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2023

Validation of Quality of Care Surveys

Delta Dental of Arkansas
Report



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Acknowledgements, Acronyms, and Initialisms ¹

AR	Arkansas
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CHIP	Children’s Health Insurance Program
CMS	Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Delta Dental	Delta Dental of Arkansas
DHS	Arkansas Department of Human Services
DMO	Dental Managed Care Organization
DOT	Dental Office Toolkit
EQR	External Quality Review
EQRO	External Quality Review Organization
HIPAA	The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996
MCP	Managed Care Plan
Q	Quarter
QR Code	Quick Response Code
Qsource®	EQRO, a registered trademark
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SurveyMonkey®	External survey tool, a registered trademark

¹*Other company and product names may be trademarks of the respective companies with which they are associated. The mention of such companies and product names is with due recognition and without intent to misappropriate such names or marks.*

Overview

The State of Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) administers the Arkansas Medicaid managed care program for Medicaid enrollees and has contracted with Qsource, an external quality review organization (EQRO), to conduct mandatory external quality review (EQR) activities required per Title 42 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR), Section 438.358 (42 CFR § 438.358). DHS contracted with Qsource to perform an optional activity—Validation of Quality of Care Surveys submitted by the dental managed care organizations (DMOs). Qsource conducted survey validation based on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS's) *Protocol 6: Validation of Quality of Care Surveys Reported by the Medicaid and CHIP Managed Care Plan* (2023) Section II.

The *Balanced Budget Act of 1997* that amended § 1932(c)(2) of the *Social Security Act* established “certain managed care quality safeguards.” These safeguards were further defined by 42 CFR §438.320, which describes an EQR as an “analysis and evaluation by an EQRO, of aggregated information on quality, timeliness, and access to health care services.” Qsource’s overarching goal is to evaluate each plan over multiple activities in an effort to ensure quality, timeliness, and access to care.

This *2023 Validation of Quality of Care Surveys Report* presents findings from the validation of Delta Dental of Arkansas (hereafter referred to as Delta Dental) surveys.

As stated in Protocol 6, surveys are a valuable resource for assessing the experience of managed care enrollees and providers. Information derived from surveys can help states and managed care plans (MCPs) create a person-centered health care environment for those enrolled in Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Enrollee surveys can be used to assess experiences with the health plan and its providers, and the quality of care received. Provider surveys can be used to assess the characteristics of providers and practices that serve Medicaid/CHIP enrollees, their accessibility and availability, and their experience with the Medicaid/CHIP program.

To meet the requirements of Protocol 6, Qsource validated the following surveys conducted by Delta Dental:

- ◆ Delta Dental Smiles Enrollee Survey 2022
- ◆ Delta Dental Smiles Provider Survey October 2022

Background

Protocol 6: Validation of Quality of Care Surveys Reported by the Medicaid and CHIP Managed Care Plan (2023) Section II laid out the following requirements for validating a survey. Qsource distributed a survey process checklist to each DMO which defined required elements for Qsource's validation of its survey. The survey process checklist can be found in [Appendix C](#).

The DMOs conducted enrollee satisfaction surveys and provider satisfaction surveys from January 1 to December 31, 2022.

The DMOs submitted the results of those surveys along with a description of survey processes for Qsource to validate. The activities listed in the Protocol are described in detail below.

Review the Survey Purpose, Objectives, and Audience

Each DMO was asked to provide a written narrative about the survey's purpose, objectives, and audience. The narrative was reviewed for the following:

- ◆ Was there a clear, written statement of the survey purpose that addresses access, timeliness, and/or quality of care?
- ◆ Was the unit of analysis clearly stated?
- ◆ Was there a clear and measurable written study objective?
- ◆ Was the audience and intended use of the survey findings identified?

Review the Work Plan

Each DMO was asked to provide a work plan, including the project management plan, schedule, reporting requirements, data preparation plan, data analysis plan, and security protocols and procedures. The work plan provides a foundation for understanding the rigor of the overall survey approach; deviations from the work plan may signal concerns related to the effectiveness of survey implementation. The work plan was reviewed for the following:

- ◆ Did the work plan include a project management plan (including key staff and roles)?
- ◆ Did the work plan include a project schedule (including timelines and deliverable dates)?
- ◆ Did the work plan specify project reporting requirements (including the number, format, and content of the reports)?
- ◆ Did the work plan include a data preparation plan, such as production of data files, data file format, and delivery?
- ◆ Did the work plan include a data analysis plan (including the use of a statistician as appropriate)?
- ◆ Did the work plan include data security protocols and procedures for assuring the confidentiality of data in compliance with HIPAA?

Review the Reliability and Validity of the Survey Instrument

There are three options for selecting a survey instrument:

1. Use an existing validated survey instrument.
2. Adapt an existing survey instrument with additional state-specific questions.
3. Develop a new survey instrument.

As part of this validation activity, Qsource assessed the extent to which there was sufficient documentation of the validity and reliability of the selected survey instrument. The survey instrument was reviewed for the following:

- ◆ Was the selected survey instrument appropriate for the purpose of the survey and the unit of analysis?
- ◆ Were new items developed for the survey?
- ◆ If new items were developed, was a test of validity and reliability conducted for the new items?
- ◆ Was the overall survey instrument tested for face validity and content validity and found to be valid?
- ◆ Was the overall survey instrument tested for reliability and found to be reliable?
- ◆ Was testing performed for the specific target population (e.g., Medicaid or CHIP) and languages?

Review the Sampling Plan

Each DMO was asked to provide a sampling plan. The sampling plan was reviewed for the following:

- ◆ Was the study population clearly defined?
- ◆ Was the sampling frame clearly defined and appropriate based on the survey objectives?
- ◆ Was the sampling method appropriate to the survey purpose?
- ◆ Was the sample size sufficient for the intended use of the survey (acceptable margin of error, level of certainty required)?
- ◆ Were the procedures used to select the sample appropriate and protected against bias?

