

# **THE NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM**

## **NATIONAL VOLUNTARY CONSENSUS STANDARDS FOR AMBULATORY CARE QUALITY MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING: PHASE I**

### **PURPOSE**

Phase one of this project is to establish informal consensus around the priority topics within the ambulatory care setting that would benefit from the standardization of performance measurement sets and public reporting mechanisms.

### **BACKGROUND**

The ambulatory care setting (outpatient care) is the principal venue for delivering medical care across the continuum from primary care to end of life care. Effective, high quality outpatient management is without question critical, as it allows for efficient use of resources and provides patients and their providers with options that are cost-effective and reduce the need for inpatient hospital stays. Measuring and reporting the quality of outpatient services have become a focus in the healthcare industry as evidence accumulates on the role of underuse, overuse or misuse of services and treatments in unnecessary hospitalizations and poor patient outcomes.

The field of performance measurement that facilitates quality improvement in the ambulatory care setting has matured, but still has more to achieve. Focusing on an effort to evaluate, standardize and implement quality measurement and reporting methodologies builds on the goals of the Institute of Medicine report, *Crossing the Quality Chasm: A Vision for Healthcare in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.

### **SCOPE**

Phase I of this project will:

- Establish priority areas for Phase II of the project; and
- Endorse the priority areas for ambulatory care that will frame the work of performance measure identification and selection.

### **THE NQF PROCESS**

Phase I of this project will involve the active participation of all NQF members. This phase of the project will be guided by a sub-committee of the NQF Board of Directors along with work groups comprised of all members interested in participating. Agreement around the priority areas for Phase II of the project will be developed through NQF's formal consensus process. The final priority areas will then be used to guide the measure identification, selection and recommendations for the next part of the project.

### **FUNDING**

Funding for this project has been provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.