

THE NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM

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National Quality Forum To Standardize Pay For Performance Principles

Washington, DC - The National Quality Forum (NQF) today announced it has agreed to hold a workshop to begin standardizing pay-for-performance program principles and guidelines. This is being done at the request of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The workshop will be held in early 2005 in Washington, DC.

Given the virtual explosion in the number of pay-for-performance initiatives, there is increasing concern about the lack of guidelines, recommended criteria and structure, and/or coordination among payer/purchaser entities for these reward and incentive programs. As a broad-based membership organization with active participation across the spectrum of stakeholders, NQF is uniquely positioned to bring all parties together to assess the degree to which guidelines and criteria for hospital-centered pay-for-performance programs can be established.

"It is highly likely that within a relatively short time, pay-for-performance programs will become the norm for healthcare reimbursement," said Kenneth W. Kizer, MD, MPH, President and CEO of the NQF. "The main question is how those programs will be designed. They must be based on standardized measures of quality and agreed-upon principles and guidelines."

"Of the many pay-for-performance initiatives that are currently under way in the United States, clear themes are emerging from the successful programs," said Suzanne Delbanco, PhD, CEO of The Leapfrog Group, a consortium of healthcare purchaser organizations working to initiate breakthrough improvements in the safety, quality, and affordability of healthcare for Americans. "I hope that the NQF workshop can turn these themes into established principles to expand pay-for-performance programs in a fair and effective manner."

In April 2003, the NQF endorsed an initial set of 39 voluntary consensus standards for hospital care quality; data on 10 of those standards are currently being reported under a public-private collaboration known as the Hospital Quality Alliance. More recently, the NQF in December 2003 announced an initiative to identify voluntary consensus standards for measuring the quality of ambulatory care. This 5-year project will result in endorsement of a set of voluntary consensus standards that can be used as the basis of performance measurement in pay-for-performance initiatives for individual physicians. In 2004, the NQF endorsed 15 nursing-sensitive voluntary consensus standards that provide a framework for how to measure the quality of nursing care, and endorsed a set of 21 voluntary consensus standards for cardiac surgery that can be used to gauge the quality of care in this critically important area.

For more information, call the NQF at 202.783.1300.

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The NQF is a private, not-for-profit, public benefit corporation created in 1999 to develop and implement a national strategy for healthcare quality measurement and reporting. Established as a unique public-private partnership, the NQF has broad participation from all sectors of the healthcare industry. Visit the NQF on the web at www.qualityforum.org.

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