

**APPENDIX D. SAMPLE OF GUARDIAN PRE-NOTIFICATION LETTER
FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CONSUMER ASSESSMENT OF
HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND SYSTEMS HOME AND
COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES (HCBS CAHPS®) SURVEY**

Instructions to Survey Sponsors for Customizing English Letters and Emails

The sample letters that follow can help sponsors and survey vendors draft pre-notification letters for the HCBS CAHPS Survey. The following tips can help customize the text to suit a sponsor's particular needs:

1. A sponsor may wish to use the sponsor's or the survey vendor's letterhead. Make the decision based on likely credibility. Print the letter on the survey sponsor's or survey vendor's letterhead so that the guardian can easily identify the source of the survey. Letterhead also lends the study credibility and has a note of authority;
2. A sponsor may wish to tailor the letter. Any text that can be personalized is noted in curly brackets with the text in italics. Some of the information will come from a sponsor's administrative data, and some will be based on decisions that the sponsor makes regarding which modes the sponsor will support and whether an institutional review board (IRB) makes suggestions. The sponsor or vendor will need to customize the letters on the basis of whether respondents will take the survey by phone only, in-person only, or either method. Consider including messaging encouraging general participation in the survey such as the purpose of the survey and how responses will be used by the sponsor;
3. If the sponsor has an IRB that reviews research involving human subjects, customize the privacy and consent statement as appropriate to meet the requirements of the IRB. There also should be language about the risks or benefits for someone participating;
4. The sponsor should include a sentence or two about how the results will be used. This provides the respondent with a concrete reason for participating in the survey. If the sponsor will only use the responses in aggregate with all responses so they cannot be personally identified, then it is good to point this out because it can ensure confidentiality of their responses;
5. Depending on the schedule and when survey vendors expect to call guardians, the sponsor should indicate the general time frame survey vendors expect to call (e.g., seven days); and
6. The sample letter should indicate the approximate time required to complete the survey. Please fill in the amount of time needed for your questionnaire. On average, the HCBS CAHPS Survey takes about 30 minutes to complete. Adding supplemental questions will increase this time. If the sponsor adds more questions, it may be helpful to test the revised survey for validity and to determine the time needed to complete the survey.

{Sponsor or Survey Vendor Logo or Letterhead}

{Date}

{First and last name of guardian (e.g., legal guardian, legal representative)}

{Line one of address}

{Line two of address (if any)}

{City, State ZIP}

Dear Guardian of {participant's first and last name}:

Our records show that you are the guardian of {participant's first and last name} and they receive home and community-based services from {**Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) program name**}. Because they receive services and support from {HCBS program name}, {Sponsor name} is asking for your help so that {Sponsor name} can meet its goal of providing people with the best quality of care and services available.

{Sponsor name} is sponsoring a survey to ask people who receive services and supports from {HCBS program name} about their experiences with the program. We are asking for your permission to contact and interview {participant's first name}. Someone from {Survey vendor name} should call you in about a week, to ask for your permission to talk to {participant's first name} and ask {participant's first name} if they agree to answer the survey. Ideally, the interviewer would conduct the survey with {participant's first name} alone. But if {participant's first name} needs help, the interviewer may also conduct it together with you, or solely with you. You are being contacted in case {participant's first name} requires your help with the survey. The survey should only take about {time} minutes or less of your time.

If you say yes, {Survey vendor name} will either ask you and/or the {participant's first name} these questions over the phone or at home or at another place you or the {participant's first name} chooses.

{Participant's first name}'s or your answers will help {Sponsor name} find ways to improve the {HCBS program name}. {Participant's first name} has been chosen at random from a list of all people in {HCBS program name}. {Participant's first name} has not been picked for any other reason. We hope {participant's first name} and/or you will answer the questions when we call you.

If you decide to participate, what {participant's first name} or you say will be private. We will not share anyone's individual answers with {Sponsor name} or any of the people who provide {participant's first name}'s services. {Survey vendor name} will be combining the answers with the answers from other people and reporting them all together, so no one will see the individual answers.

It is your choice whether you or {participant's first name} answer the questions. If either of you decides not to, that will not change any of the services {participant's first name} gets from {HCBS program name}.

If you have any questions about the study, please call *{Survey vendor name}* toll-free at *{xxx-xxx-xxxx}*. You can also call *{contact name}* at *{Sponsor name}* at *{xxx-xxx-xxxx}*. Thank you in advance for your help!

Sincerely,

{Signature of key person from sponsor}

{Name of key person from sponsor}

{Title of key person from sponsor}