Proposed Changes to the Endorsement Process

NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1 Why is NQF changing the endorsement process?

NQF has heard from various stakeholders about the desire for a more efficient and agile process that is more user friendly. In response to these concerns, NQF has partnered with our measure developer colleagues, federal partners, and other stakeholders to assess how we can get the right measures in a more timely fashion, while also getting the right input from those who use measures and measure scores. This involves looking at the endorsement process, but also looking at how to get the right measures into the endorsement process to avoid the time associated with re-work and additional development.

2 Is there a way to get involved with the Kaizen work or to share my ideas?

Yes. Please follow the work through the **Improving NQF's Processes** web page, and please email NQF staff with any ideas, questions, or inputs at **improvement@qualityforum.org.** Please let staff know if you have any interest in hearing about future events, and staff will reach out to you. As we are working to lean out NQF, we will be holding more events that bring together stakeholders to partner with us to improve NQF.

3 Is there a schedule of NQF projects?

Yes. NQF maintains a maintenance schedule which can be accessed through NQF's **Submitting Standards** web page. NQF projects follow a 7-month timeline from measure submission to the appeals period, which is dictated by our federal contracts.

PILOT PROJECTS

4 Which projects are piloting each change?

All projects are piloting Standing Steering Committees. More frequent measure submission is being piloted in the **Endocrine endorsement project**, and continuous commenting on measures is being piloted in the **Readmissions endorsement project**. Finally, the **Health and Well-Being endorsement project** is piloting the "support/not support" option for measures under consideration.

5 What is continuous commenting?

Continuous commenting was created in response to input from NQF stakeholders that a 30 day comment period was difficult to participate in and track, given the many projects ongoing at NQF. Commenters will now be able to provide input on all measures at all times, with the Steering Committee considering comments both during their in-person meeting, and after endorsement recommendations are made. Additionally, comments received outside of an active project will be shared with measure developers and if necessary, may trigger ad hoc reviews.

6 What does it mean for commenters to indicate support for a measure? How will that information be used?

In the Health and Well-Being project, NQF is piloting an option for commenters to indicate whether they support a measure for endorsement or they don't support a measure for endorsement. This is a suggestion that arose out of our Kaizen event, with stakeholders indicating that there may be value in getting an earlier sense of what NQF stakeholders think about a measure, rather than waiting until our member voting period. By getting this input earlier, we expect that Steering Committees will be able to address any issues raised in a more meaningful way. Steering Committees will still be evaluating the measures against the NQF endorsement criteria. NQF will provide the Steering Committee with information on whether stakeholder groups generally supported the measure or not, along with comments relating to the NQF endorsement criteria.

7 How will standing Steering Committees affect NQF's work?

The move to standing Steering Committees is intended to address a number of issues raised by stakeholders. Standing committees are expected to bring increased consistency to NQF's processes by ensuring continuity and stability in committee membership across projects in the same topic area. Committee members

will have the opportunity to gain more experience with the consensus development process, and to develop a better understanding of their roles and expectations as committee members. This will lead to more consistency in application of the endorsement criteria, and will also allow committee members to gain familiarity with their topic area portfolios, enhancing harmonization and gaps discussions. In addition, the presence of standing committees will facilitate NQF's ability to accept and evaluate measure submissions more frequently, which is being piloted in the endocrine project.

8 It looks like the nominations process for Steering Committees has changed. What is different?

NQF has created a **new nominations form**, which is more like a profile that can be edited and updated at any time. You can submit nominations for multiple projects at once, with NQF staff considering submissions for each of these committees. You can also submit nominations at any time for our committees, and NQF will keep track of your interest areas and ensure you are considered for committees when they are being seated.

9 What can I expect once I submit a nomination?

If you have submitted for a Committee that is actively seeking nominations, our committee management office will reach out to you to complete additional materials for your nomination, including a disclosure of interest (DOI) form and confirmation of availability. Once the committee has been seated, you will be notified prior to the posting of the proposed roster whether you have been selected. This is usually within 30 days of the close of the call for nominations.

If you have submitted a nomination for a standing committee that is not actively seeking nominations, you will remain in an application pool of nominees that will be considered when seats are available. Seats for standing committees will rotate on two and three year terms.

