



American Board  
of Internal Medicine

# **Physician Use of CAHPS To Evaluate and Improve the Quality of Patient Communication**

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Eric S. Holmboe, MD, and Rebecca S. Lipner, PhD**

**Track:** Improving Patients' Experiences With Care  
**Session:** Improving Physician-Patient Communication  
**Date & Time:** April 20, 2010, 11:00 am  
**Track Number:** CAHPS T2– S2-1



1. What role do **CAHPS** Clinician and Group Surveys play in the certification process for Internal Medicine and its medical specialties at ABIM?
2. What are Practice Improvement Modules® and why are **CAHPS** surveys used in them?
3. How many internists, subspecialists and patients use **CAHPS**?
4. How do physicians do quality improvement (QI) in patient communication with **CAHPS**?
5. What factors affect physicians' choices and what are the effect-sizes from QI plans using **CAHPS**?
6. What do physicians conclude about using **CAHPS** in their QI efforts?



# CAHPS role in the certification process

## Physicians become certified in Internal Medicine by:

1. Completing required undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate training
2. Demonstrating clinical competence in patient care
3. Meeting licensure and procedural requirements
4. Passing a certification examination

Certification in medical subspecialties requires additional training (and steps 2-4 above)

Since 1990, certification has been limited to 10 years

## Physicians must renew certification through Maintenance of Certification – lifelong learning

1. Possess a valid, unrestricted medical license
2. Earn 100 pts of self-evaluation:
  - a) medical knowledge modules web-based, with multiple-choice questions (ABIM, medical societies sources)
  - b) practice performance for QI patient care with web-based Practice Improvement modules (PIM)® (e.g. Communication PIM – **CAHPS**, **patient surveys**)
3. Pass an examination

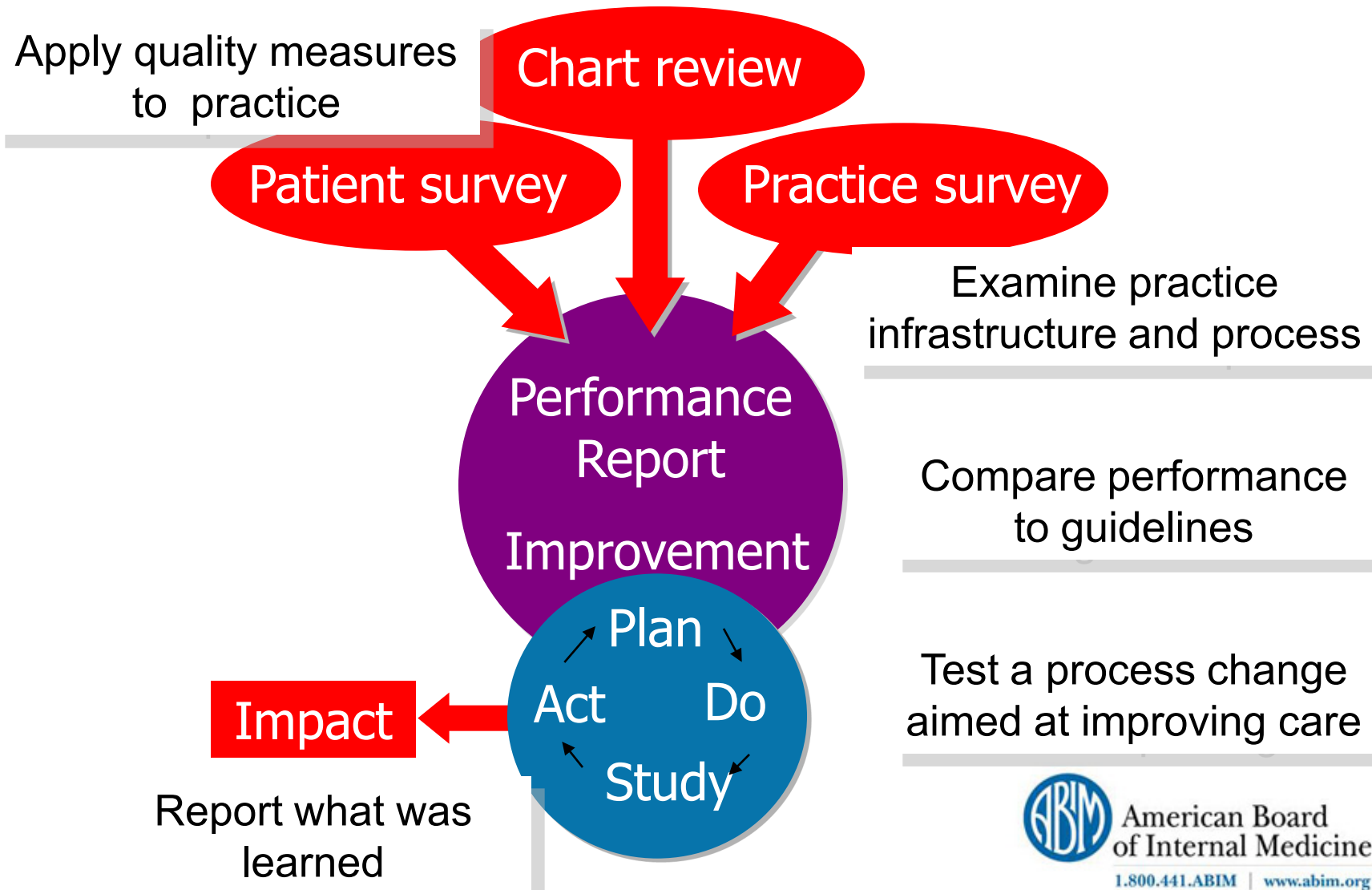


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# Current PIM Structure





# PIMs® & CAHPS surveys used in them

## PIMS in Service

1. Diabetes: 3,135; (15%)
2. Hospital-Based Patient Care: 2,331; (12%)
3. Hypertension: 2,114; (10%)
4. **Communication – Primary Care & Subspecialists\***: 1,832; (9%)
5. **Communication - Referring Physicians\***: 1,656; (8%)
6. Self-Directed: 1,574; (8%)
7. Preventive Cardiology: 1,571; (8%)
8. Osteoporosis: 1,383; (7%)
9. Colonoscopy: 1,270; (6%)
10. Essentials of Quality Improvement: 964; (5%)
11. Asthma: 713; (4%)
12. HIV: 560; (3%)
13. Clinical Supervision: 411; (2%)
14. Care of the Vulnerable Elderly: 366; (2%)
15. Hepatitis C: 352; (2%)
16. Cancer Screening: (new)
17. Approved Quality Improvement programs & products: (new)

