



## NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM

### Changing the Way We Work

The healthcare community is increasingly asking for more visible and faster progress in improving quality, reducing waste, and focusing on care that is more patient-centered. To accelerate such progress, the quality community recognizes the need to get to better measures faster. The National Quality Forum (NQF) and others have heard this challenge, and collectively are taking steps to change our approach to measure development and endorsement.

A new approach should be less resource intensive and cumbersome, more readily able to fill high-priority gap areas, and capable of driving our system to shared accountability and more appropriate use of services. Therefore, NQF—in collaboration with our Federal partners, measure developers, and key healthcare leaders—is rethinking how the quality community develops and endorses measures to be more strategic and efficient. Using the Kaizen technique—a LEAN management approach designed to systematically achieve better efficiency and quality—we are exploring effective ways to provide timely, multistakeholder input into the measure development and endorsement lifecycle.

NQF's Kaizen event in September 2013 brought together varied members of the healthcare community—including policymakers, providers, purchasers, consumers, and measure developers—to explore how we can facilitate:

- More collaborative, strategic, and coordinated measurement development; and
- An evolution of the current review and endorsement process to meet changing needs.

Participants challenged themselves to think how measure development and endorsement can be more agile, more adaptive, less costly for all parties involved, and produce better results, focusing on the four stages of the current process. The ideas put forward are promising:

#### **Measure Development**

NQF will not develop measures, but will assume a larger facilitative role in measure development. Patients, payers, and employers currently have limited input into what measures are developed—instead getting involved at the endorsement stage—so NQF will work to ensure these groups have an active voice in development decisions and are able to provide earlier input. Furthermore, NQF will work with developers and Federal partners to improve the development process, making it more efficient and eliminating duplicative efforts.

#### **Measure Testing**

Understanding of current testing methods is inconsistent and can be burdensome, leaving many developers unable to meet NQF's testing criteria. Building on [previous work examining the NQF criteria](#) and keeping in line with our efforts to achieve highest quality measures, NQF will provide additional input and guidance on testing approaches, working with developers to create innovative, standardized methods for measure testing.

## **Measure Endorsement**

Measure developers will now use one standardized form to submit measures for review, after a duplicative form was eliminated. All measure endorsement projects moving forward will also have standing steering committees capable of reviewing measures on a more frequent basis, and stakeholders will have more frequent opportunities to provide input on measures under review. In addition, NQF will improve training for steering committee members, and focus on creating more collaborative, mutually respectful meeting environments for steering committees and measure developers. Lastly, NQF is exploring opportunities to provide high-level, key information regarding endorsement, which will be used across all projects to ensure that all stakeholders who participate in the consensus process have sufficient information and support to fully engage.

## **Contracting**

HHS and CMS are working hand in hand with NQF to establish a more collaborative, efficient process for creating, reviewing, and finalizing contracts. CMS is also exploring opportunities to coordinate ideas and projects across HHS, prior to contracting with NQF, to ensure better alignment.

Many of these ideas are early in their development, but NQF is committed to seeing them through and improving our own endorsement process so that, working with our partners, we can get to better measures faster.