NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM

NQF Mission Statement, 2012-2013 Strategic Objectives, Goals, and Metrics

This document provides an overview of NQF's 2012-2013 mission statement, strategic objectives, programmatic goals, and performance metrics.[1] Achievement of the strategic objectives and the follow on goals is a shared responsibility of the NQF Board, Partnerships convened by NQF, staff, and membership, and requires alignment with many outside groups including DHHS, quality oversight and measurement groups, community partnerships, and others.

Mission Statement

The National Quality Forum (NQF) operates under a three-part mission to improve the quality of American healthcare by:

- Building consensus on national priorities and goals for performance improvement and working in partnership to achieve them;
- Endorsing national consensus standards for measuring and publicly reporting on performance; and
- Promoting the attainment of national goals through education and outreach programs.

[1] To avoid confusion, the term 'Metric' is used to refer to measures that will be used to assess NQF's performance. The term 'performance measure' is used to refer to NQF-endorsed performance measures and measures recommended by MAP.

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Strategic Objectives and Metrics

NQF has four strategic objectives and for each, we have identified one high-leverage metric.

1. Align public and private sector accountability programs around achieving the National Quality Strategy (NQS) goals -- better health, better care, lower costs—and facilitating widespread adoption of core measure sets to motivate and gauge progress in meeting these goals.

   Metric: Provide timely and useful input to HHS and other stakeholders on strategic opportunities to achieve the NQS goals and the "best available" measure sets to use in this process (by convening the National Priorities Partnership (NPP) and the Measures Applications Partnership (MAP) and producing the series of reports identified below); and establish a tracking and monitoring system that will allow NQF to assess annually whether there is widespread alignment of public and private accountability programs around the strategic opportunities and measure sets, resulting in improvement in better health, better health care, and lower costs.

2. Build a portfolio of standardized measures, practices, and serious reportable events that meets the needs of national and state/community stakeholders engaged in accountability programs that support and reward performance improvement.

   Metrics: For Federal payment and public reporting programs, increase the use of NQF-endorsed measures from the current level of about 85%. Establish a tracking program for use of NQF-endorsed measures in value-based purchasing and other programs; stratify measure use results by measure type (i.e., quality, resource use, patient experience); and, if available, gather information on actual improvement associated with use of measures.

3. Sponsor communication, education and outreach programs to enhance understanding of the National Quality Strategy and the important role of measurement and improvement to achieving better health, better care and lower costs; and the critical role of NQF and the Partnerships.

   Metric: Implement strategic portfolio of communication and outreach programs targeted at Congress and the Administration, the press, NQF membership and the broader healthcare community.

4. Build and maintain the necessary organizational capacity for NQF to achieve its strategic objectives and goals.

   Metric: Complete 2012 within budget and develop new and continued funding streams for 2013 around key objectives.

To the extent possible, the high level metrics are externally facing, that is, they assess the impact of NQF and the Partnerships it convenes on the health system. In the case of Strategic Objective #1, it is very early to assess impact of the Partnerships on accountability programs but it should be possible to establish the tracking system that will enable more "impact oriented" metrics in future years.

Programmatic Goals and Metrics

For each of the four strategic objectives, NQF has several programmatic goals along with corresponding metrics.

Align Accountability Programs

Goal #1.1 Convene the National Priorities Partnership (NPP) to provide the Federal government and other stakeholders with well-informed, multi-stakeholder input on the 2013 National Quality Strategy and on the related Partnership for Patients initiative.

Metrics:

- Deliver NPP report to HHS by October 2012 that includes recommendations on 2013 National Quality Strategy goals, strategic opportunities, and measures. Conduct stakeholder evaluation, including HHS and partners, regarding quality and usefulness of the report and achieve average/above average ratings from 90% or more of respondents.

- Successful execution of PfP quarterly convenings, webinars, and other related activities on schedule and within budget. Maintain engagement of the over 8000 individuals who participated in the 2011 PfP webinars. Obtain evaluations of average or above average from 90% or more of participants.
- Identify a limited number of strategic opportunities to align public and private sector accountability efforts to achieve the PfP goals of reducing readmissions and healthcare acquired conditions. Demonstrate progress and track changes made in accountability programs consistent with the strategic opportunities identified.