Review the Adequacy of the Response Rate

In this activity, Qsource reviewed methods used to maximize the response rate, as well as the methods used to calculate the response rate. In addition, Qsource assessed potential sources of non-response and bias, and the extent to which the response rate weakens or strengthens the generalizability of the survey findings. The strategy to maximize the response rate was reviewed for the following:

- ◆ Was locating of sample enrollees conducted to ensure complete contact information?
 - Locating is a technique used to improve response rates by locating and contacting sample enrollees. This includes verified collection of data, such as first and last name, home address, email address, phone number(s), date of birth, language preference, etc.

- ◆ Were any of the following strategies included to maximize response:
 - Advance letter
 - Multiple and varied call attempts
 - Multi-mode surveys
 - Multiple languages
- ◆ Were strategies customized to the study population (e.g., providers versus enrollees)?
- ◆ Was the method specified for calculating the response rate, and if so, was the method in accordance with industry standards?
- ◆ Was a plan included to conduct a non-response analysis?

Review the Quality Assurance Plan

Qsource reviewed the quality assurance plan to ensure that it contained quality checks for all phases of the data collection effort. The quality assurance plan was reviewed for the following:

- ◆ **Sampling.** Did the DMO include a check to ensure the sample was constructed as specified in the sampling plan?
- ◆ **Locating.** Did the DMO include a check that initial contact was made for every sample member?
- ◆ **Mail data collection.** Were the following quality checks included in the plan?
 - Was the survey reviewed for respondent reading level (surveys should be written at a sixth grade reading level to ensure most respondents are able to read and understand the content)?
 - Were specifications and procedures developed for formatting, reproducing, and distributing the survey questionnaire?
 - Were contents of the mailing packet, such as the cover letter and questionnaire, reviewed for accuracy, print smearing, fading, and misalignment?
 - Were the returned mail surveys data entry reviewed for accuracy?
- ◆ **Telephone data collection.** Were the following quality checks included in the plan?
 - Were interviewer training and telephone scripts reviewed for accuracy?
 - Were telephone interviews monitored to confirm that interviewers read questions verbatim and accurately captured responses?
- ◆ **Web-based data collection.** Did the plan include a check that the web-based instrument programming and content was tested for accuracy?
- ◆ **Data quality controls.** Did the plan include procedures to handle responses that fail edit checks, treatment of missing data, and determination of usable/complete surveys? (Note: The plan should establish a pre-determined number of questions that must be answered by the respondent to be considered a usable case).

Review the Survey Implementation

Qsource reviewed the documentation regarding the survey implementation and assessed whether implementation conformed to the work plan. The survey implementation was reviewed for the following:

- ◆ Was the data collection plan implemented as described in the work plan?
- ◆ If deviations from the data collection plan occurred, were the reasons for the deviations explained?
- ◆ Were quality assurance checks implemented as specified in the quality assurance plan?
 - Was the sampling plan verified to ensure the sample was constructed as specified?
 - Was initial contact made for every sample member?
 - Were specified quality checks made in accordance with the data collection mode (mail, telephone, web-based, or mixed mode)?
 - Were procedures developed to handle responses that fail edit checks, treatment of missing data, and removal of surveys or data determined to be unusable?

Review the Survey Data Analysis and Final Report

Qsource reviewed how the survey data were analyzed, including the statistical procedures used and comparisons made. Qsource assessed whether the analysis was appropriate to the survey purpose, whether appropriate statistical tests were applied, and how well the survey findings were supported by the data. The survey analysis was reviewed for the following:

- ◆ Were post-processing procedures implemented to address the following:
 - Responses that failed edit checks
 - Missing data
 - Removal of surveys or data determined to be unusable
- ◆ Were weights created as appropriate for analyzing survey responses and generalizing results to the study population?
- ◆ Was a nonresponse analysis conducted to determine if survey respondents differ from respondents on key variables important to the findings?
- ◆ Were survey data analyzed following the analysis plan laid out in the work plan?
- ◆ Did the final report include a comprehensive overview of survey purpose/objective, implementation, and substantive findings?

Results, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Delta Dental clearly stated the purpose, objective, and audience for both the enrollee and provider surveys. Delta Dental provided the plan for its survey process which included the survey results and the analysis plan.

For the enrollee satisfaction survey, Delta Dental submitted analysis, processes, and methodology. Delta Dental used an external survey tool, SurveyMonkey® to conduct enrollee satisfaction surveys and address internal processes. Delta Dental submitted a detailed work plan that included specific dates. Delta Dental reported that of 375,568 Delta Dental enrollees, only enrollees with an email address on file (75) were targeted for the enrollee satisfaction survey. The sample was clearly defined as enrollees, any age, AR Kids A, AR Kids B, and adults that had a dental claim during November 2021–May 2022. Of those 75 enrollees targeted, 18 responded, resulting in a 24.00% response rate. Delta Dental did not address potential sources of non-responses or bias.

For the provider satisfaction survey, Delta Dental used SurveyMonkey to conduct and record surveys for providers. Delta Dental submitted a detailed work plan that included timeframes and how the results will be used. Delta Dental reported that there were 719 active unique providers and 457 were targeted for surveys. Delta Dental did not clearly define how the sample was determined. Of those 457 providers targeted, 35 responded, resulting in a 7.66% response rate.

Delta Dental reported that reliability and validity testing was done prior to sending the surveys instruments out to providers and enrollees.

Enrollee Satisfaction Survey

Survey Purpose, Objectives, and Audience

Delta Dental reported that the purpose for the enrollee survey was to monitor customer satisfaction with the Delta Dental Smiles program and obtain a way to directly communicate with members who had a concern with the program.

