NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM

Meeting Summary

All-Cause Admissions and Readmissions Standing Committee Web Meeting

The National Quality Forum (NQF) convened a public web meeting for the All-Cause Admissions and Readmissions Standing Committee on January 29, 2018, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm ET.

Welcome, Introductions, and Review of Web Meeting Objectives

Miranda Kuwahara, project manager, NQF, began by welcoming participants to the web meeting.

Miranda Kuwahara provided opening remarks and reviewed the following meeting objectives:

- Orient Standing Committee members to the newly redesigned Consensus Development Process (CDP)
- Review NQF's Measure Evaluation Criteria
- Review updates on NQF's social risk work
- Review eMeasure Approval for Trial Use

Overview of CDP Redesign

Katherine McQueston, senior project manager, NQF, presented on revisions to the CDP that were initiated in the summer of 2017.

Major changes include the following:

- Two measure submission cycles for every topic area, each calendar year
- Streamlined committee topic areas; 22 topical areas were consolidated to 15 new topical areas
- Formation of an independent Scientific Methods Panel, which is tasked with conducting Scientific Acceptability reviews of complex measures
- Revised technical report structure to minimize the length and density of the report
- Extended 16-week public and NQF member commenting period
- Expanded training and education opportunities for all stakeholders.

Standing Committee members raised questions about the role of the Scientific Methods Panel and the input it would provide to the Committee's deliberations. Karen Joynt Maddox, Committee member and co-chair of the Methods Panel, provided an update on the Panel, noting its potential role in promoting consistency across committees. She noted that the pre-review process was designed to ease committees' evaluation burden. She expects the process will become more streamlined after several measure evaluation cycles. One Committee member inquired about NQF's definition of a complex measure, asking whether a complex measure is based on measure specifications alone or if factors such as provider burden were also taken into account. NQF staff clarified that a complex measure is defined by specifications alone, but that standing committees consider the feasibility and usability of a measure as part of their evaluation.

2017 Changes to NQF Evaluation Criteria and Guidance

Erin O'Rourke, senior director, NQF, presented on the 2017 changes to NQF Evaluation Criteria and Guidance.

Major changes include the following:

- Strengthening the requirements for outcome measures
- Additional guidance for instrument-based measure guidance
- Additional guidance for threshold and timeframes
- Strengthening guidance for face validity
- Clarified wording around the exclusion criteria
- Use criterion is now must pass for maintenance measures
- New information on best practices for IDC-10 coding

The Committee expressed interest in other committees' experiences with the new evaluation criteria in an effort to obtain lessons learned. One Committee member asked if NQF applied the new criteria to past endorsement evaluations. NQF staff noted that the new criteria were not applied retrospectively, but assured the Committee that they would monitor progress across Committees and bring forth lessons learned.

Social Risk Overview

Erin O'Rourke presented on NQF's trial period to adjust for social risk factors and NQF's new initiatives to promote health equity. As part of the equity program, NQF standing committees will continue to assess the need for social risk adjustment in measures submitted for NQF endorsement. NQF staff noted that the Standing Committee will continue to evaluate the measure as a whole, including the appropriateness of the risk adjustment approach. Committee members noted the need for data element standardization for risk adjustment factors across measures. In addition, Committee members noted that claims data might not accurately capture risk-adjustment variables for outcomes-based measures. Committee members also noted the role of implicit bias in selecting risk-adjustment variables and the need to consider potential biases when reviewing measures for endorsement. Committee members also asked for clarification about the role of the Scientific Methods Panel in reviewing measures for social risk adjustment.

eMeasure Approval for Trial Use

Erin O'Rourke presented on eMeasure Approval for Trial Use requirements. NQF piloted eMeasure Approval for Trial Use for eMeasures that are ready for implementation but cannot be adequately tested to meet NQF endorsement criteria. The goal for approving eMeasures for trial use is to promote implementation and more robust reliability and validity testing that leverage clinical data in EHRs. NQF uses the multistakeholder consensus process to evaluate and approve eMeasures for trial use that address important areas of performance measurement and quality improvement. Committee members recommended that developers harmonize with standards issued by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC).

Public Comment

Miranda Kuwahara opened the web meeting to allow for public comment. One commenter noted the role of care coordination and safety net institutions in determining SDS variables for adjustment.

Next Steps

Miranda Kuwahara presented on the Committee's next steps. The next call will be the Readmissions Strategic Discussion Webinar #2: Feedback on SES Annual Update for Readmissions Measures, SES Trial 2.0, and Introduction to the Equity Program on Tuesday February 6, 2018.