**\*CAHPS surveys used as process measurement tools**

## Communication PIM

### Primary Care & Subspecialist

<http://www.abim.org/moc/choose/module/communication-primary-care.aspx>

1. **CAHPS** Clinician and Group Survey of  $\geq 25$  patients
2. Practice system survey based on the National Committee on Quality Assurance - Physician Practice Connections program,
3. Date review: 1) identify weaknesses, 2) select 1 **CAHPS** measure to improve, and 3) develop a plan (based on Donabedian model of structure affects process affects outcomes & rapid PDSA cycle)
4. Re-measure patients (new **CAHPS** sample,  $\geq 25$  patients, measure process change.
5. Reflect on QI plan and report how practice changes affected care
6. Post PIM survey

**PIMs accredited activities by ACGME, may earn 20 AMA PRA Category 1 credits & are HIPAA compliant**



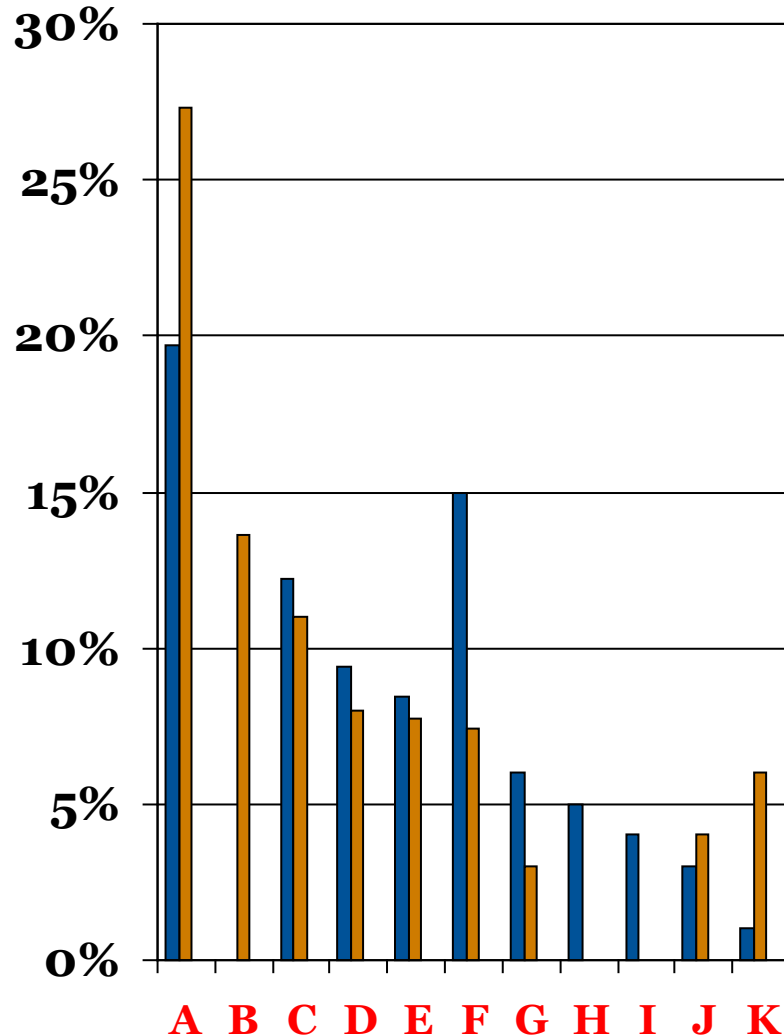
# # Internists, Subspecialists & Patients That Used **CAHPS** (since 2006)

Primary Care	Subspecialists	Patients
852 <sup>1</sup>	980 <sup>1</sup>	52,868 <sup>2</sup>
<sup>1</sup> Counts for three PIM versions used between 2006 and 2009		
<sup>2</sup> Estimate based on average # pts /physician		



# Physician Patient Communication

## Choices of CAHPS QI plans



CAHPS QI Plans	Primary Care N=320	Subspecialists N=337
<b>A</b> ≤ 15 min waiting	63 (20%)	92 (27%)
<b>B</b> Discusses Rx Costs	0 (0%)	46 (14%)
<b>C</b> Same-day answers/reg hrs	39 (12%)	37 (11%)
<b>D</b> Encourages questions	30 (9%)	27 (8%)
<b>E</b> Lab/test results	27 (8%)	26 (8%)
<b>F</b> Urgent Care prn	48 (15%)	25 (7%)
<b>G</b> Staff Helpful	20 (6%)	9 (3%)
<b>H</b> Informed about specialists care	15 (5%)	0 (0%)
<b>I</b> Timely routine care	14 (4%)	0 (0%)
<b>J</b> Checks understanding	11 (3%)	13 (4%)
<b>K</b> Knows personal values	4 (1%)	19 (6%)



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# Factors affecting Physicians' choices of CAHPS QI plans

- **Physician Factors:** age; gender; practice leader, % time spent on pt care, % pt care time spent on “paper work” (phone, email, medical records, etc.), passing IM certification exam at first take
- **Patient Factors:** age; education; race; health status; % hypertensive, diabetic, or CVD in pt pop.; % obese in pt. pop.; Overall rating of doctor
- **Practice/Microsystem Factors:** Use of pt. registries, proactive mgmt. of important med. conditions, providing multiple modes of pt. access, reporting that microsystem works well