Delta Dental provided a list of the survey's objectives:

- ◆ To assess the quality, timeliness, access, and overall experience of dental care that members and their families have had with the Delta Dental Smiles program.
- ◆ To obtain insight into how enrollees feel Delta Dental could better serve them as a DMO provider.
- ◆ To improve member experiences and understand barriers.

Delta Dental reported the audience for the survey was Delta Dental Smiles enrollees.

Work Plan

Delta Dental identified key staff and their roles as part of its project management plan:

- ◆ Vice President, Strategic Customer Solutions: Subject Matter Expert (SME) for Content Validity
- ◆ Director of Delta Dental Smiles Operation: Project Sponsor
- ◆ Digital Marketing Specialist: Logistics Lead and Survey Distributor

Delta Dental reported the following project schedule, detailing timeliness, and deliverables, for the enrollee survey:

- ◆ Began exploration phase and met with the Marketing Department.
- ◆ Obtained DHS approval for Survey Plan.
- ◆ Opt-in email sent to enrollees.
- ◆ Reminders to Opt-in, sent to enrollees, seven days later.
- ◆ Second round of reminders to Opt-in, sent to enrollees seven days later.
- ◆ Third round of reminders to Opt-in, sent to enrollees 17 days later.
- ◆ Thirteen (13) days later, enrollee survey emailed to enrollees.
- ◆ Reminders sent to enrollees seven days later.
- ◆ Second round of reminders sent to enrollees seven days later.
- ◆ Over the next seven days, Smiles Customer Service Representatives called enrollees that had not responded to the survey.
- ◆ Survey results were reviewed and addressed, contacting enrollees with issues noted and requested follow up/or left information.

Delta Dental reported that there were no reporting requirements that stated that the DMOs should conduct or report on any provider or enrollee surveys. Delta Dental reported that beginning Q1 of 2023 it would report survey results to DHS via the Quality Assurance and Improvement reporting template.

The production and delivery of data reports was handled by the Delta Dental Business Analyst to prepare for the survey. Two surveys were constructed, and were distributed using the following methodology, directing enrollees to a SurveyMonkey® questionnaire:

- ◆ Email Reminders
- ◆ In Person Events

Upon receipt of the survey results, the Delta Dental Smiles team met to review and evaluate the results. The Delta Dental Business Analyst and key staff assisted with creating the analysis plan. After reviewing the results, the team developed a plan to address the issues identified. Delta Dental also evaluated the strengths shared by survey participants for learning and overall program enhancement. The program manager worked with the Provider Relations team, the Outreach and Education team, the Marketing team, and other Delta Dental leaders to ensure feedback from the surveys was identified and effectively addressed.

The surveys, which were conducted via the SurveyMonkey tool, were reviewed by Delta Dental's legal team and it was determined that the information collected was not protected health information.

Reliability and Validity of the Survey Instrument

Delta Dental reported that prior to releasing its survey, the questions were reviewed for reliability and validity as a result of guidance from a previous validation. Delta Dental utilized the recommendations from the EQRO (Qsource) to produce a well validated survey. The 2022 survey measured quality, timeliness, and access to care. Delta Dental did conduct internal consistency method testing as an alternative to ensure the tool selected yielded the same results.

Sampling Plan

All Delta Dental Smiles enrollees with a dental claim in the previous 12 months of November 2021–May 2022 were included in the survey population. Due to historically low participation in this population, all responses were reviewed and considered on an individual basis.

- ◆ Study Population: 375,568 Delta Dental Smiles enrollees at the time of distribution.
- ◆ Specification for the Sample Frame: Delta Dental Smiles enrollees, any age, Arkansas (AR) Kids A, AR Kids B, and adults that had a dental claim during November 2021–May 2022 with an email on file.
- ◆ Sample Size: 75 Delta Dental Smiles enrollees.

- ◆ Sample Procedure: The Delta Dental Smiles program analyst worked with the Business Analytics team to retrieve data on the enrollees in the Delta Dental Smiles network with an email on file that had a claim in the previous 12 months (November 2021–May 2022).

Adequacy of the Response Rate

To maximize response rates, Delta Dental targeted enrollees that had recently filed claims. Its assumption was that if an enrollee had a recent claim, their contact information would be up to date as they would be aware of having dental benefits.

Surveys were only sent to enrollees with an email address on file due to a high rate of surveys being returned without being completed due to an incorrect address on file in the previous year. Delta Dental sent multiple rounds of reminders and its Customer Service Representatives contacted enrollees that had not yet completed the survey. The enrollees were assisted in completing the survey over the phone if needed.

A quick response (QR) code was added to the enrollee's explanation of benefits document. That document was mailed to enrollees following a dental claim. The survey was made accessible from the home page of its website; however, this method was not successful as the participation was zero.

Delta Dental reported that a total of 75 enrollees were targeted with the survey. A total of 18 enrollees responded resulting in a response rate of 24.00%, up from 0.21% in the previous year.

Quality Assurance Plan

Delta Dental reported that in an effort to produce a valid survey that adequately looked at quality, timeliness, and access to care, Delta Dental utilized recommended standard question from the EQRO.

- ◆ Sampling: Delta Dental ensured all in-network providers in the Delta Dental Smiles and Delta Dental Smiles for Kids network were considered during the planning stages for sampling.
- ◆ Locating: Delta Dental made initial contact via email for every sample enrollee.
- ◆ Web-based Data Collection (Email): Delta Dental conducted internal content testing for accuracy before implementing the email survey efforts.
- ◆ Data Quality Controls: All questions went through an internal ticketing system called Wrike, Inc. for marketing approval. The following content was reviewed and assessed for quality control efforts.
 - Survey Submission Method: SurveyMonkey (Enrollee).
 - Survey Recipients Enrollee: The survey went to all Smiles enrollees that are enrolled in Delta Dental Smiles and Delta Dental Smiles for Kids at the start of the month the survey was distributed.
 - Enrollee Questions.

