



NATIONAL  
QUALITY FORUM

# Spring 2019 Social Risk Trial Update

CSAC Informational Update

*April 23-24, 2019*

# Background and Context

- In 2014, NQF convened an Expert Panel to review the NQF policy prohibiting the inclusion of social risk factors.
- The Panel recommended allowing the inclusion of social risk factors when there was a conceptual and empirical basis for doing so
- NQF Board approved a two-year trial period when social risk factors could be included
- The first trial demonstrated that adjusting measures for social risk factors is feasible but challenging
  - ▣ *Challenging to access data*
  - ▣ *Differing approaches to conceptual rationales and empirical analyses*
- NQF has recently launched a new three-year initiative to continue examining the impact of social risk factors

# Overview of Spring 2019 Cycle Submissions

## Measures Reviewed

- 72 measures submitted
- 27 assessed outcomes (including PRO-PM)

## Risk-Adjusted Measures

- All 27 utilized some form of risk adjustment
- 21 provided a conceptual rationale for potential impact of social risk factors. 17 used literature to support, 9 used data (not mutually exclusive)

## Measures with Conceptual Relationship

- 12 of 21 limited/no impact on model performance; social risk factors not included
- 1 of 21 submitted with adjustment for social risk factors

# Summary of Submissions for Fall 2017 - Spring 2019

<b>Total Number of Measures Submitted</b>	<b>223</b>
Measures Using Risk Adjustment	88
Measures with a Conceptual Model Outlining Impact of Social Risk*	80
<i>Used published literature to develop rationale</i>	62
<i>Used “Expert Group Consensus” to develop rationale</i>	15
<i>Used “Internal Data Analysis” to develop rationale</i>	38
Measures with a Social Risk Factor included in Model	18

\*methods were not mutually exclusive

# Common Social Risk Factors Considered Fall 2017 - Spring 2019

Race/Ethnicity

Payer

AHRQ SES  
Index

Education

Employment  
Status

Zip Code

Rural Location

# Standing Committee Discussions

- Continued use of race as a potential variable
  - *Questions about influence of genetics (e.g., varying rate of medication uptake) vs social factors*
  - *Committees indicated a preference for stratification*
- Concerns that social risk factors may be held to a different standard for inclusion
  - *Social risk factor may be statistically significant but does not improve model performance (e.g., C statistic is not improved)*
  - *Concerns that social risk factors are being tested for impact after clinical factors*
- Growing evidence in the literature about the impact on access to care if measures are not adjusted
- Access to data on social risk continues to be a challenge for developers

# Disparities Standing Committee May 2019 Meeting Agenda

## Trial period update

- Review risk-adjusted measures submitted since fall 2018

## Review risk models in use

- Discuss pros and cons of different models

# CSAC Discussion

- Does the CSAC have any guidance for the standing committees as they evaluate measures for appropriate adjustment for social risk?
- Does the CSAC have any guidance on how the standing committees should consider concerns about masking disparities?
- Does the CSAC have any guidance on the emerging concerns about the lack of adjustment for social risk potentially causing access challenges?