



Call for Measures and Measure Concepts: Behavioral Health

The National Quality Forum (NQF) is seeking new measures and concepts related to behavioral health that can be used for accountability and public reporting for all populations and in all settings of care. This project will address topic areas including but not limited to: depression, bipolar disorder, screening of adolescents for behavioral health conditions, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

NQF is particularly interested in:

- measures of intermediate clinical outcomes or longer term health outcomes, including complications;
- composite measures;
- measures that capture broad populations, including children and adolescents where applicable;
- measures that are harmonized with similar measures; and
- measures that are sensitive to vulnerable populations, including racial/ethnic minorities; and Medicaid populations.

This project launched on **Monday, November 4, 2013**. The final submission deadline is **Friday, July 25, 2014**.

BACKGROUND

In the United States, it is estimated that approximately 26.4 percent of the population suffers from a diagnosable mental disorder.¹ These disorders – which can include serious mental illnesses, substance use disorders, and depression – are associated with poor health outcomes, increased costs, and premature death.² Although general behavioral health disorders are widespread, the burden of serious mental illness is concentrated in about six percent of the population.³ In addition, many people suffer from more than one mental disorder at any given time; nearly half of those suffering from one mental illness meet the criteria for at least two more.⁴ By 2020, behavioral health disorders are expected to surpass all physical diseases as the leading cause of disability worldwide.⁵

¹ Kessler RC, Chiu WT, Demler O, Walters EE. Prevalence, severity, and comorbidity of twelve-month DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R). *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 2005 Jun;62(6):617-27.

² Kilbourne, A., Keyser, D., & Pincus, H. (2010). Challenges and opportunities in measuring the quality of mental health care. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 55(9), 549-557.

³ Kessler RC, Chiu WT, Demler O, Walters EE. Prevalence, severity, and comorbidity of twelve-month DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R). *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 2005 Jun;62(6):617-27.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse. (2011). *Leading change: a plan for SAMPHSA'S roles and actions 2011-2014* (1104692). Washington, D.C.



In 2005, an estimated \$113 billion was spent on mental health treatment in the United States. \$22 billion of that amount was spent on substance use treatment alone, making substance use one of the most costly (and treatable) illnesses in the nation.⁶ Financial estimates for behavioral health disorders inflate substantially when wider social costs are factored in such as criminal, welfare, juvenile, and future earnings potential.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is currently advancing the *National Framework for Quality Improvement in Behavioral Health Care* (NBHQF).⁷ In the framework, SAMHSA notes that efforts to successfully implement the portions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) relevant to Behavioral Health will require a better understanding of the current status and needs of the behavioral health population and delivery system, as well as an increased ability to adequately assess and monitor these populations over time. Of course, meaningful mental health performance measurement is a key driver to transform the healthcare system and advance both of these goals.

In 2012, NQF endorsed 10 behavioral health measures in the areas of tobacco and alcohol use, medication adherence, diabetes health screening and assessment, and hospitalization follow-up. A subsequent phase of work recommended 20 measures for endorsement in the areas of: tobacco and alcohol use, depression screening, medication adherence, and hospital-based inpatient psychiatric services. These recommendations were put forth for public comment in September, 2013; the project will be completed by March of 2014.

MEASURE CONCEPTS

In addition to soliciting fully-developed measures for consensus-based endorsement review, NQF is also soliciting measure concepts through NQF's new Measure Inventory Pipeline. This pipeline will serve as an important source of information for HHS and other stakeholders on new measure development in the broader healthcare community. It will also enable NQF to track current and planned measure development to ensure early collaboration among developers to drive harmonization and alignment of measures.

In an effort to capture comprehensive information on measures in development, NQF seeks input on several variables including:

- measure description;
- numerator statement;
- denominator statement (target population);

⁶ Mark, T. (2011). Changes in U.S. spending on mental health and substance abuse treatment. *Health Affairs*, 28(6).

⁷ Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (SAMHSA). (2011). *National framework for quality improvement in behavioral health care* (draft). Washington, D.C.



- planned use,
- stage of development; and
- other relevant information.