Survey Implementation

Delta Dental reported that when compared to the survey plan, the enrollee survey implementation went somewhat as planned with all key staff fulfilling their responsibilities. Delta Dental Smiles staff served as SMEs that assisted with assessing and reviewing survey content validity for the survey. Delta Dental used an existing validated survey instrument (SurveyMonkey). The implementation process followed the initially proposed timeline with no delays. Delta Dental reported the only issue with implementation was that while it achieved its goal to increase the response rate from the previous year, the response rate was not as high as anticipated.

Survey Data Analysis and Final Report

The Delta Dental Smiles Enrollee Satisfaction Survey was distributed from December 1, 2022–December 23, 2022 (three emails total) to a total of 75 individual Smiles members who had a claim in the last 12 months. These individuals were identified and supplied by the Delta Dental Smiles team. In addition to email survey efforts, the customer service team encouraged users to take the survey, increasing the total number of respondents to 18. No non-response analysis was conducted.

Results

Delta Dental provided the results of its enrollee satisfaction survey. Qsource divided the survey questions into three domains of care: quality, timeliness, and access to care. An example of the survey provided by Delta Dental is located in [Appendix A](#).

Table 1 presents the response rate for Delta Dental’s enrollee satisfaction survey.

Table 1. Enrollee Satisfaction Sampling: Delta Dental		
Sample Size	Total Surveys Complete	Response Rate
75	18	24.00%

There was a total response rate of 24.00% for Delta Dental’s Enrollee Satisfaction Survey.

Tables 2–5 present the results of the survey as reported by Delta Dental.

Table 2. Enrollee Satisfaction—Quality of Care: Delta Dental		
Survey Question	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst dental care possible and 10 is the best dental care possible, what number would you use to rate all your or your child’s dental care in the last 12 months?	94.44%*	5.56%
In the last 12 months, how often did your or your child’s regular dentist explain things in a way that was easy to understand?	94.44%**	5.56%
In the last 12 months, how often did your or your child’s regular /dentist listen carefully to you?	88.89%	11.11%

Enrollee Satisfaction Survey

Table 2. Enrollee Satisfaction—Quality of Care: Delta Dental

Survey Question	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
In the last 12 months, how often did your or your child's regular dentist treat you with courtesy and respect?	94.44%	5.56%
In the last 12 months, how often did your or your child's regular dentist spend enough time with you?	94.44%	5.56%
Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst regular dentist possible and 10 is the best regular dentist possible, what number would you use to rate your or child's regular dentist?	77.78%*	22.22%
In the last 12 months, how often did the dentist or dental staff do everything they could to help you or your child feel as comfortable as possible during dental work?	100%	0.00%
In the last 12 months, how often did the dentists or dental staff explain what they were doing while treating you or your child?	94.44%	5.56%
In the last 12 months, how often did your or your child's dental plan's customer service staff give you the information or help you needed?	88.89%	11.11%
In the last 12 months, how often did your or your child's dental plan's customer service staff treat you with courtesy and respect?	94.44%	5.56%
Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst dental plan possible and 10 is the best dental plan possible, what number would you use to rate your dental plan?	83.33%*	16.67%
Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all likely and 10 is extremely likely, based on your overall experience with Delta Dental Smiles, how likely are you to recommend Delta Dental Smiles to your family or friends?	88.89%*	11.11%

*Rating of 8, 9, or 10

**Rating of most of the time or always

Enrollees reported being mostly satisfied with the quality of care provided by Delta Dental. The lowest rate of satisfaction was related to rating a child's regular dentist at 77.78%. The highest rate of satisfaction was related to the dental staff making child enrollees feel comfortable (100%).

Table 3. Enrollee Satisfaction—Timeliness of Care: Delta Dental

Survey Question	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
In the last 12 months, how often were your or your child's dental appointments as soon as you wanted?	88.24%*	11.76%
If you or your child needed to see a dentist right away because of a dental emergency in the last 12 months, did you get to see a dentist as soon as you wanted?	84.62%**	15.38%

Table 3. Enrollee Satisfaction—Timeliness of Care: Delta Dental

Survey Question	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
If you tried to get an appointment for yourself or your child with a dentist who specializes in a particular type of dental care (such as root canals or gum disease) in the last 12 months, how often did you get an appointment as soon as you wanted?	100%	0.00%
In the last 12 months, how often did you have to spend more than 15 minutes in the waiting room before you saw someone for your or your child's appointment?	52.94%	47.06%
If you had to spend more than 15 minutes in the waiting room before you saw someone for your or your child's appointment, how often did someone tell you why there was a delay or how long the delay would be?	62.50%	37.50%

*Rating of most of the time or always

**Rating of yes

Enrollees reported being somewhat satisfied with the timeliness of care provided by Delta Dental. The lowest rate of satisfaction was regarding spending more than 15 minutes in the waiting room before seeing someone for an appointment (52.94%). The highest rate of satisfaction was related to getting an appointment with a specialist as soon as the enrollee wanted (100%).

Table 4. Enrollee Satisfaction—Access to Care: Delta Dental

Survey Question	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
In the last 12 months, how often did the 800 number, written materials, or website of your or your child's dental plan provide the information you wanted?	76.47%*	23.53%
In the last 12 months, how often did your or your child's dental plan cover all of the services you thought were covered?	82.35%	17.65%
In the last 12 months, did your or your child's dental plan cover what you and your family needed to get done?	82.35%	17.65%

*Rating of most of the time or always

Enrollees reported being somewhat satisfied with their access to care provided by Delta Dental. The lowest rate of satisfaction was regarding the rate to which dental plan provider information had the information an enrollee wanted (76.47%).