# Important Covariates for the No. 1 Choice of CAHPS QI plans: $\leq 15$ min waiting time (Odds Ratios)

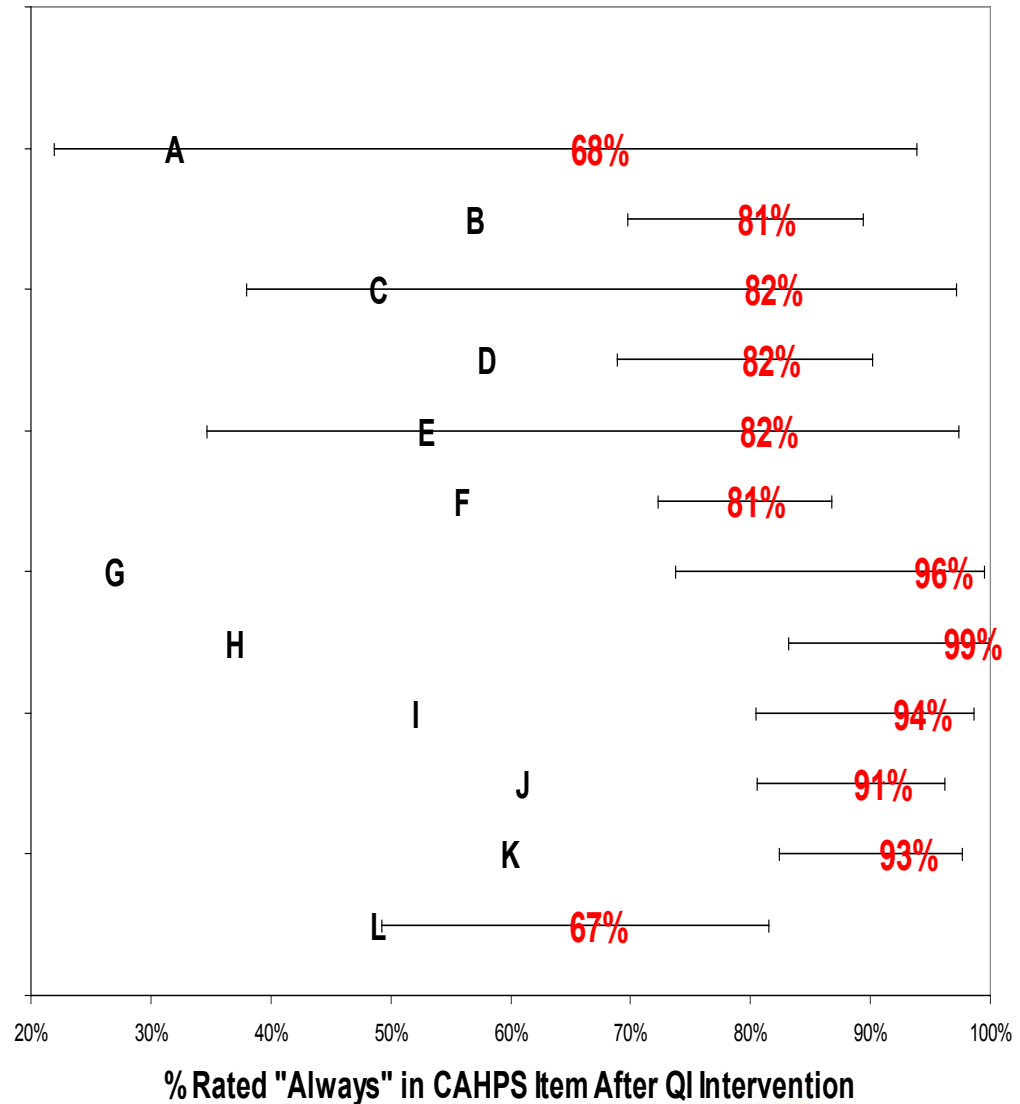
		Primary Care		Subspecialists	
Physician	Age	1.07	**	0.94	**
	Male	0.44	*	0.87	
	Practice leader	0.94	***	1.00	
	% Time patient care	0.96	**	0.99	
	% Time paper work	0.94	**	1.01	
Patient	%Age 65+	14.48	**	0.13	*
	%< High school	30.22	*	1.98	
	%White	0.14	*	2.54	
	%Poor/fair health	0.01	**	3.39	
	%Obesity	2.27	*	1.33	
	%Medicaid	1.00		1.01	*
	Overall rating of Dr.	6.83	***	1.54	
Practice/Microsystem					

\*  $p < 0.1$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$



# CAHPS QI Effect-sizes

- A. PC  $\leq 15$  min waiting
- B. PC Urgent Care prn
- C. PC Same day answers
- D. PC Encouraged ?'s
- E. PC Lab/Test Results
- F. PC Staff Helpful
- G. SS  $\leq 15$  min waiting
- H. SS Rx Costs
- I. SS Same day answers
- J. SS Encouraged ?'s
- K. SS Lab/Test Results
- L. SS Urgent Care prn





# Physicians Conclusions About Using CAHPS Measures in Their QI Projects

Participant responses from 1,143 physicians, 546 primary care and 597 subspecialty

Participation in this (Communication) module enhanced my ability to assess current practice performance (% Agree to Strongly Agree, 5-point scale)	A & SA = 84% of 458 (40% responding), average=4.02; sensitivity average range: 2.21–4.61
Participation in this module enhanced my ability to develop and implement an improvement plan to improve care for patients (% Agree to Strongly Agree)	A & SA = 82% of 458 (40% responding), average=4.04; sensitivity average range: 2.22–4.62
Participation in this module enhanced my ability to re-measure performance on a selected quality indicator after implementing an improvement plan (% Agree to Strongly Agree )	A & SA = 81% of 458 (40% responding), average=3.99; sensitivity average range: 2.20–4.60
The questions in the Patient Surveys (CAHPS) focused on issues relevant to patient care? (% Agree to Strongly Agree)	A & SA = 79% of 803 (70% responding), average=4.09; sensitivity average range: 3.17-4.36
How useful was it for you to review the summary Patient Survey (CAHPS) data? (% Useful to Very Useful , 5-point scale)	U & VU = 82% of 803 (70% responding), average=4.21; sensitivity average range: 3.26-4.45
What was your (physician) impression of patients' willingness to complete the survey (CAHPS)? (% Willing to Very Willing , 5-point scale)	W & VW = 72% of 801 (70% responding), average=3.96; sensitivity average range=3.08-4.27



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# Thank You!

To access the Primary Care Communication PIM go to:

**<http://www.abim.org/moc/choose/module/communication-primary-care.aspx>**

**Problems? [garnold@abim.org](mailto:garnold@abim.org)**



- ▶ [Healthcare Organizations Recognizing MOC](#)
- ▶ [Residency & Fellowship Programs use PIMs](#)
- ▶ [Non-Internists use PIMs](#)
- ▶ [ABMS Boards use PIMs](#)



## Product Info, Demos & Ordering

Get details, demonstrations and ordering information for each PIM:

Select a PIM

- or -

Select a PIM by Specialty

### Sample Modules

<a href="#">Asthma</a>	<a href="#">view survey (pdf)</a>
<a href="#">Cancer Screening</a>	<a href="#">view survey (pdf)</a>
<a href="#">Care of Vulnerable Elderly</a>	<a href="#">view survey (pdf)</a>
<a href="#">Clinical Supervision</a>	
<a href="#">Colonoscopy</a>	
<a href="#">Communication - Primary Care</a>	<a href="#">view survey (pdf)</a>
<a href="#">Communication - Subspecialists</a>	<a href="#">view survey (pdf)</a>
<a href="#">Communication with Referring Physicians</a>	<a href="#">view survey (pdf)</a>
<a href="#">Diabetes</a>	<a href="#">view survey (pdf)</a>
<a href="#">Hepatitis C</a>	
<a href="#">HIV</a>	
<a href="#">Hospital-Based Patient Care</a>	
<a href="#">Hypertension</a>	<a href="#">view survey (pdf)</a>
<a href="#">Osteoporosis</a>	
<a href="#">Patient and Physician Peer Assessment</a>	
<a href="#">Preventive Cardiology</a>	<a href="#">view survey (pdf)</a>
<a href="#">Self-Directed</a>	





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## ABIM PIM Practice Improvement Module®



### Communication - Primary Care PIM

Date Started: 3/1/2010



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ABIM PIM Practice Improvement Module®  
Communication - Primary Care PIM

Activity Release Date: July 1, 2009

Last Review Date: July 1, 2009

Amount of CME Credit: 20 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™

### Getting Started

Before you begin working on your PIM, you must read the information below and check the attestation at the bottom of this section.

