



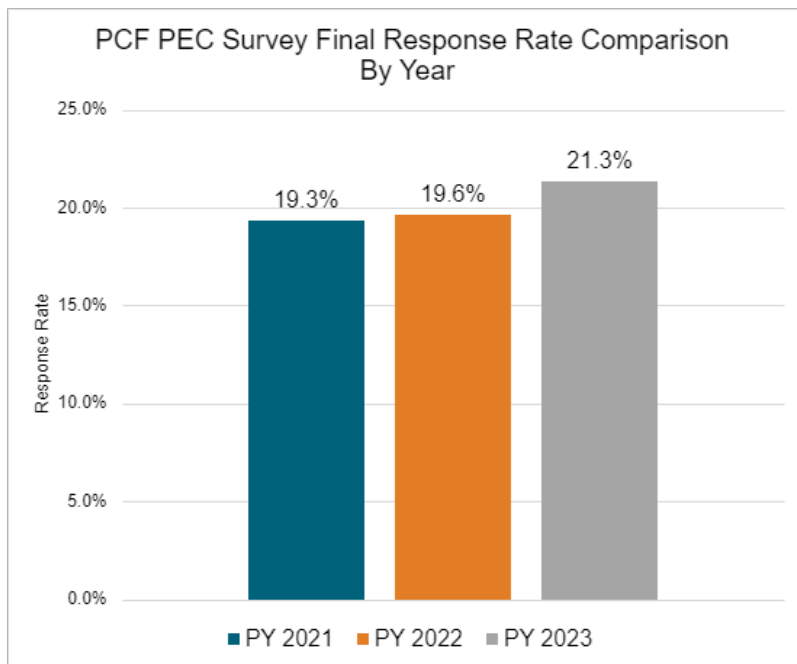
July
2024

PCF PEC Survey Semiannual Newsletter

Message from the PCF PEC Survey Team

Welcome to the July 2024 issue of the Primary Care First (PCF) Patient Experience of Care (PEC) Survey Newsletter! These newsletters are posted on the PCF PEC Survey website under the General Information tab. Please visit the PCF PEC Survey website for more information on the items mentioned in this newsletter: <https://pcfpecs.org/>

Response Rate Trends on the PCF PEC Survey



The Performance Year (PY) 2023 response rate was 21.3%, which is higher than the previous 2 years of data collection. In PY 2023, nearly two-thirds of PCF practices (64%) saw improved response rates when compared to PY 2022. Of those practices, 59% improved their response rates by at least 1 percentage point and 19% saw a response rate gain of 5 percentage points or more.

We implemented several changes during PY 2023 that likely improved response rates. First, PY 2023 is the first year that we have used the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) logo and a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) signature on both the first and second cover letters. Use of the HHS logos and signatory may have helped boost the sense of the survey's legitimacy among respondents.

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Upcoming Events and Milestones

09/02: RTI International Closed for Labor Day

09/10: Sample files posted to PCF PEC Survey website for vendors

09/23: Teaser postcard mailing

09/30: Virtual site visits begin

Next is improved guidance to practices on patient rosters. Each year, the PEC Survey team reviews our communication plan and strategies for communicating with practices and adjusts as needed. For PY 2023, we made revisions designed to address common questions and submission problems seen during PY 2022. More accurate patient rosters make it more likely that vendors will successfully reach patients, thereby improving response rates.



Finally, the PEC Survey team increased messaging to practices around patient engagement to support response rates in PY 2023. Thank you to our survey vendors who have worked with their PCF practice clients to increase patient awareness of the PEC Survey. Please continue to communicate regularly with your clients about important dates and actions they can take to support this survey throughout this performance year. CMS appreciates your efforts to support target response rates on the PCF PEC Survey.

Vendors should monitor practice response rates during data collection and troubleshoot any practices with unusually low response rates.

REMINDER: PCF PEC Survey Supplemental Reports Were Released to Practices June 7

The PY 2023 PCF PEC Survey Supplemental Reports were released to practices in the PCF Practice Portal on June 7, 2024. All Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 practices that participated in the PCF PEC Survey received these reports detailing practice performance. In addition to overall PEC Survey summary and domain-level scores for PY 2023, the report presents the practice's performance on each of the individual items in the PY 2023 PCF PEC Survey, as well as the average scores within their region and across all PCF practices.

CMS also provided practices with the following resources to assist in understanding their report:

- The [Understanding and Using Your PEC Survey Results on-demand webinar](#)  provides an overview and discussion of every section of the report and describes how a practice may implement changes based on their results.
- [PCF PEC Survey Reports and Scoring Fact Sheet](#) .