Table 5. Enrollee Satisfaction—Handling of Complaints and Issue Resolution: Delta Dental

Survey Question	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
How would you rate your experience with your or your child's dental plan's ability to resolve any issues you may have?	94.12%*	5.88%
Overall, how would you rate your experience of the complaint and issue resolution process?	86.67%	13.33%

*Rating of satisfied or very satisfied.

Enrollees reported being mostly satisfied with the handling of complaints and issue resolution by Delta Dental.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Table 6 presents identified strengths and weaknesses from the enrollee satisfaction survey.

Table 6. Enrollee Satisfaction Survey Strengths and Weaknesses	
Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Delta Dental clearly stated the study purpose, objective, and audience. ◆ Delta Dental provided the internal key staff and their roles as part of the survey work plan and noted that there was no requirement for DHS deliverables or reporting. ◆ Delta Dental submitted a detailed timeline for the survey. ◆ Delta Dental implemented recommendations from Qsource to ensure reliability and validity testing was done on the survey instrument. ◆ Delta Dental submitted a sampling plan and the methodology used for the survey. ◆ Delta Dental submitted a quality assurance plan for the survey and implemented suggested recommendations made by Qsource in last year's report. ◆ Delta Dental noted an issue with implementation that it experienced. 	
Weaknesses (Opportunities)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ In an effort to improve the response rate, Delta Dental targeted only those enrollees who had an email on file, resulting in a small sample size (75 enrollees). ◆ Delta Dental did not address potential sources of non-responses or bias. ◆ Delta Dental's had a response rate of 24.00% 	

Recommendations

Qsource makes the following recommendations based on the findings in this report.

- ◆ Delta Dental should work to obtain correct email information for its enrollees to increase the sample size and allow for more reliable results.
- ◆ Delta Dental should take a closer look at how to improve the response rate in the future (e.g., a thorough verification of contact information, email, or text reminders, and follow up with non-respondents).
- ◆ Delta Dental should continue to conduct this survey to align with the market and to allow comparison across plans.
- ◆ Delta Dental should include analysis of the survey process, including analysis of non-response and bias.

Provider Satisfaction Survey

Survey Purpose, Objectives, and Audience

Delta Dental reported that its Provider Advisory Committee meets quarterly to share ideas and diverse viewpoints. The purpose of the provider survey was to add another line of communication where in-network Delta Dental Smiles providers could share their experiences with its program and offer suggestions for continuous improvement. Delta Dental reported that it expected the feedback from the surveys to add value to the program and improve provider and member relations.

Delta Dental provided a list of the survey's objectives:

- ◆ To assess the quality, timeliness, access, and overall experience that the dental providers and their staff have had with the Delta Dental Smiles program.
- ◆ To assess the level of satisfaction in regard to claims processing and additional training needs to improve outcomes.
- ◆ To learn about provider concerns with treating adults with special needs and improve outcomes.
- ◆ To determine the factors that contribute to providers having complaints and issues.
- ◆ To obtain insight into the provider's perspective on what factors contribute to access to care and barriers to improving outcomes.

Delta Dental reported that all in-network providers in the Delta Dental Smiles and Delta Dental Smiles for Kids network were the audience. However, based on the objectives and analysis plan, the audience or intended use appeared to be its own leadership/internal use.

Work Plan

Delta Dental identified key staff and their roles:

- ◆ Vice President, Strategic Customer Solutions: SME for Content Validity
- ◆ Director of Delta Dental Smiles Operation: Project Sponsor
- ◆ Digital Marketing Specialist: Logistics Lead and Survey Distributor

Delta Dental provided a detailed timeline from conception of the survey design through analysis of the survey results:

- ◆ Began exploration phase and met with Marketing Department.
- ◆ Obtained DHS Approval for survey plans.
- ◆ Emailed Provider Surveys.
- ◆ Sent reminders to providers seven days later.
- ◆ Sent second round of reminders to providers seven days later.
- ◆ Collected survey results.

Delta Dental reported that there were no reporting requirements that stated that the DMOs should conduct or report on any provider or enrollee surveys. Delta Dental reported that beginning Q1 of 2023 it would report survey results to DHS via the Quality Assurance and Improvement reporting template.

The production and delivery of data reports was handled by the Delta Dental Business Analyst to prepare for the survey. Two surveys were constructed, and were distributed using the following methodology:

- ◆ Dental Office Toolkit (DOT)
- ◆ Email
- ◆ On Site Visits

Upon receipt of the survey results, the Delta Dental Smiles team met to review and evaluate the results. The Delta Dental Business Analyst and key staff assisted with creating the analysis plan. After reviewing the results, the team developed a plan to address the issues identified. Delta Dental also evaluated the strengths shared by survey participants for learning and overall program enhancement. The program manager worked with the Provider Relations team, the Outreach and Education team, the Marketing Team, and other Delta Dental leaders to ensure feedback from the surveys was identified and effectively addressed.

The survey was reviewed by Delta Dental's legal team, and it was determined that the information collected was not protected health information.

Reliability and Validity of the Survey Instrument

Delta Dental reported that prior to releasing its survey, the questions were reviewed for reliability and validity as a result of guidance from a previous validation. Delta Dental utilized the recommendations from the EQRO (Qsource) to produce a well validated survey. The 2022 survey measured quality, timeliness, and access to care. Delta Dental did conduct internal consistency method testing as an alternative to ensure the tool selected yielded the same results.

Sampling Plan

Delta Dental reported that all in-network providers in the Delta Dental Smiles and Delta Dental Smiles for Kids networks were sent email reminders leading up to the close of the survey. The DOT was used to promote the survey as well.

- ◆ Study Population: 719 providers were enrolled in the Delta Dental Smiles network at the end of October 2022.
- ◆ Specification for the Sample Frame: Delta Dental Smiles and Delta Dental Smiles for Kids Providers, in any specialty, with a valid email address on file at the end of October 2022.
- ◆ Sample Size: 457 providers enrolled in the Delta Dental Smiles network.

