

Inside The Patient Perspective

Volume 1 - September 2025

Access to Care – Opening Doors to Better Experiences



Why “Access to Care” Matters to You as a Provider

As a provider, your patients’ ability to receive timely and appropriate care is a direct reflection of your practice’s quality and responsiveness. The “Access to Care” measures in the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) survey captures patients experience with access to services like tests, treatments, and specialist visits. Here’s why the Access to Care measures should matter to you:

This Metric Influences Patient Retention:

When patients feel confident in accessing care, they’re more likely to stay with your practice. High access scores foster trust and long-term relationships.

- It Affects Your Ratings: CAHPS® ratings impact patient choice and your inclusion in preferred networks.
- It Reveals Operational Gaps: Low scores often signal referral, scheduling, or communication issues. Addressing these improves both patient experience and team efficiency.
- It Supports Accreditation and Compliance: National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and The Joint Commission use CAHPS® data in reviews. Strong access scores show your commitment to quality, patient-centered care.

Meridian Resources and Support:

- Explore Meridian’s 2025 CAHPS® Provider Toolkit! Designed to support your efforts with delivering high-quality, patient-centered care.

Provider Best Practices for Improving Access to Care Ratings:

- Same-Day Appointment Availability: Use open-access scheduling to meet urgent needs and reduce wait times
- Extended Hours & Telehealth: Offer extended hours such as evenings, weekends and virtual visits to accommodate patients.
- Streamlined Triage Protocols: Train staff to triage calls and respond to patient inquiries promptly.
- Proactive Outreach: Use reminders and follow-ups to schedule routine care and close gaps.
- Language & Cultural Accessibility: Offer multilingual support and culturally responsive care to reduce barriers.

Tips for Frontline Staff:

- Apologize for any delays and explain the reason.
- Offer rescheduling options when wait times are long.
- Encourage patients to book follow-up appointments before leaving the office.
- Use interpreters and culturally appropriate materials to support diverse patients