

# Variation in Measure Specifications: How, Where, and Why?

Public Web Call

*January 28, 2016*



NATIONAL  
QUALITY FORUM

# Agenda

- Introductions
- Opportunity and Objectives
- Project Timeline
- Measurement Variation Discussion Points

# Introductions



**Debjani Mukherjee**  
Senior Director



**Andrew Lyzenga**  
Senior Director



**Amber Sterling**  
Project Manager



**Jean-Luc Tilly**  
Project Analyst

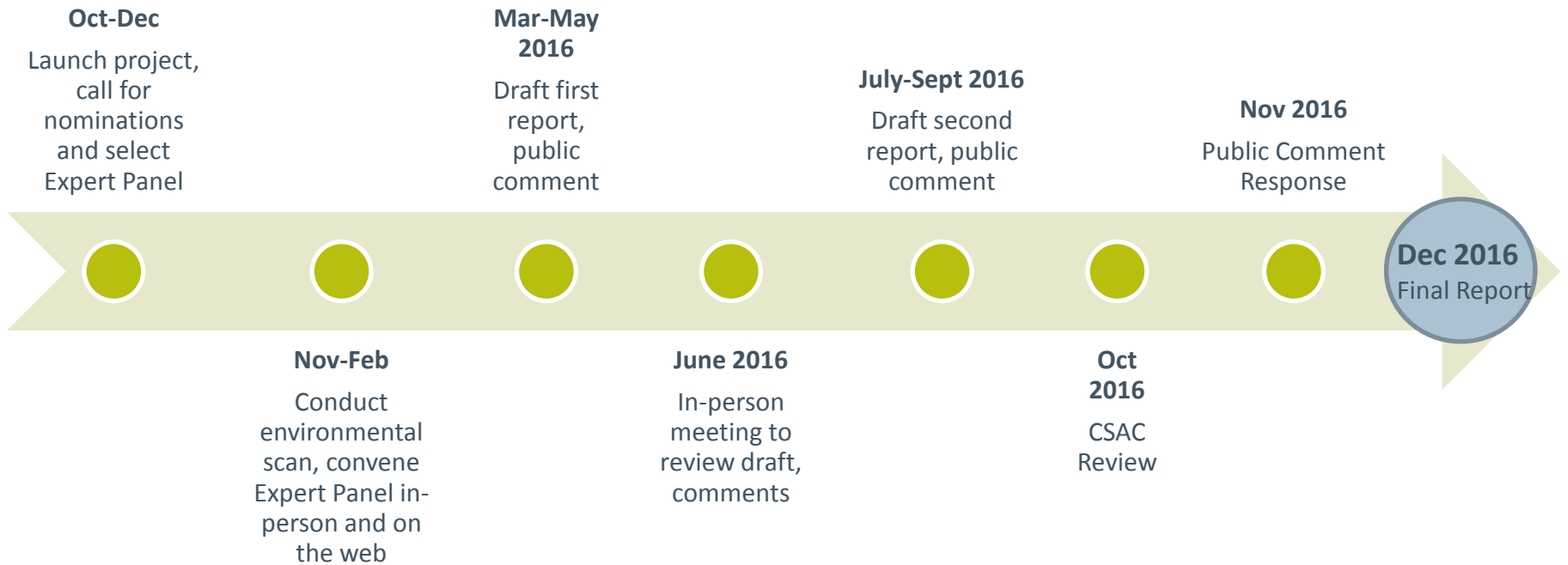
# Expert Panel

- **Matt Austin, PhD**
- **Mary Barton, MD, MPP**
- **Andrew Baskin, MD**
- **Beverly Court, PhD**
- **Hazel Crews, PT, MHA, MHS, CPHQ**
- **Tricia Elliot, MBA, CPHQ**
- **Charles Gallia, PhD**
- **Jeff Geppert, PMP, EdM, JD**
- **Matt Gigot, MPH**
- **Kendra Hanley, MS**
- **Blackford Middleton, MD, MPH, MSc**
- **Amy Moyer, MS, PMP**
- **Allison Peel, DC, MHA, MPH, PMP**
- **Peter Robertson, MPA**
- **Patrick Romano, MD, MPH**