#### On This Page...

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[Selecting Your ABIM Patient Sample](#)

[Confidentiality About Research](#)

[Attestation You must attest to reading this page](#)



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## ABIM PIM Practice Improvement Module®



### Communication - Primary Care PIM

Date Started: 3/1/2010



#### Communication - Primary Care PIM

Recommended # to Complete

Start Date

Status

Completion Date

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3/1/2010

Complete

3/1/2010

##### PART 1 - Performance Data

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25 of 25 collected

3/1/2010

Complete

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Complete

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Complete

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##### PART 2 - Quality Improvement (QI) Plan

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Complete

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Complete

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[Target a Measure for Improvement](#)

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Complete

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[Practice Structures—System Enhancements](#)

3/2/2010

Complete

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[Your Practice Structure—System Enhancements](#)

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Complete

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[Your QI Plan](#)

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Complete

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##### PART 3 - Remeasurement

[Remeasurement](#)

3/2/2010

Complete

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26 of 25 collected

3/2/2010

Complete

3/3/2010

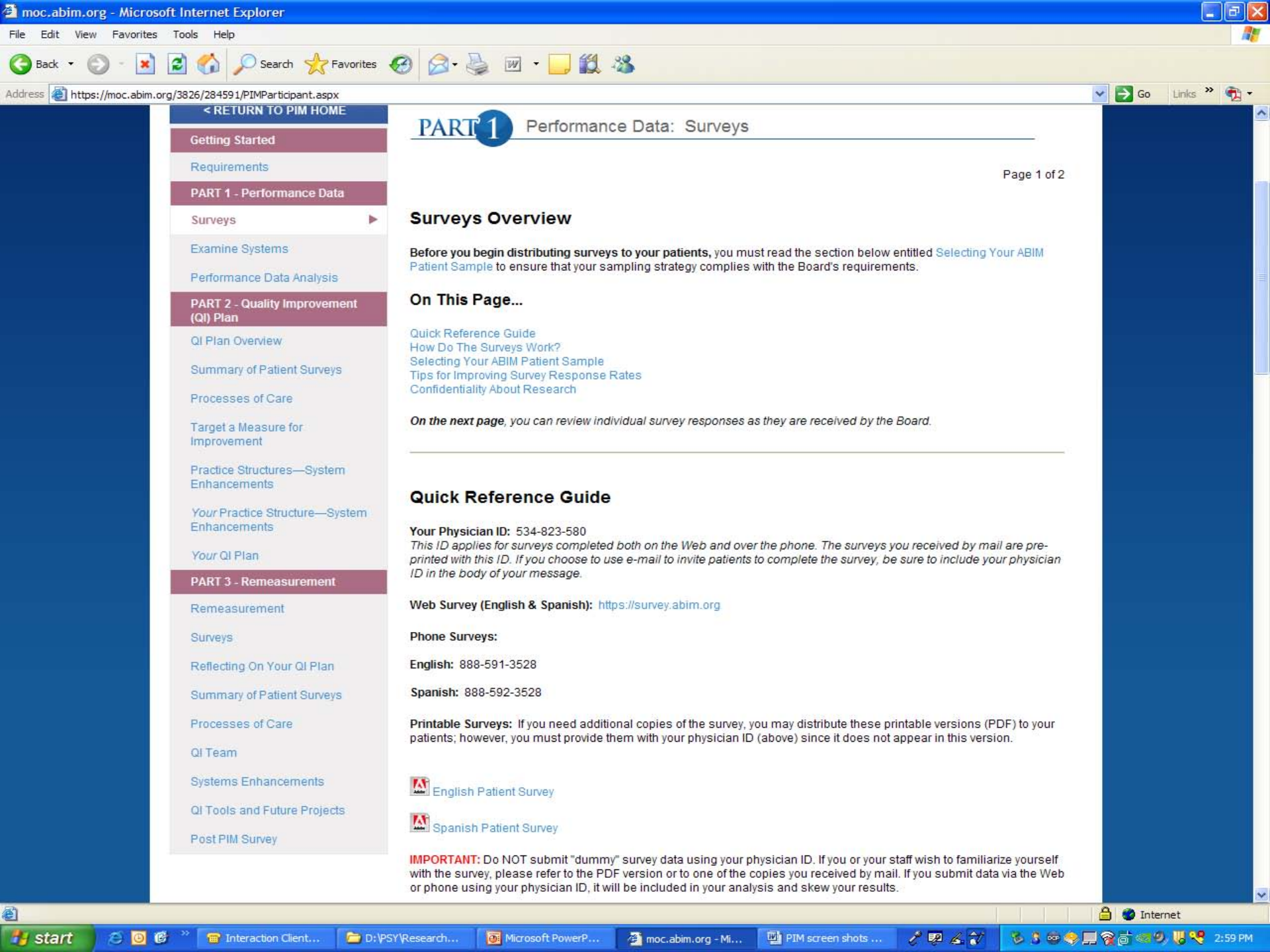
[Reflecting On Your QI Plan](#)

3/3/2010

Complete

3/3/2010





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## PART 1 Performance Data: Surveys

Page 1 of 2

## Surveys Overview

Before you begin distributing surveys to your patients, you must read the section below entitled [Selecting Your ABIM Patient Sample](#) to ensure that your sampling strategy complies with the Board's requirements.

