



RESTRUCTURING NQF's MAINTENANCE OF ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

BACKGROUND

From its earliest days, NQF members and stakeholder have expected that measures endorsed by NQF would undergo periodic review to assess impact and potential unintended consequences. Generally reassessment every three years is considered reasonable unless there are special circumstances. In 2010 the current "Endorsement Maintenance" process was established. This process consists of three elements:

- Review of endorsed measures against all current NQF criteria every three years. These maintenance reviews takes place within funded projects; the maintenance evaluation is the same as for a new measure.
- Annual updates. Measure developer/stewards are asked to update any measure information in the NQF system (OPUS) annually. If a "material change" to a measure is made, then an *ad hoc* review is indicated.
- *Ad hoc* reviews. Anyone may request an ad hoc review of an NQF-endorsed measure. These are limited assessments of the measure around the issue raised by those requesting the *ad hoc* review.

GOALS of NQF MAINTENANCE OF ENDORSEMENT

NQF has identified the following goals for the maintenance of endorsement activities:

- To ensure the currency and relevance of NQF-endorsed consensus standards through a regular schedule of reviewing for continued endorsement.
 - NQF has a responsibility to ensure that endorsed measures reflect current science and are reliable and valid representations of quality.
- To ensure that endorsed measures continue to meet the NQF evaluation criteria.
 - Criteria have evolved over time in response to the changes in the development enterprise, stakeholder input, and a need for a refined portfolio of measures.

RESTRUCTURING OF MAINTENANCE OF ENDORSEMENT

NQF's Maintenance Team has consulted with NQF senior leadership, senior directors and project managers and the Measure Developer Advisory Panel to propose a new approach for maintenance of endorsement. The Committee Advisory Panel suggested that the maintenance review should focus on current performance and Usability and Use for maintenance of endorsement since an endorsed measure will have met the criteria for evidence and testing for reliability and validity and should not need repeated review unless something changes. NQF would streamline and simplify the questions asked of developers for the maintenance review. Questions would focus on criteria that might have changed and information from implementation of the measure since the last review.

Changes to NQF Maintenance of Endorsement Evaluation – EFFECTIVE October 1, 2015

- The new process takes advantage of the existing Standing Committees and emphasizes their role in overseeing the topic-area portfolio of NQF-endorsed measures.
- The new process relies on the measure information submitted during earlier evaluations. On the new “Maintenance Checklist” the developer will indicate which criteria have been updated, otherwise the Committee will review the information that exists in the NQF data system without need for re-submission of information for all criteria. The emphasis will be on updated current performance/opportunity for improvement data and usability and use data as described below.
- The new process will emphasize pre-review public and member comments when it can be most effective. Stakeholder groups that may be underrepresented on Committees would have an opportunity to have a stronger voice. The pre-review comments would factor significantly in the measure evaluation.
- Under the new process, the evaluation criteria will not change, however, the emphasis among the criteria will shift. Comments from Standing Committee members indicate a desire to have fuller, more robust discussions about what has been learned about previously endorsed measures, e.g., improvement or changes in gaps, how has the measure been used, and unintended consequences. The following table lists the current evaluation criteria and highlights which criteria will receive more emphasis during the new maintenance process.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

CURRENT MAINTENANCE PROCESS	NEW MAINTENANCE PROCESS
IMPORTANCE TO MEASURE AND REPORT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gap – opportunity for improvement, variation, quality of care across providers 	INCREASED EMPHASIS: gap in care and variation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence – Quantity, quality, consistency (QQC) • Established link for process measures with outcomes 	DECREASED EMPHASIS: Require measure developer to attest to current evidence; Standing Committee to affirm no change in evidence
SCIENTIFIC ACCEPTABILITY OF MEASURE PROPERTIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure specifications 	NO CHANGE: Require updated specifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability • Validity (including risk adjustment) 	DECREASED EMPHASIS: If prior testing adequate, no need for additional testing at maintenance with certain exceptions (e.g., change in data source, level of analysis, or setting)
USABILITY AND USE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use: used in accountability applications and public reporting • Usability: impact and unintended consequences 	INCREASED EMPHASIS: Much greater focus on measure use and usefulness, including both impact and unintended consequences
FEASIBILITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure feasible, including eMeasure feasibility 	NO CHANGE: Implementation issues may be more prominent