

# 2024 Adult and Child NC Medicaid CAHPS® Aggregate Report in Summary

## Survey Overview

The North Carolina (NC) Department of Health and Human Services Division of Health Benefits (DHB) administered the 2024 Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®)<sup>[1]</sup> survey to promote actionable performance feedback to improve overall care.

## Survey Administration

The survey was administered to beneficiaries of the five Standard Plans<sup>[2]</sup> and six specific NC Medicaid populations:

- Individuals enrolled in a Prepaid Health Plan (PHP) receiving behavioral health services
- Federally recognized tribal members and others eligible for services through the Indian Health Service (IHS) associated with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) Tribal Option
- Medicaid Direct
- Current Foster Care children
- Adult former foster care children
- Those in Medicaid Direct who qualify for Tailored Plans<sup>[3]</sup> (TPs).

Adult and parents/caretakers of child beneficiaries provided feedback on their experiences with health plans and their health care over the previous six months by mail or online between February 16 and May 6, 2024.

Adults were administered a survey with 39 core questions and ten supplemental questions added by DHB. Parents/caretakers of child members were administered a survey with 41 core questions and eight supplemental questions added by DHB. Survey results were used to evaluate the experience of adults and children enrolled in NC Medicaid across dimensions including care access, care quality, providers, specialty care, health behavior, and more. For more details, please refer to the full report [here](#).

## Key Takeaways

### Response Rates

**Overall, the 2024 response rates increased from the 2023 survey administration.** As response rates for CAHPS surveys have been declining nationally in recent years, this is indicative of successful efforts on behalf of NC DHB to increase survey participation.<sup>[4]</sup> Indeed, NC DHB refined the sampling strategies used for the 2024 CAHPS Survey administration and included substantial oversamples for each population. **These efforts were successful in obtaining a large volume of responses and increasing response rates from the 2023 administration.**

Table 1 outlines the total number of beneficiaries sampled, the number of responses (i.e., completed surveys), and the response rate for the adult and child populations in the previous (2023) and current (2024) survey iterations.

Table 1. Adult and Child Survey: 2023 and 2024 CAHPS Survey Administration Outcome and Response Rates

	2023			2024		
	Total Eligible Sample	Total Respondents	Response Rate <sup>^</sup>	Total Eligible Sample	Total Respondents	Response Rate <sup>^</sup>
Adult	60,805	4,883	8.03%	61,232	5,461	8.92%
Child	61,460	6,028	9.81%	63,403	7,270	11.47%

Race and ethnicity oversamples for the Black and Hispanic beneficiary populations are included in the sample sizes and total respondents in this table.

## Experience of Overall Care

- Overall **experience with health care remains largely positive** for NC Medicaid respondents even as different aspects of care vary. For instance, adult and child respondents reported that their personal doctor communicated well with them compared to national percentiles. Table 2 shows how NC Medicaid respondents' experiences compare to national benchmarks.

Table 2. NC Medicaid Program Star Ratings When Positive Ratings Results Were Compared to NCQA National Percentiles

Measures	Adult	Child
Rating of Personal Doctor	★★★★★ 87.39%	★★★ 90.40%
Getting Needed Care	★★★★ 86.13%	★★★★ 86.74%
How Well Doctors Communicate	★★★★ 94.38%	★★★★ 96.08%
Customer Service	★★★★ 91.35%	★★ 87.64%

★★★★★ (Excellent)=At or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, ★★★★ (Very Good)=At or between the 75<sup>th</sup> and 89<sup>th</sup> percentiles, ★★★ (Good)=At or between the 50<sup>th</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> percentiles, ★★ (Fair)=At or between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 49<sup>th</sup> percentiles, ★ (Poor)=Below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile

Percent positive rating and percentiles do not necessarily correlate. For *Rating of Personal Doctor*, a rating of 87.39% falls above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of all NCQA National CAHPS ratings, meaning adults in NC reported better care than 90% of adults for CAHPS nationally. For more in-depth explanation, please refer to the full report.

## Race/Ethnicity Stratifications

- Differences in respondents' experience of care varied by race and ethnicity within the NC Medicaid population across many measures, and are consistent with previous years' trends:
  - Adult and child respondents who identified as Other<sup>[5]</sup> race and Hispanic ethnicity reported significantly worse experiences across several measures**, including getting needed care, receiving care outside of business hours, and being offered a telehealth appointment.
  - Adult Black respondents reported experiences of care that were both significantly better** (health plan customer service and getting needed care) **and significantly worse** (getting an interpreter and interpreter treated them with courtesy and respect).

## Rural/Urban Stratifications

- NC Medicaid program respondents in rural and urban counties **did not experience significant differences across many domains**, indicating that care did not vary significantly based on rurality. Where significant differences did emerge, rural-located respondents typically reported more positive care:
  - Adult respondents living in rural counties reported that they received care outside of business hours significantly more** than adults living in urban areas.
  - Child respondents living in rural counties rated their specialist seen most often positively significantly more than** respondents living in urban counties.

## Supplemental Items

- DHB added questions to assess more specific beneficiary experiences:
  - Among those **who needed an interpreter at their or their child's personal doctor's office, the majority (89.53% for adult and 94.23% for child respondents) were usually or always treated with courtesy and respect by this interpreter.**
  - While **16.14% of child respondents were offered a telehealth appointment** instead of an in-person visit, **72.47% of those offered a telehealth appointment report using this option** at least once.

<sup>[1]</sup> CAHPS® is a registered trademark of the Agency of Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

<sup>[2]</sup> The five PHPs include AmeriHealth Caritas of North Carolina, Inc.; Carolina Complete Health, Inc.; Healthy Blue of North Carolina; UnitedHealthcare of North Carolina, Inc.; and WellCare of North Carolina, Inc.

<sup>[3]</sup> Tailored Plans were unlaunched managed care programs at the time of the NC CAHPS 2024 Survey. TPs are health plans specifically oriented to those with higher behavioral health needs. Those eligible for TPs are Medicaid beneficiaries who have mental health needs, intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD), traumatic brain injuries, or severe substance use disorders.

<sup>[4]</sup> Cynthia Bland et al, Challenges Facing CAHPS Surveys and Opportunities for Modernization (Research Triangle Park NC: RTI Press, 2022).

<sup>[5]</sup> The Other race category includes: Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and Other.