- ◆ Sample Procedure: The Delta Dental Smiles program analyst worked with the Provider Relations team to identify in-network providers with a valid email address in its provider system. Delta Dental noted that the validity testing of email addresses confirmed the accuracy of the measure. The Provider Relations team then created a notification on the DOT, which was used daily by the providers to submit claims and obtain important forms/documents, to direct providers to complete the survey. The Delta Dental Smiles program analyst also worked with its marketing team to create the survey on SurveyMonkey and to distribute the survey via email to the sample.

Adequacy of the Response Rate

To maximize provider responses, Delta Dental utilized the service office email addresses that it had stored in its provider system. Delta Dental noted that its claims processed were 90% electronic claims and 10% paper claims, which showed a preference for electronic communications by its providers. Providers utilized the DOT as one electronic way to submit claims; therefore, Delta Dental attempted to maximize responses through notification on the DOT.

Delta Dental partnered with its Provider Network Coordinator team to attempt to increase response rates. The team communicated the importance of the survey during on site office visits. Lastly, during the course of the survey, reminder emails were sent out to participants that had not responded.

Delta Dental noted potential causes of low response rates which it will address for future surveys:

- ◆ Timing of survey
- ◆ Lack of in-person reminders
- ◆ Lack of understanding of the importance of the survey

Delta Dental reported a total of 457 providers were targeted and 35 responded for a response rate of 7.66%, down from 11.84% in the previous year.

Quality Assurance Plan

Delta Dental reported that in an effort to produce a valid survey that adequately looked at quality, timeliness, and access to care, Delta Dental utilized recommended standard question from the EQRO.

- ◆ Sampling: Delta Dental ensured all in-network providers in the Delta Dental Smiles and Delta Dental Smiles for Kids network were considered during the planning stages for sampling.
- ◆ Web-based Data Collection (Email): Delta Dental conducted internal content testing for accuracy before implementing the email survey efforts.
- ◆ Data Quality Controls: All questions went through an internal ticketing system called Wrike, Inc. for marketing approval. The following content was reviewed and assessed for quality control efforts.
 - Survey Recipients Provider: The survey went to all Smiles Providers that were enrolled at the start of the month the survey was distributed.

- Provider Questions.

Survey Implementation

Delta Dental reported that when compared to the survey plan, the provider survey implementation went largely as planned with all key staff fulfilling their responsibilities. Delta Dental Provider Relations staff served as SMEs that assisted with assessing and reviewing the content validity for the survey. Delta Dental used an existing validated survey instrument (Pardot). The implementation process followed the initially proposed timeline with little to no delays. Provider surveys were distributed in electronic format.

Delta Dental reported that the response rate was lower than anticipated. Delta Dental noted several possible factors for the low response rate:

- ◆ Email addresses were often provided to Delta Dental at a service office or corporate office level.
 - One service office can have multiple providers.
 - One corporate office can have multiple service offices.
- ◆ Email addresses were not a required element of provider contact information; therefore, Delta Dental did not have all provider email addresses.
- ◆ Some emails provided to its Provider Network credentialing team were not valid.

Survey Data Analysis and Final Report

Delta Dental reported the results of its survey. Delta Dental created an internal executive final report to conduct a non-response analysis. The report was used to compare characteristics of respondents, statistical significance, and analyze survey data. Delta Dental reported that it developed internal action items for the future, in particular its low scores in the handling of complaints and issue resolution.

Results

Delta Dental provided the results of its provider satisfaction survey. Qsource divided the survey questions into three domains of care: quality, timeliness, and access to care. An example of the survey provided by Delta Dental is in [Appendix B](#).

Table 7 presents the response rate for Delta Dental’s provider satisfaction survey.

Table 7. Provider Satisfaction Sampling: Delta Dental		
Sample Size	Total Surveys Complete	Response Rate
457	35	7.66%

There was a total response rate of 7.66% for Delta Dental’s Provider Satisfaction Survey.

Tables 8–11 present the results of the survey as reported by Delta Dental.

Table 8. Provider Satisfaction—Quality of Care: Delta Dental		
Survey Question	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
How would you rate Delta Dental Smiles compared to all other dental plans you contract with: Accuracy of claims processing?	97.14%	2.86%
How would you rate Delta Dental Smiles compared to all other dental plans you contract with: Knowledge/accuracy of response to telephone inquiries?	94.29%	5.71%
How would you rate Delta Dental Smiles compared to all other dental plans you contract with: Procedures obtaining pre-certification/referral/authorization information?	88.57%	11.43%
How would you rate Delta Dental Smiles compared to all other dental plans you contract with: Ease of submitting electronic claims?	94.29%	5.71%
How would you rate Delta Dental Smiles compared to all other dental plans you contract with: Courteousness of provider representative?	100%	0.00%
How would you rate Delta Dental Smiles compared to all other dental plans you contract with: Completeness and accuracy regarding Delta Dental Smiles?	97.14%	2.86%
How would you rate Delta Dental Smiles compared to all other dental plans you contract with: Quality of provider orientation process?	91.43%	8.57%
How would you rate Delta Dental Smiles compared to all other dental plans you contract with: Quality of ongoing training for your staff?	91.43%	8.57%

Providers reported being mostly satisfied with the quality of care related to working with Delta Dental. The lowest rate of satisfaction related to procedures obtaining pre-certification, referral, and authorization information (88.57%). The highest rate of satisfaction related to the courteousness of provider representatives (100%).