# Project objectives

- Identify how, where, and why variation is happening
- Describe threats to comparability
- Examine ways in which variation can be controlled
- Develop a tool or framework to identify and assess measure variation, and to help prevent or mitigate unnecessary variation

# Timeline



# Project deliverables

- Environmental Scan and Key Informant Interviews
- Two In-Person Meetings
- Final Report including:
  - Results of scan & interviews
  - Consensus definition of variation and threats to comparability
  - Framework to serve as guide to mitigate variation
  - Recommendations for future activities to address variation

# How are we thinking about variation?

- Modification or 'tweaking' specifications of existing established measures
- Inadvertent duplication of measures with minor differences in specifications
- Our goal: identify standards for variation/substantial change



# Positive consequences of measure variation

- Variation can be appropriate due to availability of new data
- Increase innovation
- Reduce cost
- Precise results
- Variation can have negligible impact in some cases

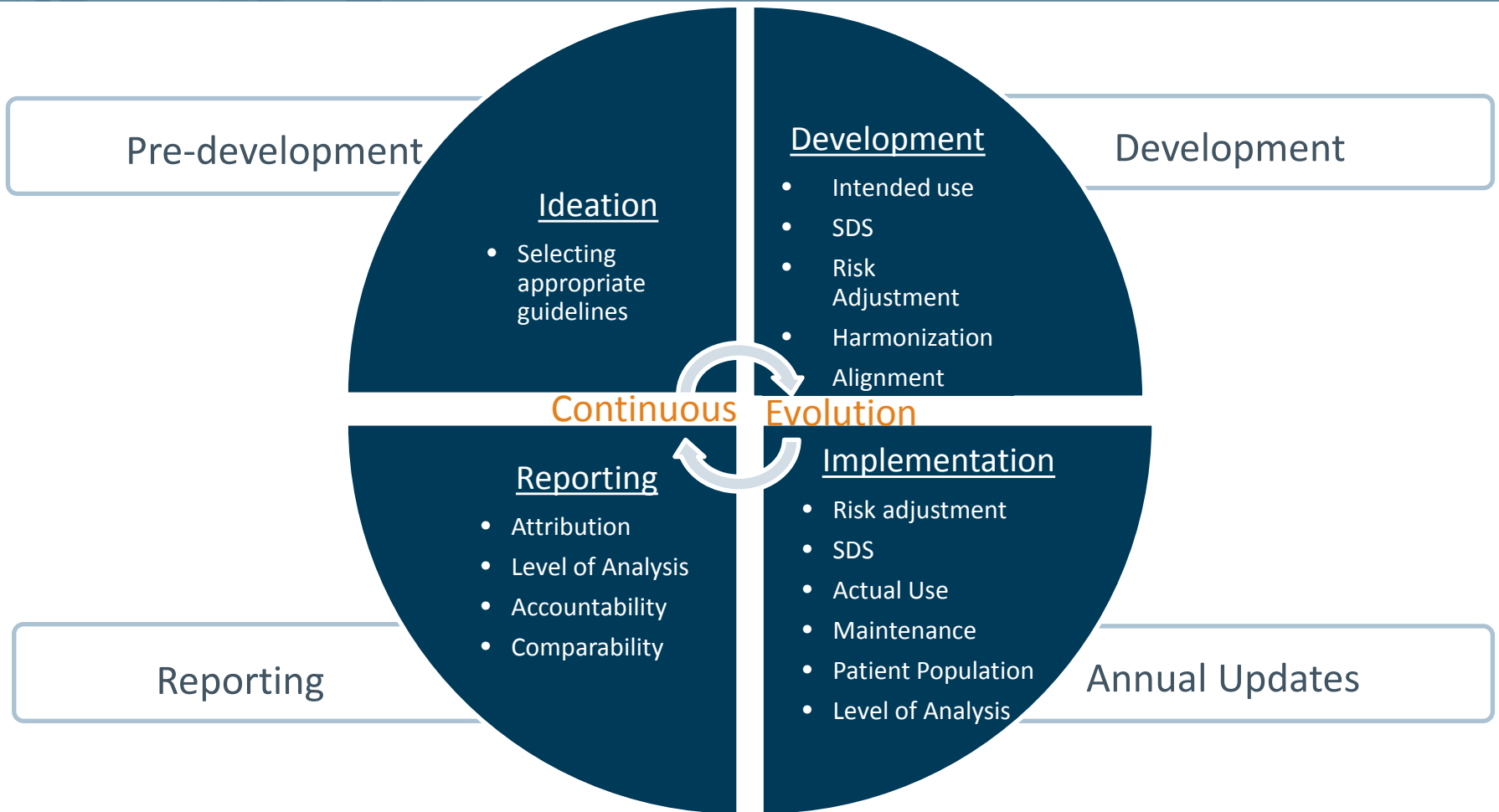
# Negative consequences of measure variation

