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QUALITY FORUM**

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# Scientific Methods Panel Monthly Call Meeting

NQF Methods Panel Team

*December 12, 2019*

# Welcome, Roll Call, and Agenda

# Scientific Methods Panel Members

|                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| J. Matt Austin, PhD               | Jack Needleman, PhD                   |
| Bijan Borah, MSc, PhD             | <b>David Nerenz, PhD, Co-chair</b>    |
| John Bott, MBA, MSSW              | Eugene Nuccio, PhD                    |
| <b>David Cella, PhD, Co-chair</b> | Sean O'Brien, PhD                     |
| Daniel Deutscher, PT, PhD         | Jennifer Perloff, PhD                 |
| Lacy Fabian, PhD                  | Patrick Romano, MD, MPH               |
| Marybeth Farquhar, PhD, MSN, RN   | Sam Simon, PhD                        |
| Jeffrey Geppert, EdM, JD          | Alex Sox-Harris, PhD, MS              |
| Laurent Glance, MD                | Michael Stoto, PhD                    |
| Joseph Hyder, MD                  | Christie Teigland, PhD                |
| Sherrie Kaplan, PhD, MPH          | Ronald Walters, MD, MBA, MHA, MS      |
| Joseph Kunisch, PhD, RN-BC, CPHQ  | Terri Warholak, PhD, RPh, CPHQ, FAPhA |
| Paul Kurlansky, MD                | Eric Weinhandl, PhD, MS               |
| Zhenqiu Lin, PhD                  | Susan White, PhD, RHIA, CHDA          |

# Agenda for Today's Discussion

- Discuss recommendations for changes to NQF's evaluation criteria
- As time allows...
  - ▣ *Endorsement of healthcare performance measures (quality, access, cost/resource use)*
  - ▣ *Score-level validity testing: Appropriate comparators*

# Methodologic Issues: Input on Potential Changes to Evaluation Criteria

# Current Testing Requirements

|             | Structure/process/<br>outcome                 | Instrument-<br>based | Composite   | eCQM                              |
|-------------|---|----------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Reliability | Element OR score<br>("short-cut"*<br>allowed) | Element AND<br>score | Score   | Depends on how<br>data are stored |
| Validity    | Element OR score<br>or face validity**        | Element AND<br>score | New: element OR<br>score OR face<br>validity<br>Maintenance:<br>Score | Element                           |

\*No reliability testing required if data element validity testing conducted and results are adequate

\*\* Face validity allowed for new measures, but only with accepted justification at maintenance

# Consensus Recommendations from October 2019 SMP Meeting

|             | Structure/process/<br>outcome  | Instrument-<br>based | Composite  | eCQM                           |
|-------------|--|----------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Reliability | Element:<br><b>consensus not yet reached</b> (new “short-cut”* possibly allowed)<br>Score: <b>should be required</b> | Element AND score    | Score  | Depends on how data are stored |
| Validity    | Element OR score OR face validity**  | Element AND score    | New: element OR score OR face validity<br>Maintenance: Score | Element                        |

\*Potential new short-cut: No data element reliability testing required if data element validity testing conducted and results are adequate

\*\* Face validity allowed for new measures, but only with accepted justification at maintenance

# Questions to Discuss

## For “regular” structure/process/outcome measures

- Should score-level validity testing be:
  - ▣ *Required*
  - ▣ *Expected, but waived if adequate justification provided*
  - ▣ *Leave as optional*
  
- Should data element validity testing be:
  - ▣ *Required*
  - ▣ *Expected, but waived if adequate justification provided*
  - ▣ *Leave as optional*



# Questions to Discuss

## For “regular” structure/process/outcome measures

- Re-visiting recommendation regarding score-level reliability testing
  - ▣ *Would you be willing to wait until maintenance?*
  - ▣ *Would you be willing to grant a waiver (with adequate justification)?*
- Should data element reliability testing be:
  - ▣ *Required*
  - ▣ *Expected, but waived if adequate justification provided*
    - » e.g., data element validity demonstrated
  - ▣ *Leave as optional*
  - ▣ *Different recommendations, depending on new vs. maintenance*

# Timeframe for Potential Changes to Testing Requirements

- Dec 2019: Obtain consensus recommendations from SMP during monthly call
- April 2020: Present SMP recommendations to CSAC
  - ▣ *CSAC may accept/reject/modify the recommendations*
  - ▣ *CSAC may suggest an implementation timeframe*
- Late spring/early summer: Begin to publicize changes to criteria
- NOTE that NQF often allows up to a 1-year gap between changing criteria and implementing the changes
  - ▣ *Likely, any SMP-recommended changes would not be required of developers until August 2021 (although it might be as early as January 2021)*

# Endorsing Performance Measures (not just quality measures)

# Categories of Measures Endorsed by NQF

- Quality measures
- Cost/resource use
- Access measures
- Population health measures
  - ▣ *Guidance for validity testing for population health measures:*
    - » Validity testing demonstrates that the measure data elements are correct and/or the measure score correctly reflects the effect of interventions to **improve population health**, adequately identifying differences in effectiveness.
  - ▣ *NOTE that currently, our taxonomy doesn't differentiate between “quality” measures and measures of access or population health*

# Score-Level Validity Testing: What are Appropriate Comparators?

# Current Guidance

Examples of validity testing of the measure score include, but are not limited to:

- testing hypotheses that the measures scores indicate quality of care (e.g., measure scores are different for groups known to have differences in quality assessed by another valid quality measure or method);
- correlation of measure scores with another valid indicator of quality for the specific topic; or
- relationship to conceptually related measures (e.g., scores on process measures to scores on outcome measures).

# Additional Context

NQF currently does not require validity testing relative to:

- An expected outcome (e.g., process measure about foot exams for patients with diabetes does not have to be correlated to a measure about foot amputation)
- Testing is not limited to other NQF-endorsed measures
- Testing does not have to use an “external” measure or dataset
  - ▣ *e.g., we allow testing of an instrument-based domain measure (e.g., treated with respect”) with a “global” measure from the same instrument (e.g., would you recommend this agency)*
  - ▣ *Recently, some concerns about “circular” testing (e.g., stability over time)*

# Discussion Questions

- Do we need additional requirements regarding the “comparator”?

## AND/OR

- How can we enhance our guidance about score-level validation to encourage meaningful validation?
- Examples:
  - ▣ *Some things better than others (best practices)?*
  - ▣ *Some things not really allowed?*
  - ▣ *Some things maybe okay for first endorsement, but more needed for maintenance?*



# Member and Public Comment

# Next Steps

- Methods Webinars
  - ▣ *Poll for availability is forthcoming*
  - ▣ *2-hour duration*
  - ▣ *Interspersed throughout the year*
  - ▣ *Next call: January 2020 (specific date/time TBD)*
- Contact information: [methodspanel@qualityforum.org](mailto:methodspanel@qualityforum.org)

# Adjourn