## On This Page...

[Quick Reference Guide](#)  
[How Do The Surveys Work?](#)  
[Selecting Your ABIM Patient Sample](#)  
[Tips for Improving Survey Response Rates](#)  
[Confidentiality About Research](#)

*On the next page, you can review individual survey responses as they are received by the Board.*

## Quick Reference Guide

## Your Physician ID: 534-823-580

*This ID applies for surveys completed both on the Web and over the phone. The surveys you received by mail are pre-printed with this ID. If you choose to use e-mail to invite patients to complete the survey, be sure to include your physician ID in the body of your message.*

Web Survey (English & Spanish): <https://survey.abim.org>

## Phone Surveys:

English: 888-591-3528

Spanish: 888-592-3528

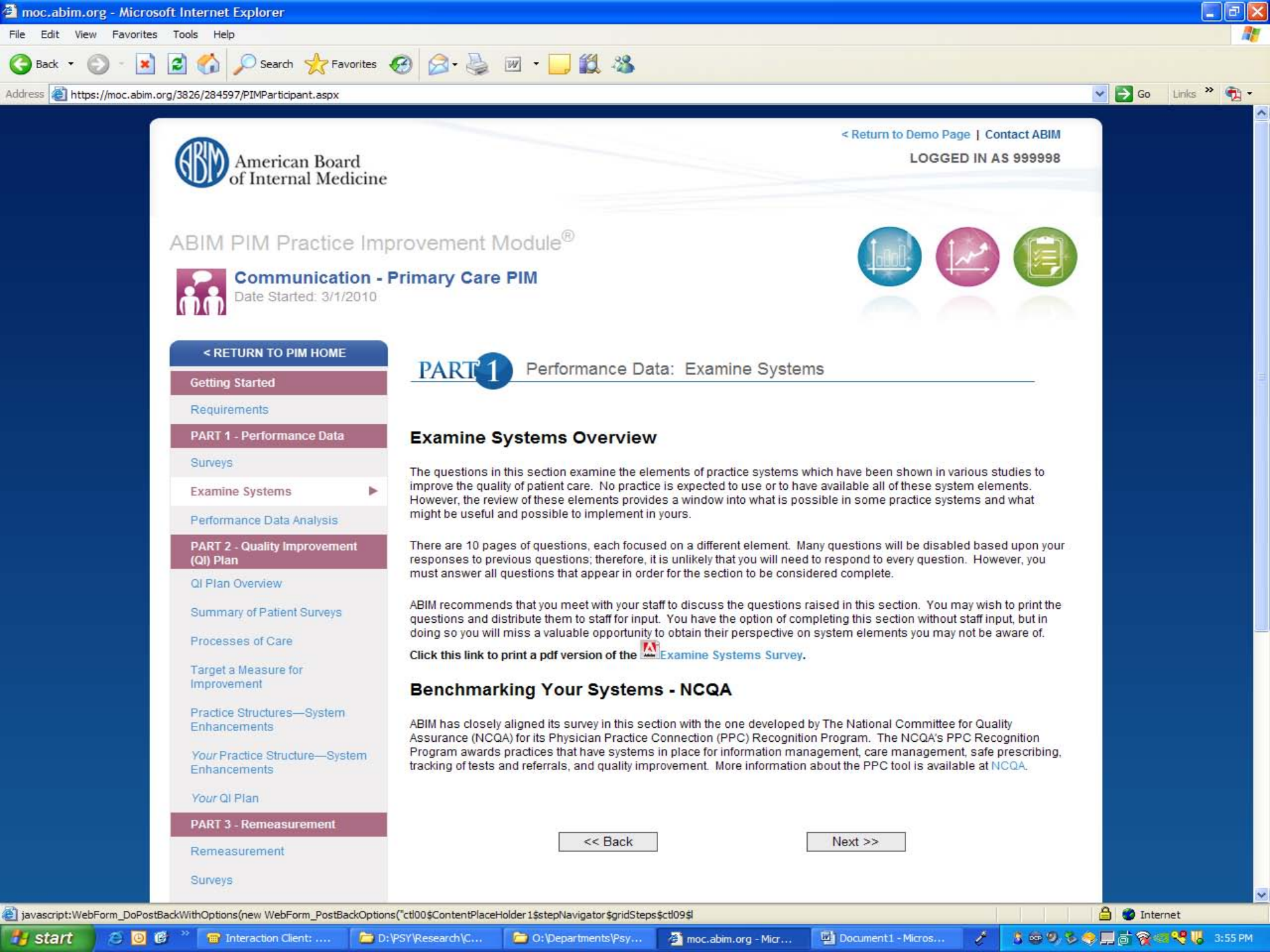
**Printable Surveys:** If you need additional copies of the survey, you may distribute these printable versions (PDF) to your patients; however, you must provide them with your physician ID (above) since it does not appear in this version.

[English Patient Survey](#)[Spanish Patient Survey](#)

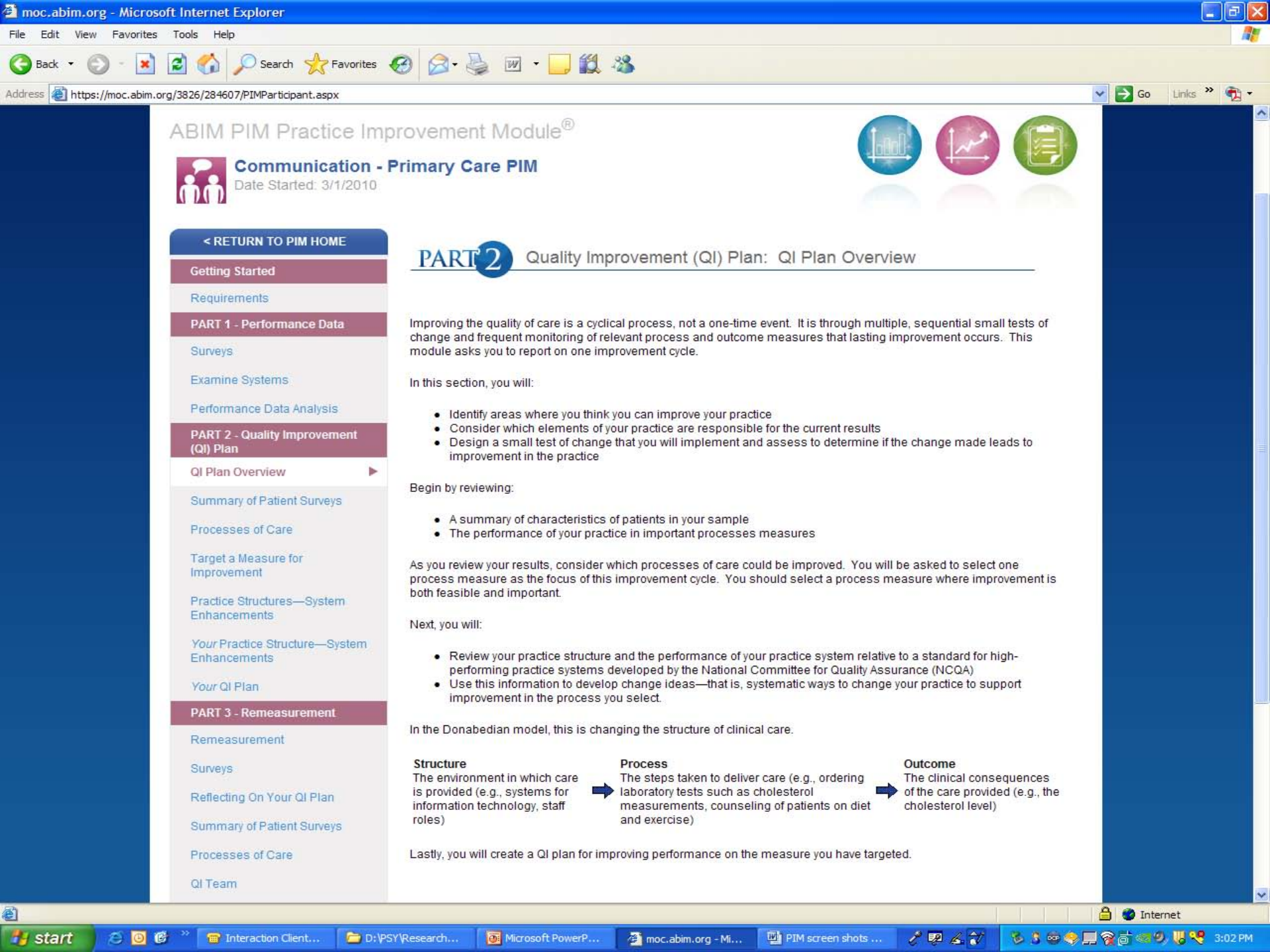
**IMPORTANT:** Do NOT submit "dummy" survey data using your physician ID. If you or your staff wish to familiarize yourself with the survey, please refer to the PDF version or to one of the copies you received by mail. If you submit data via the Web or phone using your physician ID, it will be included in your analysis and skew your results.













