



NATIONAL
QUALITY FORUM

Fall 2018 Social Risk Factor Trial Update

Background and Context

- In 2014, NQF convened an expert panel to review the NQF policy prohibiting the inclusion of social risk factors.
- The Panel recommended allowing the inclusion of social risk factors when there was a conceptual and empirical basis for doing so
- NQF Board approved a two-year trial period when social risk factors could be included
- The first trial demonstrated that adjusting measures for social risk factors is feasible but challenging
 - *Challenging to access data*
 - *Differing approaches to conceptual rationales and empirical analyses*
- NQF has recently launched a new three-year initiative to continue examining the impacts of social risk factors

Overview of Fall 2018 Cycle Submissions

Measures Reviewed

- 78 measures submitted
- 45 were outcome (including PRO-PM)

Risk-Adjusted Measures

- 45 utilized some form of risk adjustment
- 42 had a conceptual basis for adjusting for social risk factors. 33 used literature to support, 23 used data (not mutually exclusive)

Measures with Conceptual Relationship

- 26 small effect, social risk factors not included; concerns about differences in quality cited
- 16 submitted with adjustment for social risk factors

Summary of Submissions for Fall 2017-Fall2018

- 172 measures submitted from fall 2017-2018
- 69 utilized some form of risk adjustment
- 65 measures were submitted with a conceptual model outlining the potential impact of social risk:*

 - *Risk-adjusted measures that used published literature to develop rationale: 53*
 - *Risk-adjusted measures that used “Expert Group Consensus” to develop rationale: 19*
 - *Risk-adjusted measures that used “Internal Data Analysis” to develop rationale: 32*

- 23 measures submitted with a social risk factor included in their model
 - *Measures are still undergoing the endorsement process (none were received for the Fall 2017 cycle)*

Common Social Risk Factors Considered Fall 2017-Fall 2018

Race/Ethnicity

Payer

AHRQ SES
Index

Education

Employment
Status

Zip Code

Rural Location

Social Risk Factors Considered Fall 2017-Fall 2018 Review Cycles and Frequency

- Race or ethnicity: 58
- Dual Eligibility 14
- AHRQ SES Index 8
- Education 8
- Employment Status 6
- Zip Code 5
- Rural Location 5
- Medicare Status 4
- Payer/ Insurance Product 4
- Language 4
- Insurance Status 1
- Relationship to next of kin 1
- Percent of residents below the federal poverty line (FPL) in the patient's home zip code 1
- Legal status 1
- Gender 1

Early Findings

- Many developers continue to examine race as a potential variable.
 - *However, some do not consider it a social risk factor*
- Disconnect between conceptual relationship and empirical analysis
 - *Social risk factor may be statistically significant but does not improve model performance (e.g. C statistic is not improved)*
 - *Effect of social risk factor may often be small*
 - *Access to data can be limited*
- Ongoing concerns about potential differences in quality and the impact on disparities; however, growing evidence in the literature about the impact on access if measures are not adjusted

Disparities Standing Committee Meeting Agenda



CSAC Discussion

- Does the CSAC have any guidance for the Disparities Standing Committee?
- How could NQF address ongoing concerns about worsening healthcare disparities?