

## **STANDARDIZING MEASURES OF HOSPITAL QUALITY**

### **PURPOSE**

To establish consensus on an initial core set of quality performance measures for the nation's general acute care hospitals, and on an enduring framework and process for updating such measures.

### **BACKGROUND**

From beta-blocker utilization to service satisfaction surveys, hospitals across the country are using a wide variety of measures to assess their performance and to improve the quality of care. However, there are many potential uses of this type of information. Hospital performance measures are also being developed and used for accreditation, prudent purchasing, consumer choice, and other purposes.

With greater use of hospital quality indicators, and more public use of them, comes a greater need for consistency across and among the measures, and an enduring framework to guide future decisions about how hospital quality should be measured and reported. While the growing interest in quality indicators increases the possibilities for measuring and improving hospital quality, it also increases the potential for misdirected or redundant activities, conflicting demands by different healthcare purchasers, and confusion and underuse of quality measures by those who are most interested in the information.

### **SCOPE**

This project will:

- Assess and endorse an initial set of existing measures that are reasonable indicators of hospital quality, and that are useful to consumers, purchasers, hospitals, and quality improvement organizations alike. Among measures that will be considered, for example, are those being recommended or applied by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, the state Peer Review Organizations, and major private sector purchasers of healthcare.
- Develop a comprehensive framework and standardized process for hospital quality measurement, including a process for updating the initial measurement set as new measures become available, and identifying gaps where research is needed to develop appropriate measures. The work of the NQF Strategic Framework Board will provide the underpinning for this phase of the project.

### **THE NQF PROCESS**

This project, like all NQF activities, involves the active participation of representatives from across the spectrum of healthcare stakeholders. The project is guided by a Steering Committee, with additional expertise provided by technical advisory panels. Agreement around the recommendations will be developed through NQF's formal consensus process. The final core set of hospital performance measures will be then disseminated and implemented through NQF member organizations, public agencies, and other interested bodies.

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