

NQF Measure Incubator

The Challenge: More Measures that Matter

Despite the widespread use of many good quality healthcare measures in the past two decades, there are areas of health and healthcare that still do not have enough or the right kinds of measures to drive improvement. Measure development hasn't kept pace for care of people with Alzheimer's disease, multiple chronic conditions, or those receiving palliative or end-of-life care. These and other "gap" areas, such as behavioral health, diagnostic accuracy, and measures that use patient-reported outcomes, need better data to benchmark performance and help ensure that patients receive high-quality care.

The NQF Measure Incubator is an innovative effort that facilitates efficient measure development and testing through collaboration and partnership. It addresses important aspects of care for which quality measures are underdeveloped or non-existent. In leading the Measure Incubator, NQF's role is to facilitate the work of others. NQF itself will not develop measures.

Measure gaps occur for many reasons. A principal cause is the measure development process itself. The designing, testing, and disseminating quality measures can be burdensome, costly, and time-consuming. It can take two to three years to develop a new measure and put it into use.

Similar to incubators that nurture entrepreneurs in technology environments, the NQF Measure Incubator is designed to nurture development of needed measures. The Incubator connects groups interested in particular measure concepts with measure development experts, financial and technical resources, and data.

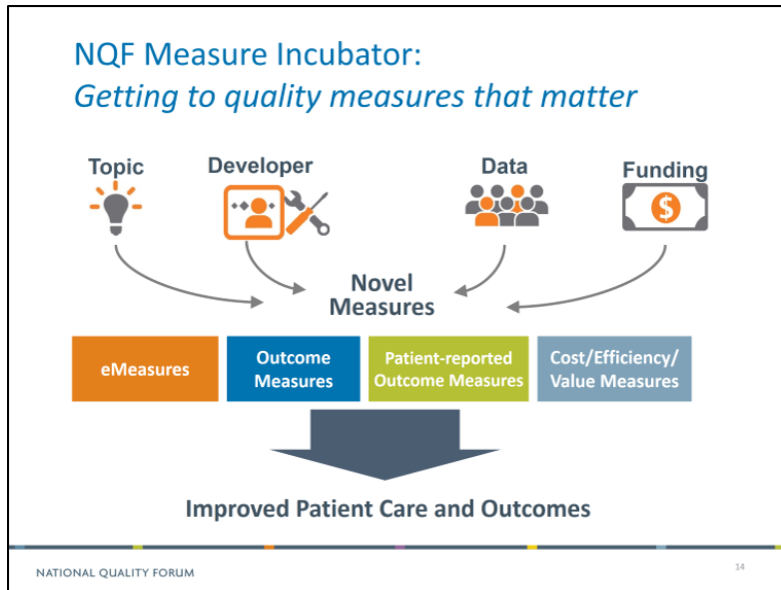
What sets this approach apart and makes it innovative is having continuous access to data to more rapidly test and adjust measures to reduce measure development time. The Measure Incubator also holds promise to make measure development more efficient by standardizing relevant best practices.

The Concept: An NQF Measure Incubator

The Measure Incubator embodies NQF's mission by providing the quality measurement community with a more efficient environment to develop and test measures that matter. The goals of the NQF's Measure Incubator are to:

- Facilitate development of more meaningful measures that are difficult to construct and test;
- Rapidly fill measurement gap areas
- Spur development of electronic clinical quality measures (eCQMs) to take advantage of the data collected through EHRs and to help enable measurement—and improvement—in real time
- Drive outcome-based healthcare measurement that better reflects the voice of patient and caregiver
- Advance measurement science by making tools and test beds more accessible to address tough challenges in measurement

- Improve availability of meaningful measures by prospecting for proven measures in use by leading providers that could be developed into national standards



Proving the Concept: Testing the Measure Incubator

NQF currently is working with an array of stakeholders, data partners, and measurement development experts to test the effectiveness of the Measure Incubator in the following ways:

- **“Proof of concept”** with OptumLabs, where access to its collaborative environment and unique data resources will provide participating OptumLabs partner organizations the opportunity to incubate and test measures. Several measure projects are already underway in this testing stage, including:
 - University of Maryland—refining a series of process measures as part of a larger research study on dementia and Alzheimer’s disease;
 - AARP—a founding contributor to the Incubator, AARP is exploring the creation of measures addressing dementia/Alzheimer’s disease and homebound populations;
 - Mayo Clinic—developing “phenotypes” of patients with multiple chronic conditions, as a precursor to measure development for this complex population.
- **PatientsLikeMe**, with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, will test NQF’s 2013 pathway to take patient-reported outcomes and translate them into patient-reported outcome (PRO) measures. This work aims to develop measures that capture what’s important to patients—from their day-to-day experiences like living with pain to how they are functioning after surgery, and more. With these metrics, the goal is to help patients and their physicians make better healthcare decisions and spark improvements.
- **Minnesota Community Measurement**, a pioneer in patient reported outcome (PRO) performance measure development, is working through the NQF Measure Incubator to develop and test a performance measure using an appropriate COPD PRO as a measure of physician

practice outcomes. GSK, a global leader in respiratory disease, will also collaborate with the Incubator as the sponsor of the project.

- **A design session** held February 24-25, 2016, convened more than 60 stakeholders representing all sectors interested in measure development to refine the Incubator process.
- **Final evaluation** and modification of the Incubator process will reflect what was learned from the proof of concept work and the design session to ensure that measure development via the Incubator is agile, iterative, replicable, and efficient.

NQF's Leadership of the Measure Incubator

As a national, trusted convener of quality measurement stakeholders, NQF has the experience and contacts in the quality community to bring together the requisite expertise, knowledge, and resources to develop, launch and manage the Measure Incubator.

In leading the Measure Incubator, NQF is uniquely positioned to:

- Effectively match measure developer(s) with projects, using NQF's strong relationships with measure developers and other technical experts;
- Share its insights into measure gaps and "measures that matter," based on NQF's substantial work to vet measures and to advance the science of quality measurement;
- Provide a pathway to take patient reported outcome to performance measures, based on its seminal work in this area in 2013
- Understand and contract with the right data providers to ensure that appropriate data are being used each project and for the measures undergoing testing;
- Leverage its experience working to expand and refine electronic quality measures;
- Convene leading experts in the field who bring the most current evidence-based data and knowledge to Measure Incubator projects.

Measure Incubator Governance: Incubator Advisory Council

The Incubator Advisory Council (IAC), an advisory panel to the NQF Board, develops clear and transparent conflict of interest policies that reflect NQF's values and protect NQF's mission. The IAC also advises NQF on Incubator funding and project selection, and makes recommendations to ensure that NQF's measure endorsement work is kept separate from the Incubator environment. For example, incubated measures will be conferred no advantage in the endorsement process.

Members of the Incubator Advisory Council include:

- Carolyn Clancy, M.D., chief medical officer, Veterans Health Administration
- Robert Galvin, M.D., MBA, operating partner, Equity Healthcare, The Blackstone Group
- Michael McGinnis, M.D., National Academy of Medicine senior scholar and executive director, Institute of Medicine Roundtable on Value & Science-Driven Health Care.
- Eric Schneider, M.D., M.Sc., senior vice president for policy and research, The Commonwealth Fund
- Susan Sheridan, MIM, MBA, DHL, director of patient engagement, Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)
- Jed Weissberg, M.D., senior fellow, Institute for Clinical and Economic Review (ICER)