Goal #1.2 Convene the Measures Applications Partnership (MAP) to provide the Federal government and other stakeholders with well-informed, multi-stakeholder input on the selection of measures for use in various payment and public reporting programs.

Metrics:

- By August 2012, produce a 3-5 year strategic plan for MAP that strengthens connections between the MAP and NPP and addresses key measurement alignment issues. The strategy may include further development of the "cascading measures" concept and cross-cutting measurement areas.
- Submit annual pre-rulemaking input to HHS by February 1, 2013.
- Recommend measures for VBP demonstration projects, meeting deliverables and timelines to be defined by HHS contract.
- Recommend a national core set of safety measures that are applicable to all patients, as recommended by the MAP Ad Hoc Safety Workgroup. Meet timeline defined by HHS contract.
- Provide input to HHS on measurement issues and measures relevant for specific sub-segments of the dual eligible beneficiary population. Meet timeline defined by HHS contract.
- Identify a prioritized list of high-impact conditions for adult/non-Medicare, Medicaid, and maternal/perinatal populations by November 2012.
- Enhance support for MAP decision-making. Assess opportunities to provide evidence-based analytic support to the MAP measure selection process, such as modeling potential impacts of measure adoption and incorporating actual measure implementation experiences from the field. Engage state and community leaders to ensure that practical perspectives about their needs and implementation experiences are reflected in MAP measure selection process. Deliverables and timelines will be defined by HHS tasks.

- Incorporate MAP Coordinating Committee and workgroup inputs resulting from experience with the measure selection criteria to refine and enhance the criteria and interpretive guide by August 2012.

Goal #1.3 Engage community alliances and states in aligning with the National Quality Strategy, acting on strategic opportunities identified by NPP, and incorporating NQF-endorsed measures into their programs.

Metrics:

- Refine and expand functionality of the Quality Positioning System (QPS) web tool to promote uptake of NQF-endorsed measures by end users, including states and communities. Complete QPS version 1 by September 2012.
- Complete testing of the community tool to align measurement with a sample of AF4Q, NRHI, and Beacon communities and achieve high ratings on usefulness by September 2012; complete communications plan by December 2012.
- Gather and synthesize feedback from the end users of QPS, alignment tool, portfolios and the resources for consideration in the next phase development by December 2012.
- Develop a Field Guide to NQF Resources, including QPS, the community alignment tool and SREs, for use by state and community leaders by October 2012. Implement communication plan by December 2012.
- Identify funding sources for state and community-oriented work in the amount of $250 – 300k.

Measures Portfolio

Goal #2.1 Endorse and maintain a portfolio of performance measures, practices and serious reportable events (SREs) that enables evaluation of progress in meeting National Priorities and Goals and is responsive to the measure needs of HHS and other stakeholders.

Metrics:

- Implement 2012 schedule of endorsement projects, and conduct expedited and ad hoc reviews of measures and evaluation of time-limited measures, as appropriate. For 90% or more of the projects, achieve ratings of satisfactory or above from at least 90% of project steering committee members and a rating of satisfactory or above from the project sponsor.
- Work to achieve a more balanced portfolio that: 1) addresses gap areas with emphasis on resource use, care coordination, patient outcomes, and patient experience; and 2) reduces competing/related measures through harmonization, selection of "best in class," and measures that assess patients across payers. Reduce the number of measures in "related areas" by 10%.
- Streamline and strengthen the measure endorsement process by implementing recommendations of various task forces including the Task Force on Board Oversight, Task Force on the Measure Evaluation Usability Criterion, and others.

Goal #2.2 Facilitate the migration of measures to an electronic platform.

