

The following are responses from the Dirigo Health Agency (DHA) to written questions received on RFP #201206335, Designated Patient Experience Survey Vendors. These responses contain clarifications and some modifications to what was contained in the RFP or discussed during the Bidders' Conference.

- 1. Item 3 states that “Bidders are asked to be brief and to respond to each question and instruction listed in the ‘Proposal Submission Requirements’ section of this RFP.” Does this include responding to each question in A. Proposal Format, or are we to begin with B. Proposal Contents?**

Applicants should organize their proposal in accordance to **B. Proposal Contents**.

- 2. In response to item 2, will you accept a narrative biography describing the individuals' relevant experience and skills (in lieu of an actual resume).**

The resume of the senior person responsible for project oversight is required and should be included as an attachment. A narrative description of relevant experience and skills of other senior people responsible for major project components is sufficient but is counted against page limits.

- 3. Is the form on page 22 the content that we should include as Section III Cost Proposal (p. 13)? Or, should the form on page 22 be included as an attachment? Our concern is that there is a 1-page limit for Section III Cost Proposal; therefore, if this form is supposed to be the content of that section, that in itself would fulfill the 1-page limit.**

The Cost Proposal form can be included as an attachment and not included as part of the one-page narrative limit.

- 4. The RFP states that: Preference will be given to Bidders who are:**

- 1. Approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to administer either the Hospital CAHPS (HCAHPS) or the Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plan (MA and PDP) CAHPS surveys. A list of approved vendors can be found at: [http://www.hcahponline.com/app\\_vendor.aspx](http://www.hcahponline.com/app_vendor.aspx).**

OR

- 2. Certified by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). A current list of NCQA-Certified HEDIS/CAHPS Survey Vendors can be found at: <http://www.ncqa.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=o1WCtrVjMI8%3d&tabid=170>**

**We meet requirement #1. We are NOT Certified by NCQA. Does this disqualify us from responding to this RFP?**

The minimum qualification for applying under this solicitation is documented experience using the CAHPS protocol, including sampling method, and one of the instruments within the suite of CAHPS surveys. Preference is given to a bidder who is **either** NCQA-certified or approved by CMS to administer either the Hospital CAHPS (HCAHPS) or the Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plan CAHPS surveys.

- 5. Do you have an estimated response rate for each survey mode? During the Bidder's Conference on June 18, 2012, an overall response rate of 30% was mentioned, and other DHA published materials refer to a 35% rate.**

The 30% response rate referred to in the Bidders' Conference was for illustrative purposes only. There is no expected response rate for each survey mode.

- 6. How soon after the completion of each practice site registration do you anticipate making the initial subsidy payment for that practice site? For example, if a Designated Vendor completed the registration for Practice Site A on August 15 and for Practice Site B on August 18, on what dates could the Vendor expect the initial subsidy payment for each practice site?**

DHA is currently considering the proposed timeline for subsidy payments. We anticipate that registration will be rolling during the first month after contract award. Our preference is to wait until all practice sites are registered before making the initial subsidy payment to each Designated Vendor. We expect the payment will be on or around October 31, 2012 taking into account processing time of up to four weeks after receipt of invoice. Information required from the Designated Vendor to invoice DHA will be provided at the time of contract award.

- 7. How soon after DHA receives notification from the CAHPS Database on the number of surveys submitted by a Designated Vendor for a practice site do you anticipate making the second/final subsidy payment for that practice site?**

DHA has been informed that the federal renewal contract for the CAHPS Database has just been released and that final award is not expected until February, 2013. This delay in contract award will postpone the "open submission period" during which time Designated Vendors must submit completed surveys to the CAHPS Database. We now estimate the "open submission period" to be March/April. To accommodate this unanticipated delay and to assure that survey results get into the hands of providers as early as possible, DHA plans to change its proposed subsidy payment schedule.

First subsidy payment – on or around October 31, 2012

The first payment will equal 25% of the total estimated subsidy amount based on the sample size per practice site calculated at the time of practice site registration. Minimum elements required to invoice for a first payment will be defined by DHA at the time of contract award

Second payment – on or around January 30, 2013

A second payment will be made to Designated Vendors after survey administration when DHA receives documentation from the Designated Vendor on the number of completed surveys per practice-site and aggregate practice-site results. Minimum elements required to invoice for a second payment will be defined by DHA at the time of contract award. DHA will use this information to adjust the survey count calculated at the time of registration. This information will not be used for purposes of analysis or public reporting by DHA but is intended to provide practice sites with early results for improving care quality. The second payment will equal 50% of the total adjusted subsidy amount based on the number of actual surveys reported, not to exceed the original sample size calculated on the basis of providers per practice site. The cost for preparing a practice-site report should be included in your bid per completed survey.

Third payment – after cleaning by the CAHPS Database and notification to DHA of the final completed survey count

The final payment will be made to Designated Vendors after the CAHPS Database conducts its cleaning and edit function and notifies DHA of the final number of completed surveys submitted through the CAHPS Database. According to CAHPS, a survey is considered complete if it has responses for 50 percent or more of the key survey items. Further information can be found at:

[http://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/surveys-guidance/cg/~media/Files/SurveyDocuments/CG/12%20Month/Admin\\_Survey/1033\\_CG\\_Fielding\\_the\\_Survey.pdf](http://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/surveys-guidance/cg/~media/Files/SurveyDocuments/CG/12%20Month/Admin_Survey/1033_CG_Fielding_the_Survey.pdf).