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## PART 2 Quality Improvement (QI) Plan: Processes of Care

This page summarizes the performance of your practice in providing important processes of care, based on responses from your patient surveys.

### Steps to Complete This Page:

1. Review the data below and determine areas where you believe improvement is feasible and important.
2. Select up to three (3) processes that are *potential* targets for improvement by clicking the box to the left of the appropriate item. The process measures you select on this page will be presented to you again when you are developing your Quality Improvement (QI) Plan. Ultimately, you will focus on only one measure for this improvement cycle.

### Categories

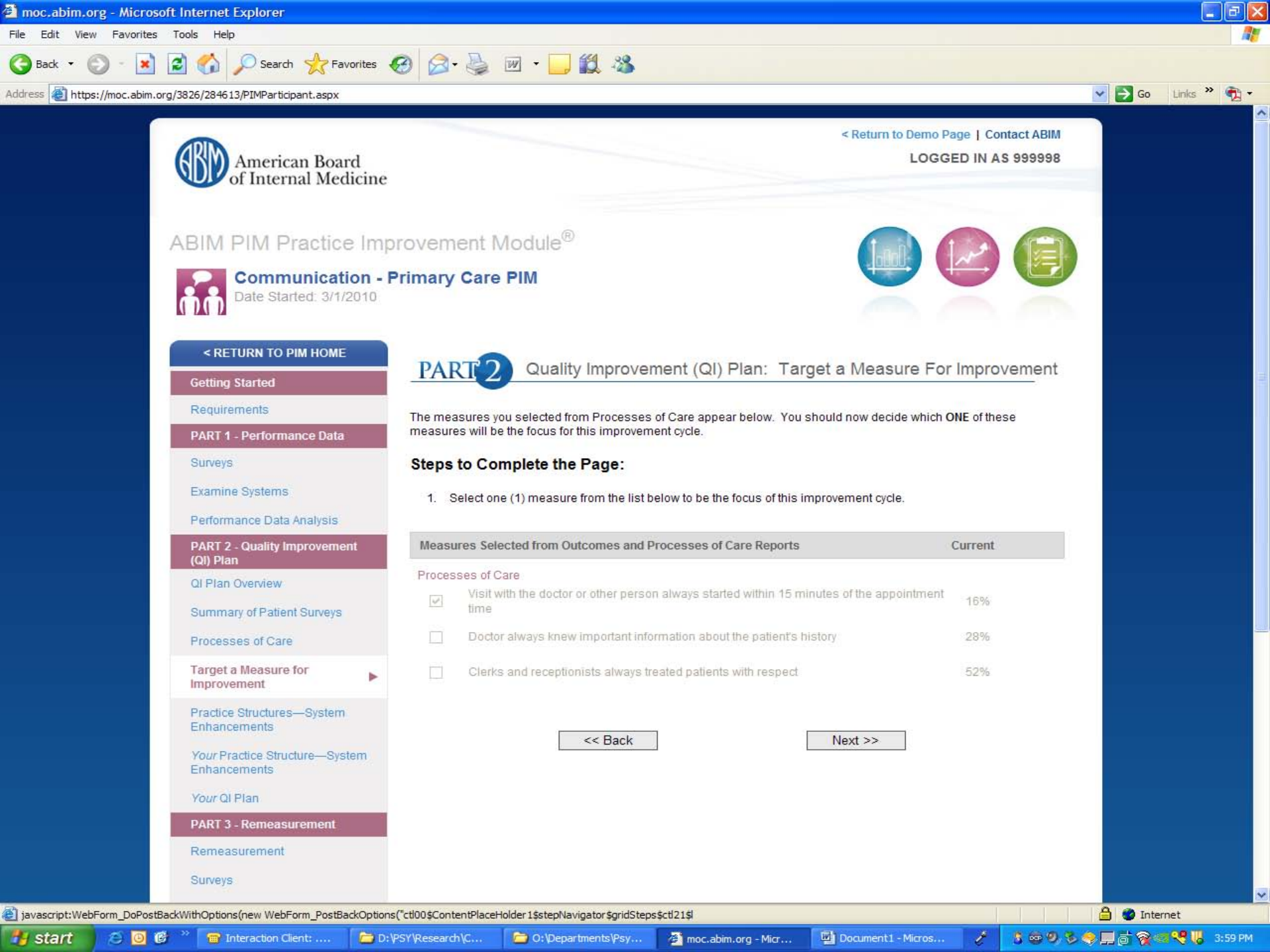
Click any of the categories listed below to jump to the underlying questions for that category.

	Overall % n = 25
Scheduling Appointments and Contacting the Doctor	30%
Physician-Patient Communication	61%
Physician's Interpersonal Skills	51%
Medical Treatment	66%
Coordinating Care	57%
Overall Patient Rating of the Doctor (average rating)	8.88
Office Staff	47%

### Scheduling Appointments and Contacting the Doctor

	Applicable Surveys n = 25	Patient Surveys n = 25
<input type="checkbox"/> Urgent appointment was always available as soon as needed	12	3 (25%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Routine appointment was always available as soon as needed	18	9 (50%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Always got an answer to a question the same day the patient called during regular office hours	14	5 (36%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Always got the help or advice needed when calling after regular office hours	9	2 (22%)







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physician knowledge, attitudes, and skills in determining outcomes or care. It is through changing the structure of your practice that lasting improvements in the process and outcomes of care will occur. Many physicians have not been trained how to understand or influence the design of their practice structure and will need to become competent in system-based practice and system-based learning and improvement.