Metrics:

- Complete the annual update of the Quality Data Model in response to public comment by September 2012.
- Implement process for reviewing eMeasures by 1st quarter 2012.
- Complete beta testing of Measure Authoring Tool (MAT), develop a training guide and sponsor two webinars for measure stewards and other stakeholders to include a mechanism for feedback on the tool, and implement requirement that measures submitted for endorsement include eMeasure specifications by 4th quarter 2012.

Communication, Education and Outreach

Goal #3.1 Promote greater understanding of the work of NQF and the Partnerships through effective communication strategies both with members and more broadly across the health care sector.

Metrics:

- Plan and execute an outreach strategy to the media and policymaking community centered around key reports produced by NPP and MAP, and intended to enhance understanding of the National Quality Strategy goals, strategic opportunities to achieve them, accomplishments in aligning public and private sector accountability programs (e.g., use of core measure sets recommended by MAP), and, if possible, impact on health, health care and costs.
- Enhance 2-way communication with key stakeholders including:
  - NQF's eight stakeholder groups – consumers, purchasers, health professionals, providers, heath plans, communities, supplier and industry, and quality measurement and research.
  - Federal agencies and departments, and
  - States and communities.

Based on website evaluation (to be completed December 2011), identify limited set of high-leverage website improvements to be completed by July 2012. Conduct an analysis of social media strategies and identify key approaches for implementation in late 2012.

Goal #3.2 Grow and maintain NQF membership through effective communication and engagement.

Metrics:

- Implement member survey in early 2012 to assess impact of communication and education programs in enhancing awareness and understanding of the work of NQF and the Partnership; and to also assess satisfaction with NQF member services. Achieve average/above average performance ratings from 90% or more of respondents on value of NQF membership.
- Expand net membership by 5-7% during 2012.

Goal #3.3 Develop and execute a sustainable education program plan that includes the annual conference, Colloquium and award programs, and webinars that cover key programmatic areas.

Metrics:

- Hold annual conference, Colloquium, award programs and webinars that cover key programmatic areas and are rated above average or higher by 85% of participants.
- Increase sponsorship contributions for the Colloquium and award programs by 20%.

Goal #3.4 Support NQF's mission through active outreach to the executive and legislative arms of government to promote understanding of the importance and impact of NQF's work and that of the Partnerships.

Metrics:

- Develop briefing materials and conduct frequent visits (e.g., quarterly) to key Hill offices. Maintain frequent contact (e.g., monthly) with key programmatic offices within HHS.
- Complete NQF's annual report o Congress within legislative timelines and budget.

Organizational Capacity

Goal #4.1 Long-Term Funding. Develop and implement a plan to diversify funding for NQF projects and infrastructure.

Metrics:

- Develop plan by 1st quarter 2012 and implement on at least two strategic opportunities by the end of 2012.

Goal #4.2 Strengthen organizational and operational capacity to support achievement of NQF's strategic goals.

Metrics:

- Human resources. Recruit and retain a highly competent and productive workforce. Maintain turnover rate below industry average (November 2012). Complete manager satisfaction survey of recruitment quality and timeliness with positive response at or above 90%.
- Corporate quality assurance and compliance program. Each department defines, measures against and reports quarterly on a set of meaningful metrics that evaluates the department's work in terms of workload, timeliness, quality and support for NQF's Strategic Goals. Monthly monitoring reports provided to HHS for HHS-funded projects.
- Project management. Quarterly reports demonstrate 95% of projects achieving deliverables per planned timeline unless there is a documented and approved reason for extension of the deliverable due date.
- Legal affairs. Timely and smooth implementation to new stewardship agreement. Complete revised steward agreement by June 2012.
- Information technology. Maintain an IT infrastructure that meets the needs of internal customers and achieve ratings of average or above average from at least 85% of staff on service quality and responsiveness. Develop a 2-year IT capital investment and maintenance plan (mid 2012) for implementation in 2013.
- Finance. Monthly/quarterly financial reports provided to senior management and project managers will be evaluated as satisfactory by at least 90% of respondents (December 2012). Final reports from auditors will have no undisputed deficiencies of a significant caliber (April 2012). Achieve 100% compliance with financial reporting requirements under HHS contract and RWJ grant.