Please note that the information entered through NQF's Measure Inventory Pipeline will not be evaluated by the Steering Committee against the NQF Criteria. Submitted information will be catalogued by NQF and used to help inform the Steering Committee's measure gaps discussion. NQF will also share the information with HHS to inform CMS' Measure Inventory Pipeline, which is a reference for several stakeholders.

NQF's Measure Inventory Pipeline will be available for concept submissions in November, 2013.

MEASURE SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To submit a measure, please complete the following:

- [Measure Submission Form](#) Clicking on this link will redirect you to the webpage for this project, from which you can access the online measure submission form.
- Measure Steward Agreement. Please note that no materials will be accepted without submission of a fully executed *Measure Steward Agreement Form*. All materials not meeting this requirement will be returned to the sender.

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Materials must be submitted using the online submission form by 6:00 pm, ET Friday, July 25, 2014. If you have any questions, please contact Lauralei Dorian at 202-783-1300 or email us at behavioralhealth@qualityforum.org.

Conditions for Consideration:

- The measure owner/steward verifies there is an identified responsible entity and process to maintain and update the measure on a schedule that is commensurate with the rate of clinical innovation, but at least every three years.⁸
- The intended use of the measure includes both public accountability and quality improvement.
- The measure is fully specified and [tested for reliability and validity](#). Measures that are not tested will not be accepted in this project.
- The measure developer/steward attests that [harmonization](#) with related measures and issues with competing measures have been considered and addressed, as appropriate.

⁸ Measure stewards must execute a Measure Steward Agreement with NQF.



- The requested measure submission information is complete and responsive to the questions so that all the information needed to evaluate all [criteria](#) is provided.

Submission Guidance:

- Developer guidebook:
 - A [Developer Guidebook](#) as has been created to assist developers in the measure submission and evaluation process. The Guidebook contains all the information developers need to know when submitting a measure to NQF.
- ICD-10-CM/PCS:
 - Beginning April 1, 2013 measures specified with administrative claims data must submit a set of ICD-9-CM and ICD-10-CM/PCS codes. Click [here](#) for further information on this requirement.
- eMeasures:
 - Must be submitted in Health Quality Measures Format (HQMF) and the quality data model (QDM);
 - Review the [current measure evaluation criteria and guidance](#)
- Composite measures:
 - Please notify project staff if you plan to submit a composite measure

Technical Assistance

NQF project staff will provide technical assistance to measure developers at any time during the measure submission process up to the submission deadline. Contact the project team with any questions about the criteria, how to answer the questions in the form, any technical issues with the online submission process... or anything else!

MEASURE SUBMISSION COMPLETENESS CHECKLIST

- Measure steward agreement or concept agreement is completed and signed, and attached to the submission.
- Conditions for submission are addressed.
- There are responses in all fields on measure submission form (MSF.)
- Attachments included: eMeasure specifications (S.2a); data dictionary/code list (S.2b); Evidence and Measure Testing appendices
- All URLs are active and accurate.
- Harmonization/competing measures: Did you present a plan for harmonization of the related/competing measures identified by staff during early identification/triage? (see Harmonization process)
- Paired measures should be submitted on separate forms.
- An eMeasure must be submitted in HQMF format and the quality data model (QDM).

Measure Submissions Due By Friday, July 25, 2014 6:00 PM ET



- Composite measures (contains individual measures with a single score) - responses to the composite measure questions are included.
- Both ICD-9 and ICD-10 codes included.

RESOURCES FOR MEASURE DEVELOPERS AND STEWARDS

For more details on measure evaluation criteria, please see the following reports:

- [Evidence Task Force Report](#)
- [Measure Testing Task Force Report](#)
- [Harmonization Report](#)
- [Competing Measures Report](#)

Evaluation and Measure Submission Guidance:

- [eMeasure Testing Guidance Report](#)
- [Guidance on Quality Performance Measure Construction](#)
- [Evidence and Importance to Measure and Report](#)
- [Measure Testing and Scientific Acceptability of Measure Properties](#)
- [Composite Evaluation Criteria](#)
- [Resource Use Measure Evaluation Criteria](#)
- [Endorsement Maintenance Policy](#)