Bidders should note that the basis of this final payment differs from that described in the RFP. Originally, DHA planned to make final payment based on the number of surveys reported by the CAHPS Database after submission of survey data by the Designated Vendor, prior to cleaning and editing by the CAHPS Database. We have been advised that cleaning and editing may take anywhere from 1 week to 2 months from the date of submission to the CAHPS Database. DHA will use the count of the total number of completed surveys (not to exceed original estimates) after cleaning by the CAHPS Database as the basis for determining final subsidy amounts. The third payment will equal the unpaid balance of the total final subsidy amount.

No Designated Vendor will be paid for more than the total number of surveys shown in the CAHPS sample size estimate table based on the number of providers in a practice-site. A Designated Vendor could be paid less than the original subsidy amount if it collects fewer surveys than in the table. The change in timing of the final payment also will necessitate a change in the contract award period which is now planned to be August 6, 2012 – June 30, 2013.

The following example illustrates potential scenarios under which subsidy payments will be calculated based on a hypothetical \$9.00 subsidy amount.

	<b>Scenario 1</b>	<b>Scenario 2</b>	<b>Scenario 3</b>
Original Sample Size per CAHPS table	100	100	100
Estimated Total Subsidy Amount	\$900	\$900	\$900
First Subsidy Payment	$\$900 \times .25 = \$225$	$\$900 \times .25 = \$225$	$\$900 \times .25 = \$225$
# Completed surveys reported by Vendor	110	90	90
Adjusted Total Subsidy Amount	\$900*	\$810	\$810
Second Subsidy Payment	$\$900 \times .5 = \$450$	$\$810 \times .5 = \$405$	$\$810 \times .5 = \$405$
#Completed surveys reported by CAHPS	100	90	80
Final Total Subsidy Amount	\$900	\$810	\$720
Final Subsidy Payment	$\$900 - (225 + 450) = \$225$	$\$810 - (225 + 405) = \$180$	$\$720 - (225 + 405) = \$90$

\*Subsidy is calculated based on the number of completed surveys, not to exceed the original sample size.

- 8. Is there a formal agreement that DHA will require for use between Designated Vendors and practice sites or are Designated Vendors and practice sites free to negotiate those contracts independently?**

No. The RFP describes responsibilities of the Designated Vendor which may require a contractual agreement with the practice site.

- 9. Could you estimate the number of primary and specialty practices in the State of Maine that are eligible for participation? Can you provide a list of practice sites for the practices within the state of Maine?**

We know that there are approximately 4000 licensed physicians in Maine and believe there are slightly more specialists than PCPs. From previous work in Maine, we believe there are about 540 individual primary care practice sites (physical sites as required in the RFP). We think that there may be a similar number of specialty sites. Separately we estimate that approximately 50-60% of practices are owned by hospitals or health systems. There is no central list of practice sites in Maine.

- 10. In the communication and outreach DHA will conduct to encourage practice sites to participate, will the Designated Vendors be ranked? If so, ranked by what criteria?**

Following contract award, DHA will release the list of Designated Vendors, with the exception of those indicating that they wished to opt out of opening their services beyond established clients. The list will not be ranked but may include the mode, price per completed survey as proposed by the Designated Vendor through this solicitation, any price breaks for volume, current certifications, and Vendor contact information.

- 11. Will a subsidy be paid on completed surveys in excess of the required number of completed surveys per practice site? For example, if a Designated Vendor sends out 143 surveys in estimation of receiving 50 completed surveys, but ends up receiving 100 completed surveys, will a subsidy be paid on those additional 50 completed surveys?**

Subsidies will be paid on completed surveys up to the required number of completed surveys per practice site.

- 12. Will the price per completed survey submitted with a vendor's bid in response to the RFP be published/provided to practice groups, or will DHA simply publish the best price and/or the subsidy amount?**

DHA will publish the subsidy amount and the cost per completed survey submitted by the Designated Vendors in response to this RFP. Designated Vendors indicating that they wish to opt-out of opening their services beyond established clients will not be included on this list. DHA considers the bid as a maximum cost per completed survey but that a Designated Vendor may negotiate a lower price with a practice site once the subsidy amount is known.

**13. Will the subsidy be a fixed dollar amount (e.g. \$9.00) or a fixed percentage of the best price? If a Designated Vendor charges the subsidy amount to a practice site, would there be any balance left for a practice site to pay? In effect, will DHA subsidize 100% of a practice site's survey costs? Will Designated Vendors receive the full subsidy payment regardless of their cost per completed bid?**

Designated Vendors who negotiate a survey price rate with a practice site at or below 110% of the subsidy amount will get the subsidy amount or 90% of their survey price rate, whichever is lower. Designated Vendors who negotiate a survey price rate with a practice site above 110% of the subsidy amount will receive the full subsidy amount per final number of completed surveys as calculated by the CAHPS Database. Designated Vendors will be required to disclose the final negotiated price charged to practice sites during the registration process to determine the appropriate subsidy amount. Prices disclosed at registration will be kept confidential and will only be used to ensure that the subsidy payment does not exceed 90% of actual cost.