

# 2018 NQP Priorities for Action



National Quality Partners™ (NQP) provides an active forum for NQF members to connect, collaborate, and innovate on quality measurement and improvement strategies to achieve national health and healthcare quality goals. The NQP Leadership Consortium has released three priorities for action to guide NQP's 2018 initiatives.

## 1 PRIORITY FOR ACTION: THE OPIOID CRISIS

### **Problem:** The Rise of Harmful and Deadly Opioid Use

The rising use of opioids has led to a national crisis of dependence, addiction, overdose, and death. Over the past 20 years, opioid prescriptions have tripled, and the number of opioid-related deaths has quadrupled. Many healthcare systems and providers as well as national, state, and community organizations have launched bold initiatives to address the challenge. However, they lack a hub to coordinate efforts and share strategies and best practices to address inappropriate prescribing, promote a broader array of pain management strategies, and provide support and services to individuals at risk for adverse events.

### **NQP Action:** Develop NQP Opioid Stewardship Playbook

The NQP Leadership Consortium recommends the launch of an NQP Opioid Stewardship Action Team to coordinate the exchange of best practices and solutions to improve opioid prescribing and adequate pain management. The Action Team will convene a diverse group of NQF member organizations to drive national progress through a shared agenda, common measurement strategies, and coordination and alignment of stakeholder activities. The Action Team will provide a forum for engagement in support of the *National Quality Partners Playbook™: Opioid Stewardship*, a resource with strategies and tactics for appropriate opioid prescribing and approaches to pain management, particularly for individuals with chronic pain and those at risk of dependence and addiction.

## 2 PRIORITY FOR ACTION: SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS

### **Problem:** Insufficient Improvement in Serious Mental Illness Outcomes

The NQP Leadership Consortium identified behavioral health—more specifically serious mental illness (SMI)—as a priority area for national action. SMI, which includes mental, behavioral, or emotional disorders that result in functional impairment or interfere with major life activities impacts as many as 10 million adults in the United States, many of whom have significant comorbidities, lower life expectancy, and higher suicide rates. Societal costs are also high in terms of lost earnings, homelessness, and the impact on law enforcement and the judicial system. NQF has identified behavioral health as an area in need of better quality measures, including SMI outcomes, screening composites, and behavioral and physical health integration, and healthcare providers need practical strategies for identifying at-risk populations and integrating behavioral health with primary care<sup>1</sup>.

### **NQP Action:** Develop Solutions in Quality Measurement and Improvement

The NQP Leadership Consortium recommends launching an initiative to form strategies to address the scarcity of measures in behavioral health, particularly for SMI. Efforts to prioritize measure concepts could accelerate the development of a needed suite of quality measures and serve as the foundation for a collaborative effort, such as an NQP SMI Action Team. An NQP Action Team could identify gaps in care practice, such as assessment and management of behavioral health symptoms, or identify goals for a collaborative effort, such as improving patient-reported outcomes or addressing behavioral health-related readmissions.

# 3 PRIORITY FOR ACTION: INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH TO IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES

## **Problem: Challenges Integrating Social and Environmental Risk Data in Clinical Practice**

Research shows that healthcare services contribute less than 10 percent to health outcomes while other factors, such as health behaviors and social and environmental factors—often referred to as social determinants of health (SDOH)—are quite influential.<sup>2</sup> Increasingly, healthcare providers and professionals recognize the need to address upstream social inequities, such as education, employment, or living conditions, which adversely affect health. Many clinicians lack specific knowledge, tools, and strategies to address these factors, which generally are not part of medical training and education.

## **NQP Action: Stimulate Shared Learning and Action to Accelerate Data Integration**

The NQP Leadership Consortium recommends exploring innovative programs that integrate data on SDOH into clinical practice. Collection and use of SDOH data are foundational to the newly launched NQF Health Equity Program, which aims to achieve health equity and reduce disparities in healthcare. NQF will highlight successful approaches to integrating SDOH data to support providers and communities in their efforts to eliminate disparities. These exemplars can serve as the foundation for an NQP Playbook™ with tools to address risk factors and solutions for integrating community resources. Considerations for integrating social data into electronic health records, understanding the impact of addressing non-medical risk factors, and capturing data in a way that is actionable will be highly informative to a wide range of stakeholders.

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1 Milbank Memorial Fund. *Integrating Primary Care into Behavioral Health Settings*. 2017.

2 NQF. *A Roadmap for Promoting Health Equity and Eliminating Disparities: The Four I's for Health Equity*. 2017.

For more information, please contact us at [nationalqualitypartners@qualityforum.org](mailto:nationalqualitypartners@qualityforum.org).

## **2017 NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM LEADERSHIP CONSORTIUM**

The National Quality Forum convenes the NQP™ Leadership Consortium annually to identify national health and healthcare priorities for collaboration and coordination.

- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Case Management Association
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- American Institutes for Research
- Association of Rehabilitation Nurses
- Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
- Children's National Medical Center
- Coalition to Transform Advanced Care
- Council of Medical Specialty Societies
- HCA
- Henry Ford Health System
- Infectious Diseases Society of America
- Informed Patient Institute
- Johnson & Johnson Health Care Systems
- Magellan Health, Inc.
- Merck & Co., Inc.
- National Partnership for Women & Families
- Network for Regional Healthcare Improvement
- Nursing Alliance for Quality Care
- Planetree International
- Quality Insights
- The Joint Commission
- The Leapfrog Group
- University of Texas-MD Anderson Cancer Center
- URAC
- Veterans Health Administration
- Vizient, Inc.