NQF

THE NATIONAL FORUM FOR HEALTH CARE QUALITY MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

NQF Project Brief
January 2001

"SAFE PRACTICES" IN HOSPITAL CARE

PURPOSE

This project will establish a compendium of evidence-based "safe practices" that can and should be widely implemented to reduce the likelihood of healthcare errors.

BACKGROUND

In its May 2000 document, "Patient Safety: A Call To Action," the National Quality Forum asserted the need for those involved in the healthcare system to take action in 10 high priority strategic areas to improve patient safety:

1. Make patient safety a leadership and management priority,
2. Make an unequivocal organizational commitment to patient safety,
3. Create a culture of safety that promotes open communication about healthcare errors,
4. Initiate routine self-assessment for potential patient safety problems,
5. Implement recognized safe practices that have been shown to prevent errors,
6. Increase education about patient safety for healthcare professionals,
7. Be accountable for patient safety, including informing patients if errors occur,
8. Recognize and deal with professional misconduct,
9. Make patient safety research a priority, and
10. Support efforts to create a non-punitive environment for healthcare error reporting.

The fifth step – taking action to support broad implementation of recognized safe practices – is the subject of this project. The compendium will be a tool for healthcare providers, purchasers, and consumers alike to identify and encourage practices that will reduce errors and improve care.

SCOPE

This project will:

- Establish criteria for what constitutes an evidence-based "safe practice for patient safety in hospitals and other healthcare settings;
- Based on an outside review of the evidence, establish consensus on a set of "safe practices," and identify promising but unproven practices for which more research is needed;
- Disseminate the compendium of "safe practices," including the evidence supporting them, through NQF member organizations and the public; and
- Promote the widespread implementation of these practices.

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, which will evaluate the practices based on an outside review, and make recommendations regarding a core set of "safe practices." Agreement around the recommendations will be developed through NQF's formal consensus process.

FUNDING

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