Table 9. Provider Satisfaction—Timeliness of Care: Delta Dental		
Survey Question	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Please rate Delta Dental Smiles in the following service areas when compared to your experience with other health plans you work with: Timeliness of claims processing.	97.06%	2.94%
Please rate Delta Dental Smiles in the following service areas when compared to your experience with other health plans you work with: Promptness of Delta Dental Smiles' provider relations department to an inquiry.	85.29%	14.71%
Please rate Delta Dental Smiles in the following service areas when compared to your experience with other health plans you work with: Timeliness of resolution by Delta Dental Smiles' provider relations department.	88.57%	11.43%

Provider Satisfaction Survey

Providers reported being mostly satisfied with the timeliness of care related to working with Delta Dental. The highest rate of satisfaction related to the timeliness of claims processing (97.06%).

Table 10. Provider Satisfaction—Access to Care: Delta Dental		
Survey Question	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Please rate Delta Dental Smiles in the following service areas when compared to your experience with other health plans you work with: Access to Dental Director.	84.38%	15.62%

Providers reported being mostly satisfied with the access to care related to working with Delta Dental (84.38%).

Table 11. Provider Satisfaction—Handling of Complaints and Issue Resolution: Delta Dental		
Survey Question	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Please rate Delta Dental Smiles in the following service areas when compared to your experience with other health plans you work with: Resolution of unpaid/rejected claims.	79.41%	20.59%
Please rate Delta Dental Smiles in the following service areas when compared to your experience with other health plans you work with: Timeliness of appeal process.	85.29%	14.71%
Please rate Delta Dental Smiles in the following service areas when compared to your experience with other health plans you work with: Questions regarding the handling of complaints and issue resolutions.	79.41%	20.59%

Providers reported being somewhat satisfied with the handing of complaints and issue resolutions by Delta Dental. The highest rate of satisfaction related to the timeliness of appeals processing (85.29%).

Strengths and Weaknesses

Table 12 presents identified strengths and weaknesses from the provider satisfaction survey.

Table 12. Provider Satisfaction Survey Strengths and Weaknesses	
Strengths	
◆	Delta Dental clearly stated the study purpose, objective, and audience.
◆	Delta Dental provided the internal key staff and their roles as part of the survey work plan and noted that there was no requirement for DHS deliverables or reporting.
◆	Delta Dental submitted a detailed timeline for the survey.
◆	Delta Dental implemented recommendations from Qsource to ensure reliability and validity testing was done on the survey instrument.
◆	Delta Dental submitted a sample plan and the methodology used for the survey.
◆	Delta Dental submitted a quality assurance plan for the survey and implemented suggested recommendations made by Qsource in last year’s report.

Table 12. Provider Satisfaction Survey Strengths and Weaknesses

- ◆ Delta Dental listed issues with implementation that it experienced and a plan to address those issues when conducting its next survey.

Weaknesses (Opportunities)

- ◆ Delta Dental's response rate was 7.66%, down from 11.84% in the previous year.

Recommendations

Qsource makes the following recommendations based on the findings in this report.

- ◆ Delta Dental should ensure its defined audience is the true intended audience of the survey. For example, Delta Dental noted its audience as all in-network providers; however, Qsource found that the audience or intended use appeared to be its own leadership/internal use.
- ◆ Delta Dental should ensure providers understand the importance of the survey and conduct follow up via phone call to achieve a high response rate.
- ◆ Delta Dental should continue to conduct this survey to align with the market and to allow comparison across plans.

Appendix A | Enrollee Satisfaction Survey

Figure A-1. Delta Dental's Enrollee Satisfaction Survey



We thank you for sharing your opinion. We strive to offer all of our members world-class customer service, and we want to know how you rate us.

This survey consists of 23 questions and should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your participation!



Quality of Care

1. Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst dental care possible and 10 is the best dental care possible, what number would you use to rate all your or your child's dental care in the last 12 months?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. In the last 12 months, how often did your or your child's regular dentist explain things in a way that was easy to understand?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

3. In the last 12 months, how often did your or your child's regular dentist listen carefully to you?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

4. In the last 12 months, how often did your or your child's regular dentist treat you with courtesy and respect?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

5. In the last 12 months, how often did your or your child's regular dentist spend enough time with you?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

6. Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst regular dentist possible and 10 is the best regular dentist possible, what number would you use to rate your or child's regular dentist?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. In the last 12 months, how often did the dentist or dental staff do everything they could to help you or your child feel as comfortable as possible during dental work?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

8. In the last 12 months, how often did the dentists or dental staff explain what they were doing while treating you or your child?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

9. In the last 12 months, how often did your or your child's dental plan's customer service staff give you the information or help you needed?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

10. In the last 12 months, how often did your or your child's dental plan's customer service staff treat you with courtesy and respect?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

11. Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst dental plan possible and 10 is the best dental plan possible, what number would you use to rate your dental plan?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all likely and 10 is extremely likely, based on your overall experience with Delta Dental Smiles, how likely are you to recommend Delta Dental Smiles to your family or friends?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Delta Dental Smiles Member CAHPS Survey 2022

Timeliness of Care

13. In the last 12 months, how often were your or your child's dental appointments as soon as you wanted?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

14. If you or your child needed to see a dentist right away because of a dental emergency in the last 12 months, did you get to see a dentist as soon as you wanted?