Survey vendors should be prepared to address questions that practice clients have about their survey results, response rates, and vendor-provided reports. They may have questions about how their PCF PEC Survey report results differ from results in a vendor report. Please remind them that vendor results are not official CMS results and are for a practice's internal quality improvement purposes only. Survey vendors will not have sufficient information to replicate CMS scoring.

Please direct practices with questions about their official PCF PEC Survey Supplemental Report, their scores, and payment to PCF Support via email at PCF@Telligen.com or by phone at 1-888-517-7753.

09/24: Vendor Help Desks open

09/30: First questionnaire mailing

10/07: Reminder/Thank You postcard mailing

10/21: First interim data submission due from vendors

10/28: Second questionnaire mailing

11/18: Computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) nonresponse follow-up begins

11/18: PCF PEC Survey Team begins remote telephone interviewing

11/27: Second interim data submission due from vendors

11/28–11/29: RTI closed for Thanksgiving

12/06: Documentation of interviewer training, including HIPAA training, due from vendors

12/17: All mail and telephone data collection ends, Vendor Help Desk closes

01/17/2025: Final data submission due from vendors

01/31/2025: Interviewer monitoring documentation due from vendors

FAQs for vendors and practices

Please visit this page to view the list of FAQs for vendors and practices:

<https://pcfpecs.org/General-Information/FAQs> 

This list will be updated periodically.

Engaging PCF Practices

Keeping practices informed and engaged in the PCF PEC Survey data collection is critical to the success of the survey. When practices are knowledgeable and supportive of the survey, patients are more likely to participate. Although CMS communicates information through the PCF 'First Edition' Newsletter and PCF Connect, survey vendors should also communicate directly with their clients. For example:

- Encourage practices to display the PCF PEC Survey [poster](#) and [waiting room FAQs](#). Provide your Help Desk telephone number and email address so that they can personalize them.
- Remind practices to send a reminder message about the survey via their patient portal in September [using CMS-provided language](#).
- Direct practices to the section called **Increase Patient Participation in the PEC Survey** in the [Practice Site Responsibilities quick link](#).
- Inform practices about important data collection milestones like the start of mailing and telephone outreach.
- Tell practices about the change to HHS letterhead (and why it matters). Practices should be aware of what the survey envelope and survey look like so they can verify its legitimacy if asked.

Vendors that provide practices with survey reports (including interim or dashboard reports) must adhere to all [Quality Assurance Guidelines](#) (QAG) requirements as detailed in Section 8.4.

Prepare For Your PY 2024 Site Visit

Remote site visits will begin on September 30th and continue through the fall. In previous years, some PCF PEC Survey vendors have elected to create presentations to prepare for their site. The PCF PEC Survey team highly recommends this and will provide a list of agenda items for the site visit to function as guidelines for the presentation. Survey vendors should submit their presentation to the PCF PEC Survey team via email (pcfpecs@rti.org) at least five business days in advance of the scheduled site visit.

BlueJeans, the video conferencing software that has been used for PCF PEC Survey Vendor site visits in the past, has been discontinued. All virtual site visits will now be conducted via Zoom, with extra precautions to ensure compliance with HIPAA. Please review [QAG](#) Section 10.6 for more information about site visits. We look forward to speaking with your team this fall.

We want to hear from you!

What would you like to see in these newsletters and on the PCF PEC Survey website? What types of resources would be beneficial to survey vendors and your client practice sites?

Please reach out to the PCF PEC Survey Team at pcfpecs@rti.org with ideas!

Resources for Vendors

- [Quality Assurance Guidelines](#)
- [Data Submission Resources](#)
- [PCF PEC Newsletters](#)
- [2024 Vendor Training Materials](#)

Quick Links for Vendors

- [How to Download Sample Files](#)
- [How to Use the Online Validation Tool for Data Submission Files](#)
- [How to Upload Interim Data](#)
- [How to Add or Update Vendor Point of Contact Information](#)

Resources for Practices

- [PCF PEC Survey Fact Sheet for Practices](#)
- [Introduction to PCF PECS On-Demand Webinar](#)
- [PCF Connect](#)

Quick Links for Practices

- [Practice Site Responsibilities](#)
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Important Steps that Vendors Must Take for a Successful Data Collection This Fall

