (Baseline and Follow-Up) with naming conventions:
 - Survey Vendor Name_SSR_C29B_MM-DD-YY.xls
 - Survey Vendor Name_SSR_C27F_MM-DD-YY.xls
- Use 2026 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 plan H-number, plan name, total number of cases to receive calls, number of telephone attempts made, and number of closed cases
 - Template provided to survey vendors ahead of fielding

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

MAO Progress Report Sample

Sample of MAO Progress Reports (Report #7)

- One-time deliverable
- Reports must follow guidelines and only provide information specified in the HOS QAG
 - Summary Status Report data
- Sending member-specific data is prohibited
- As a reminder, survey vendors are **NOT** permitted to share their own unpublished results

Biweekly Progress Reports

Reporting Requirements	Due Date (2026)
<p>REPORT #2</p> <p>Narrative Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of Baseline and Follow-Up prenotification letter and first questionnaire printing, fulfillment, and mailing processes• Verification of mail-out dates of Baseline and Follow-Up 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Example report to health plans with response rates	Friday, July 24

Biweekly Progress Reports (Cont'd)

Reporting Requirements	Due Date (2026)
REPORT #3 Summary Status Report: Baseline and Follow-Up Cohorts Narrative Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outstanding issues or concerns Other Deliverable: Member correspondence (white mail), if applicable	Friday, August 7
REPORT #4 Summary Status Report: Baseline and Follow-Up Cohorts Narrative Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of progress with protocol to date• Detail problems or issues to date• Outstanding issues or concerns Other Deliverable: Member correspondence (white mail), if applicable	Friday, August 21

Biweekly Progress Reports (Cont'd)

Reporting Requirements	Due Date (2026)
<p>REPORT #5 Summary Status Report: Baseline and Follow-Up Cohorts Narrative Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of Baseline and Follow-Up second questionnaire mailing• Verification of mail-out dates of Baseline and Follow-Up second questionnaire 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, if applicable) version 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)
<p>REPORT #6</p> <p>Summary Status Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baseline and Follow-Up Cohorts• Telephone attempt progress to date <p>Narrative Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 Baseline and Follow-Up 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 <p>Other Deliverable: Member correspondence (white mail), if applicable</p>	Friday, September 18

Biweekly Progress Reports (Cont'd)

Reporting Requirements	Due Date (2026)
<p>REPORT #7</p> <p>Summary Status Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baseline and Follow-Up Cohorts• Telephone attempt progress to date <p>Narrative Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outstanding issues or concerns• Detail problems or issues to date• Report on progress of Baseline and Follow-Up 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• Submit a sample of the interim/progress report that is provided to HOS clients	Friday, October 2

Biweekly Progress Reports (Cont'd)

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

Blinded Response Rates

- HOS Project Team will provide blinded response rates to survey vendors based on Summary Status Reports on a biweekly basis

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 Project Team will conduct remote silent monitoring of interviewers and interviewing system
 - HOS Project Team will conduct separate remote monitoring sessions with each subcontractor

Telephone Interviewer Monitoring (Cont'd)

HOS Project Team assesses interviewers on:

- Reading script verbatim with correct pronunciations
- Accurate probing
- Speaking clearly
- Maintaining an appropriate pace
- Operating the electronic interviewing system competently
- Capturing accurate responses
- Answering questions appropriately

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”

Telephone Interviewer Monitoring (Cont'd)

Common Findings

- Inappropriate tone maintained with respondents
- Poor pacing or emphasis
- Not reading all response options
- Improper probing
- Mispronunciations
- Missing emphasis on key words
- Inappropriate coding of responses
- Incorrect responses to member questions

Site Visits

- Evaluate survey vendor's compliance with the HOS 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 will be asked to 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 Project Team
- HOS Project Team will provide a list of requirements and records prior to the review
- Reviews conducted remotely

Data Record Review (Cont'd)

Common Findings

- Incorrect survey round codes and disposition codes
- Incorrect coding of open-ended questions
- Continuing attempts in English after member requests to be contacted in Spanish
- Coding multiple marked questions
- Continuing telephone attempts following receipt of a completed mail survey

After Survey Administration

Oversight Activities	Dates (2026)
Survey Vendor Final Report	Friday, November 20
HOS 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
 - List any additional language translations requested by MAOs
 - List any additional survey modes requested by MAOs and/or respondents (e.g., internet, text) and number of requests
 3. Recommendations for 2027 HOS Administration
- Reports used for:
 - Informing QAG updates
 - Process improvement

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 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.			

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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://accellion.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 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

When must survey vendors complete and submit a Discrepancy Report after discovering a discrepancy?

- a) Within one business day
- b) Within two business days
- c) Within three business days
- d) Within five business days



Questions and Closing

NCQA

Alyssa Hart, MPH
HOS 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 by **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