If you are not selected for a particular committee, you may still be considered for other committees based on the expertise you indicated in your profile.

You will need to complete a DOI for each committee that you are nominated for. We have a new form and a new policy.

10 How often will the endocrine standing committee review measures under the more frequent measure review pilot?

For the pilot project, the endocrine standing Steering Committee will be reviewing measures every six months. Although measure submission is changing, the rest of the endorsement process remains unchanged. The standing Steering Committee will review all measures submitted by each six-month submission deadline, and measures will be evaluated against the **NQF Measure Evaluation Criteria**. In addition, stakeholders will still have opportunities to attend meetings and conference calls, and provide comments. Members will also still have the opportunity to vote on endorsement recommendations.

11 Have you thought about how all of those changes may impact NQF stakeholders?

These changes were developed and are being piloted in response to concerns raised by our stakeholders, and the ideas were born in collaboration with a representative group of NQF stakeholders. We have anticipated that an unintended consequence may be that it is too burdensome to track NQF projects with these additional activities and opportunities for engagement. As a result, these changes are only pilots. We will be seeking feedback from our committees, measure developers, and those who provide comments, votes, or attend our meetings before beginning any kind of full-scale implementation of these changes.

COMMUNICATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

12 How will changes be communicated?

Improvements will be described in detail on the **Improving NQF's Processes** page of our website. Any changes to the Consensus Development Process will, at a minimum, be communicated over email and on the website. We welcome your suggestions for how

we can best communicate how NQF is changing and improving via **improvement@qualityforum.org**.

13 Is NQF looking to update its technical reports or make them more user friendly?

Yes. NQF is revisiting how we present information about measures to all stakeholdersm which includes exploring ways to make our reports more understandable to all stakeholders, regardless of technical expertise. This updated report layout will be piloted in upcoming projects, beginning with the endorsement endorsement project. We will be seeking feedback about the content and layout at that time.

14 Where can I learn more about NQF?

We maintain a **Field Guide to NQF Resources** on our website. This Field Guide provides information about NQF projects, commonly used terms and definitions, and access to additional educational resources.

15 Have any of the improvement efforts focused on changing the NQF endorsement criteria or NQF measure submission form?

The Kaizen event focused on improving the process of measure development and endorsement by engaging multi-stakeholders from across the healthcare community. The **Consensus Standards Approval Committee (CSAC)** — a standing Committee of the Board — is ultimately responsible for the criteria for endorsement and the submission form elements; thus, these were not within scope for the Kaizen.

16 How does the measure incubator fit into all of these changes?

While the measure incubator is not explicitly linked to the Kaizen activities, it is very much in line with the objectives of NQF's improvement efforts, and we expect it will be an excellent complement to these ongoing activities.

The measure incubator will help bring together the right people to quickly and effectively develop measures in prioritized gap areas. NQF's efforts to facilitate early stakeholder input in measure development decisions will help to ensure that the incubator is addressing the right topic areas and that innovative measurement concepts are identified and fed into the incubator process. In turn, greater efficiencies in the measure testing and endorsement processes will help ensure that measures developed through the incubator are rapidly evaluated and put into use, accelerating the quality improvement and feedback cycle.

17 Are there plans to develop a Measure Inventory pipeline?

Yes. In December 2013, NQF launched the **Measure Inventory Pipeline**, a virtual space for developers to share information on measure development activities. The Pipeline will display data on current and planned measure development, and allow developers to share successes and challenges. The Pipeline will also help developers connect and collaborate with their peers on development ideas, which in turn will promote harmonization and alignment of measures.

18 Is there any work under way to align CMS' measure development contracts with CMS' measure endorsement contracts?

This issue was brought up by stakeholders during the Kaizen event and is slated for consideration in subsequent work.

19 Will NQF be considering how to streamline the work of the Measure Applications Partnership (MAP) with the endorsement process? Do these processes need to be distinct from one another?

NQF is exploring the possibility of future process improvement efforts to examine whether or not there are efficiencies that can be gained through better alignment of the MAP and consensus development process efforts.