- Yes
- No
- Does not apply to me

15. If you tried to get an appointment for yourself or your child with a dentist who specializes in a particular type of dental care (such as root canals or gum disease) in the last 12 months, how often did you get an appointment as soon as you wanted?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all
- Does not apply to me

16. In the last 12 months, how often did you have to spend more than 15 minutes in the waiting room before you saw someone for your or your child's appointment?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

17. If you had to spend more than 15 minutes in the waiting room before you saw someone for your or your child's appointment, how often did someone tell you why there was a delay or how long the delay would be?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

18. In the last 12 months, how often did the 800 number, written materials, or website of your or your child's dental plan provide the information you wanted?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all





Delta Dental Smiles Member CAHPS Survey 2022

Access to Care

19. In the last 12 months, how often did your or your child’s dental plan cover all of the services you thought were covered?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all

20. In the last 12 months, did your or your child’s dental plan cover what you and your family needed to get done?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not at all



Delta Dental Smiles Member CAHPS Survey 2022

Handling of Complaints and Issue Resolution

21. How would you rate your experience with your or your child’s dental plan’s ability to resolve any issues you may have?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Does not apply to me

22. Overall, how would you rate your experience of the complaint and issue resolution process?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Does not apply to me





Delta Dental Smiles Member CAHPS Survey 2022

23. Please enter your contact information here.

Name:

Phone number:

Method of communication (text or call)?:

Best time of day to contact:

Appendix B | Provider Satisfaction Survey

Figure B-1. Delta Dental's Provider Satisfaction Survey

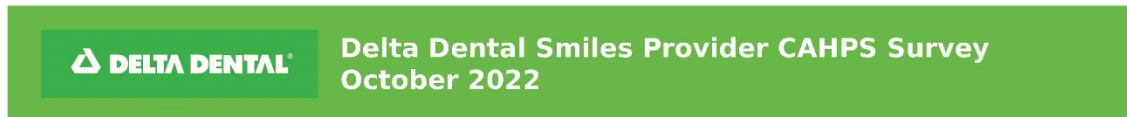


Dear Delta Dental Smiles Provider,

The Delta Dental Smiles team at Delta Dental of Arkansas would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity of working with you.

We value you and your team as participating providers and want your experience with us to be great. Please take a few minutes to complete our annual survey so we will better understand what is important to you and how we can serve you and our members better in the future.

This survey consists of 7 questions and should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.



Quality of Care

1. How would you rate Delta Dental Smiles compared to all other dental plans you contract with?

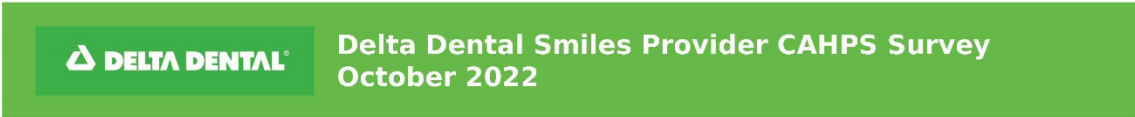
- Excellent
- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Very Unsatisfactory

2. Please rate Delta Dental Smiles in the following service areas when compared to your experience with other health plans you work with.

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Accuracy of claims processing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledge/accuracy of response to telephone inquiries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Procedures obtaining pre-certification/referral/authorization information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease of submitting electronic claims	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Courteousness of provider representative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Completeness and accuracy regarding Delta Dental Smiles provided	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of provider orientation process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of ongoing training for your staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. On a scale of 0 to 10, 0 being the least likely and 10 being the most likely, are you likely to recommend Delta Dental Smiles to a friend or colleague?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



DELTA DENTAL Delta Dental Smiles Provider CAHPS Survey
October 2022

Timeliness of Care

4. Please rate Delta Dental Smiles in the following service areas when compared to your experience with other health plans you work with.

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Timeliness of claims processing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promptness of Delta Dental Smiles' provider relations department to an inquiry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Timeliness of resolution by Delta Dental Smiles' provider relations department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Access to Care

5. Please rate Delta Dental Smiles in the following service areas when compared to your experience with other health plans you work with.

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Access to Dental Director	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Handling of Complaints and Issue Resolution

6. Please rate Delta Dental Smiles in the following service areas when compared to your experience with other health plans you work with.

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Resolution of unpaid/rejected claims	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Timeliness of appeal process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Questions regarding the handling of complaints and issue resolution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



7. Please enter your contact information here. Your contact information will remain confidential and Delta Dental of Arkansas will not share it with anyone.

Name of person completing survey:

Name of dental office:

Office address:

Office phone number:

Email address:

Appendix C | DMO Survey Process Checklist

Figure C-1. DMO Survey Process Checklist



Survey Process Checklist

Please compile the following materials or a narrative description for the process used in implementing your **Quality of Care Surveys**, for **2022**, for both **enrollees** and **providers**, as applicable.

Documents	Enrollee Survey ✓ Included	Provider Survey ✓ Included
Survey's Purpose (Preferred file naming convention: survey type_Purpose)		
Survey's Objective (Preferred file naming convention: survey type_Objective)		
Survey's Audience/Intended Use (Preferred file naming convention: survey type_Audience)		
Work Plan (Preferred file naming convention: survey type_Work Plan) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Project Management Plan (key staff and rolls) b. Schedule (timelines and deliverables) c. Reporting Requirements (Reporting to DHS Monthly/Quarterly, etc.) d. Data Preparation/Delivery Method (file type) e. Data Analysis Plan f. Security Protocols and Procedures (e.g. HIPAA) 		
Method for Reliability and Validity Testing, if any (Preferred file naming convention: survey type_Reliability and Validity)		
Sampling Plan, if any (Preferred file naming convention: survey type_Sampling) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Study Population b. Specifications for the Sample Frame c. Sample Size d. Sample Procedure 		
Methods Used to Maximize Response Rate (Preferred file naming convention: survey type_Response Rate) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Description of Sources of Non-Response 		
Quality Assurance Plan (to ensure quality checks for all phases of data collection), if any (Preferred file naming convention: survey type_Quality Assurance Plan)		

Appendix C | DMO Survey Process Checklist

Documents	Enrollee Survey ✓ Included	Provider Survey ✓ Included
Survey Implementation (File naming convention: survey type_Implementation) a. How the survey process went compared to the plan b. What problems did you encounter		
Survey Analysis (what analysis did you perform on the results) (File naming convention: survey type_Analysis)		

- ◆ Submit files to Qsource Xchange>Plan folder>2023>Protocol 6
- ◆ Deadline: 7/14/23