- **Ask practice sites for their name and physical address.** A common reason for nonresponse to the survey is lack of recognition of the practice name and address. Vendors should ask clients for the practice site's name and the address that sample patients will recognize and use them on all patient materials. The practice name and mailing address on the sample files will appear exactly as the practice entered them into the PCF Practice Portal. It is possible the patient-recognizable name and address differ from the name and address on the sample file, however, if the practice site elected to use a legal or other name in the PCF model. Checking with practices is also an excellent way to identify typographical errors. Completing this step can help boost response rates!
 - **Employ address standardization and forwarding address techniques.** Vendors must verify each mailing address in the sample file by using a commercial address update and standardization service. When a new forwarding address for a patient is known, the survey vendor should take advantage of that and send the mailing to the forwarding address.
 - **Communicate with practices to properly address patients who live in residential care facilities.** Practices must share with their PEC Survey vendor the names and addresses of residential care facilities and assisted living facilities where their patients reside. To identify facilities, they may scan their patients' addresses or search online for nearby residential care and assisted living facilities. These patients will receive their survey in a [special envelope](#) designed to catch the attention of facility staff and solicit proxy respondents. These patients also do not receive telephone follow-up because of the burden this places on facility staff.
 - **Attempt to obtain telephone numbers for the subset of patients in the sample file for which a phone number was not provided.** Survey vendors shall use a secondary source, such as phone matching services or software, directory assistance, and other phone directory applications. Vendors should ensure the telephone numbers from the service are associated with the patient in the sample file.
 - **Take measures to ensure calls are not flagged as spam.** Survey vendors must conduct tests before survey launch to determine whether PEC Survey calls are likely to be flagged as spam. If they are, the survey vendor must implement measure(s) to prevent this flagging, such as distributing the calls across different numbers of origination and not re-using numbers.
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PCF Support

Please direct your practices to PCF Support (PCF@Telligen.com or 1-888-517-7753) when they have questions about the PCF model, patient rosters, PEC Survey reports, or payment and technical assistance inquiries about the PCF PEC Survey website, such as authorizing their vendor.

Preparing for Sample File Download in September

Sample files for the PY 2024 PCF PEC Survey will be available Tuesday, September 10, 2024, for download on the PCF PEC Survey website by survey vendors who have been authorized by one or more PCF practices to collect and submit survey data on their behalf.

The PCF PEC Survey website has a [Downloading Sample Files Quick Link](#) to walk vendors through the download process.

The sample patient variables contained in each sample file are listed in the [example sample file](#) that is posted to the PCF PEC Survey website.

PCF PEC Survey vendors must review their [Survey Vendor Authorization Report](#) regularly and confirm they have current Business Associate Agreements (BAAs) and contracts with all listed practices. CMS will not release a practice site's sample to their survey vendor unless the practice has fully authorized a vendor on the PEC Survey website, including checking the BAA attestation box. CMS is unable to provide a sample to vendors without a properly executed BAA or contract in place.

Sections 4.5 and 4.6 of the [Quality Assurance Guidelines](#) contain more information about sample file protocols for the PCF PEC Survey. Please be on the lookout for further communications from the PCF PEC Survey team about sample file downloads in the coming weeks.

Data Collection Begins on September 23



Please see the full survey administration schedule on the [PCF PEC Survey website](#) or in [Exhibit 5-1 of the QAG](#). Some important reminders:

- **Data collection activities must begin on the date listed.** If a vendor has a large sample that cannot all be mailed in one day, mailing may continue, but it must begin on the date specified in the schedule.
 - **Only approved survey material templates can be used** for printing and mailing. No changes can be made without approval from the PCF PEC Survey team.
 - **Vendors may be required to submit print proofs** before mailing out the teaser postcard. Affected vendors will be informed of this requirement when their PY 2024 templates are approved.
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First Interim Data Submission Deadline Is October 21

The deadline for PCF PEC Survey vendors to submit their first interim data file to the PCF PEC Survey website is Monday, October 21, 2024. Please see this [Quick Link](#) with instructions on uploading the interim data file. [Data submission resources](#) are available on the PCF PEC Survey website.

Common issues found in past performance years included the following:

- Failing to code out RTI seeded cases as “200- Excluded from Survey”
- Cases with a completion date but no patient data.
 - Give surveys that have not been completed a completion date of “88888888.”
- Incorrect use of completion criteria.
 - Refer to [QAG Section 6.3.1](#) for definitions of complete and partially complete surveys.
- Incorrect use of “190- Did not receive care at practice.”
 - Only use if a patient responds “No” to Q1 or “0” to Q3.
- Incorrect use of “270- Pending” until all contact attempts are made.
 - Use “210- Incomplete” only in final data submission.
- Incorrect entry of survey language when no patient data are present.
 - Mark language as “X” when there are no patient data.

Vendors should refer to feedback received from the PCF PEC Survey team in PY 2023 when making updates to their systems and processes for PY 2024.

For additional information about data file preparation and data submission requirements, please see Chapter 7 of the [Quality Assurance Guidelines](#).

Email us at pcfpecs@rti.org or call 1-833-997-2715

Visit the PCF PEC Survey website at

<https://pcfpecs.org>

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