We find the concept of the Clinical Microsystem developed by Paul Batalden and his colleagues at Dartmouth Medical School very useful.

Clinical microsystems are the front-line units that provide most health care to most people. They are the places where patients, families and care teams meet. Microsystems also include support staff, processes, technology and recurring patterns of information, behavior and results. Central to every clinical microsystem is the patient.

In other words, a clinical microsystem is the organization of people (doctors, staff and patients) and the ways they collaborate and communicate to achieve common aims for quality care.

We encourage you to visit their website: [www.clinicalmicrosystem.org](http://www.clinicalmicrosystem.org)

### Clinical Microsystem:

The diagram below shows how the generic processes of a medical practice come together to form a clinical microsystem.

1. Patients with specific needs come to a practice looking for care.
2. What happens in the yellow boxes determines the outcomes of that care. If the patient can access the practice, and if the right diagnosis is made, an effective treatment plan prescribed, and the patient is guided in effective self-care, then those outcomes will be good.
3. The green rectangles represent aspects of the clinical microsystem that affect how effectively care can be delivered within the practice.
4. The blue oval at the bottom of the diagram recognizes the external services that must be coordinated by the practice on behalf of its patients.

```
graph LR; P((Patient needs  
Chronic care  
Acute care  
Prevention  
Cultural)) --> AP[Access to Practice]; AP --> WD[Work-up & Diagnosis]; WD --> TP[Treatment Plan]; WD --> SC[Self-Care Support]; TP --> O((Outcomes  
Clinical  
Satisfaction  
Financial)); SC --> O; AP --> MIP[Measurement & Improvement Process]; WD --> MIP; TP --> MIP; SC --> MIP; MIP --> AP; MIP --> WD; MIP --> TP; MIP --> SC; AP --> TC[Teamwork - Care Management]; WD --> TC; TP --> TC; SC --> TC; TC --> CIM[Clinical Information Management]; CIM --> TCR[Tests - Consults - Referrals - Rx]; TCR --> CIM; TCR --> AP; TCR --> WD; TCR --> TP; TCR --> SC;
```

Mouseover each box or circle to learn more.

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Review your targeted measure and your current performance rate below, then establish a feasible goal for your performance on this measure once your QI plan has been implemented.

Targeted Measure:

**Visit with the doctor or other person always started within 15 minutes of the appointment time**

Current Performance:

16 %

Performance goal for this improvement cycle:

%

## System Enhancements:

System enhancements you selected to support improvement of your targeted measure are listed below.

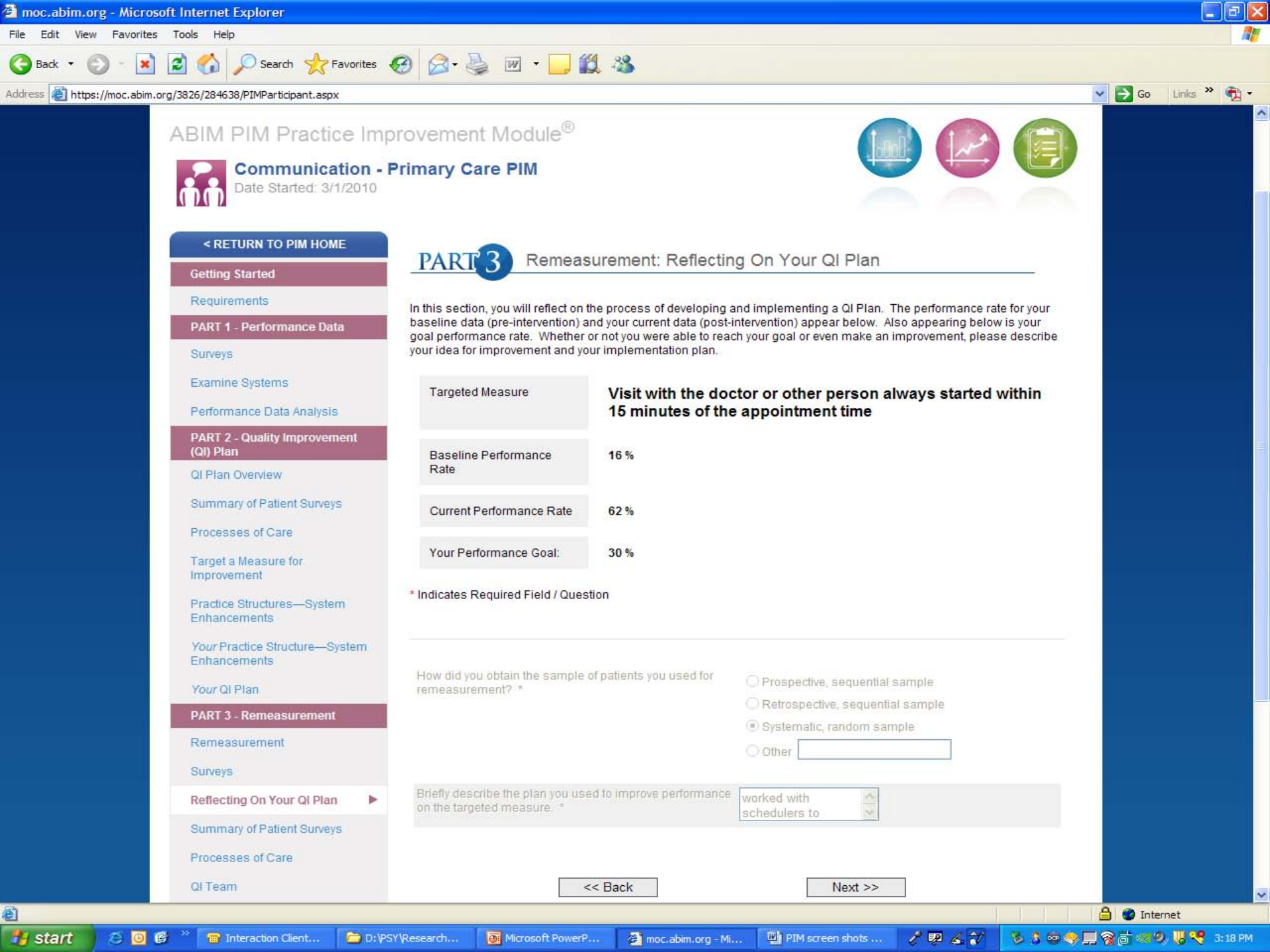
Using the scale that follows, rate how well each system enhancement listed below is currently working in your practice.