- Results in the proliferation of redundant measures across settings/programs
- Adds to the burden of data collection and reporting for providers, with limited value in return
- Reduces comparability of measure results across programs
- Limits opportunities for benchmarking
- Diminishes value for consumers, purchasers, and other measure users

# Where is variation occurring?

- Selection of measures
  - New vs. existing measures
- Measure development
  - Development of new measures when similar measures already exist
- Implementation and Use
  - Modification to suit end-user needs
  - Reporting needs

# Measure Lifecycle & Variation



# Where is variation occurring?

Question for participants:

*What are the most important causes of measure variation?*

# Why is variation occurring?

## Modification of existing measures

- Differences in intended use
  - Quality improvement vs. public reporting
  - Different level of analysis or care setting
- Differences in regional/local patient populations
- Differences of opinion regarding appropriate exclusions, risk adjustment
- Data availability & accessibility (e.g. EHR functionality)

*Question for participants:*

*If you or your organization has modified a measure, why was it necessary to do so?*

# Why is variation occurring?

## Creation of new measures

- Unfamiliarity with existing measures (no single source)
- End user needs
- Selection and translation of guideline recommendations
- EHR functionality

# How are measure specifications being changed?

- Denominator population
- Level of analysis
- Care setting
- Data source
- Risk adjustment variables or methodology

*Question for participants:*

*What are other measure specifications that are sometimes changed?*



# Potential strategies to mitigate variation

- Access to information about existing measures
- Guidance around measure selection and interpretation
- Guidance around ways to implement measures
- Standardization of definitions, concepts, and approaches
- Principles and parameters around variation of measure specifications

*Question for participants:*

*From your perspective, what interventions would be most helpful to resolve the challenges of measure variation?*

# Environmental Scan so far...

- Few studies have specifically studied the effects of varying measure specifications
- Varying measure specifications does not always threaten comparability
- Measure specification changes are often driven by data availability/cost

*Question for participants:*

*What are some examples of formal investigation of specification variation (grey literature, internal)?*

# Q&A

# Questions for Discussion

- Has your organization needed to collect and/or report information on multiple similar or redundant measures?
- What were the differences between the measures, if any?
- What was the impact on your organization?

# Next Steps

- Web Meetings
  - » Expert Panel Web Meeting 1: March 31, 2016 at 2:00PM-4:00PM
  - » Expert Panel Web Meeting 2: May 25, 2016 at 2:00PM-4:00PM
  - » Expert Panel Web Meeting 3: September 8, 2016 at 2:00PM-4:00PM
  - » Expert Panel Web Meeting 4: November 3, 2016 at 2:00PM-4:00PM
- In-Person Meetings
  - » Tuesday, February 23, 2016
  - » Wednesday, June 29, 2016
- Key Informant Interviews
  - » April-May, 2016
- Public Comment on Draft Report 1: **4/4/16 - 5/3/16**
- Public Comment on Draft Report 2: **9/30/16 – 10/29/16**