	Not Used	Functioning Poorly			Needs Improvement			Functioning Well		
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Performing pre-visit planning to assure that all needed information is available at the time of the visit.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>
Ordering lab tests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ordering imaging tests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Your Plan

At this point, you have selected a measure for improvement, set a feasible improvement goal and considered underlying system enhancements that will facilitate reaching your goal. Now you can formulate your QI plan. The questions that







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  - Post PIM Survey

## PART 3 Remeasurement: Processes of Care

### Categories

Click any of the categories listed below to jump to the underlying questions for that category.

	Post-Intervention Overall % n = 26	Pre-Intervention Overall % n = 25
Scheduling Appointments and Contacting the Doctor	31%	30%
Physician-Patient Communication	41%	61%
Physician's Interpersonal Skills	40%	51%
Medical Treatment	32%	66%
Coordinating Care	36%	57%
Overall Patient Rating of the Doctor (average rating)	8.23	8.88
Office Staff	26%	47%

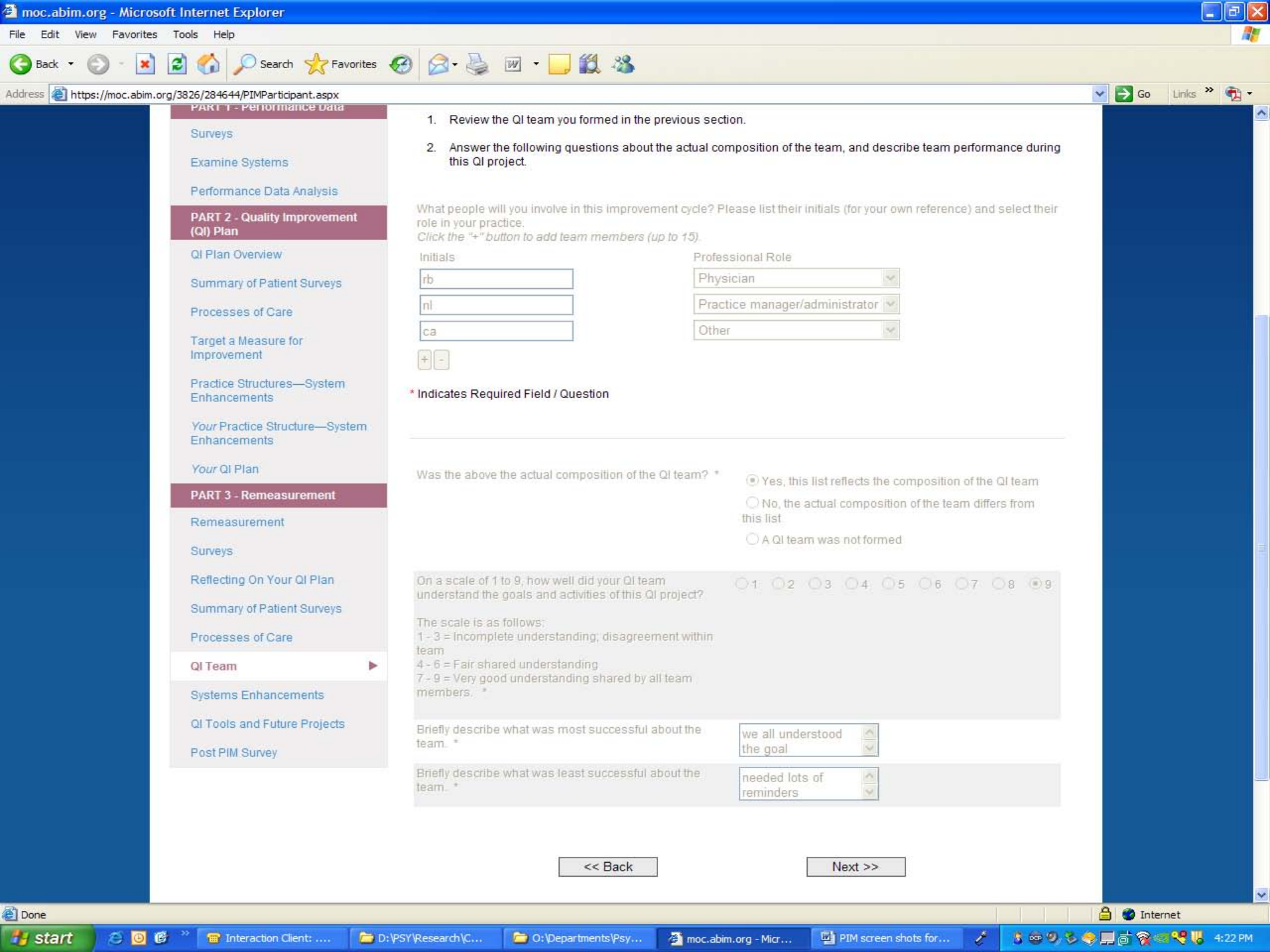
### Scheduling Appointments and Contacting the Doctor

	Post-Intervention Applicable Surveys n = 26	Post-Intervention Patient Surveys n = 26	Pre-Intervention Applicable Surveys n = 25	Pre-Intervention Patient Surveys n = 25
Urgent appointment was always available as soon as needed	12	1 (8%)	12	3 (25%)
Routine appointment was always available as soon as needed	22	10 (45%)	18	9 (50%)
Always got an answer to a medical question the same day the patient called during regular office hours	15	4 (27%)	14	5 (36%)
Always got an answer to a medical question as soon as it was needed	8	1 (12%)	9	2 (22%)
Visit with the doctor or other person always started within 15 minutes of the appointment time	26	16 (62%)	25	4 (16%)

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### Physician-Patient Communication







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Steps to Complete This Page:

- 1. Review the system enhancements you selected in Part 2 as part of your QI Plan.
- 2. Answer the following questions about how/if you used the enhancements as planned and describe their usefulness for this QI project.

	Not Used	Functioning Poorly			Needs Improvement			Functioning Well		
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Performing pre-visit planning to assure that all needed information is available at the time of the visit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>
Ordering lab tests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ordering imaging tests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Previous System Enhancement Selections.

\* Indicates Required Field / Question

Briefly describe how you used your system enhancement (s), and if you used more than one, please indicate which was the most helpful. If you did not use a system enhancement included in this module, please describe the change idea you used for this improvement cycle. \*

Had staff check record to be sure

What did you learn about your practice process or system of care when making a system enhancement? \*

need additional features in EMR

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