



Cost and Efficiency Standing Committee Web Meeting

The National Quality Forum (NQF) convened a public web meeting for the Cost and Efficiency Standing Committee on February 15, 2018, 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm ET.

Welcome, Introductions, and Review of Web Meeting Objectives

Katherine McQueston, senior project manager, NQF, and Vanessa Moy, project analyst, NQF, welcomed participants to the web meeting. Ms. McQueston provided opening remarks and reviewed the following meeting objectives:

- Introduce NQF's Equity Program and SES Trial 2.0
- Obtain feedback from the Cost and Efficiency Standing Committee on ongoing NQF work related to attribution

Introduction to the Equity Program

Drew Anderson, senior director, NQF, introduced the NQF Health Equity Program. Health equity has been an important part of NQF work in recent years. NQF created a roadmap, funded by HHS, for promoting health equity and reducing disparities that served as a foundation for the current Health Equity Program. The roadmap defines what an equitable health system is and provides recommendations on how to understand if a health system is performing to meet equity objectives.

Mr. Anderson reviewed the following aims of the NQF Equity Program with the goal of helping stakeholders implement the roadmap.

There are four program areas with the following aims:

- Identify disparities and those affected by health inequity
 - Promote a common understanding and standardized language around health equity to address data and infrastructure challenges
 - Gather innovative strategies for social risk factor data collection and use
- Influence performance measurement
 - Facilitate development of needed measures to promote health equity and reduce disparities
 - Drive toward the systematic approach laid out in the NQF Health Equity Roadmap for using measures to eliminate disparities and promote health equity
- Inspire implementation of best practices through innovative approaches
 - Lead and engage strategic partners to implement effective interventions and best practices
 - Disseminate effective interventions, best practices, and lessons learned
 - Facilitate use of innovative, successful interventions
- Inform payment
 - Convene experts to address the impact of payment on health equity

- Spur resource allocation to those effecting meaningful change
- Create tools and resources to facilitate uptake of payment models that promote health equity
- Explore emerging issues related to risk adjusting performance measures for social risk factors

Committee members were supportive of NQF's work in health equity. Committee members were concerned with the application of risk adjustment for payment, and they asked if there was work on potential effects of incorporating risk adjustment more broadly on health equity and disparities.

Introduction to the SES Trial 2.0

Erin O'Rourke, senior director, NQF, presented on NQF's trial period to adjust for social risk factors and NQF's new initiatives to promote health equity. In April 2015, NQF began a two-year, self-funded trial of a policy change that allowed risk adjustment of performance measures for social risk factors: the Sociodemographic Status (SDS) Trial. The initial trial (April 2015 to April 2017) found that adjustment may be feasible but remains challenging; there is limited availability of adequate social risk factors data, and there is significant heterogeneity of social risk data and modeling approaches.

The NQF Board approved a new three-year initiative—the Social Risk Trial—in which NQF will continue to allow the inclusion of social risk factors in outcome measures.

Through this new initiative, NQF will:

- Identify preferred methodologies to link the conceptual basis for adjustment with the analyses to support it
- Develop guidance for measure developers
- Explore alternative data sources and provide guidance to the field on how to obtain and use advanced social risk factors data
- Evaluate risk models for appropriate social and clinical factors
- Explore the impact of social risk adjustment on reimbursement and access to care

As part of the implementation of the three-year Social Risk Trial, NQF will:

- Continue to consider if an outcome measure includes the appropriate social and clinical factors in its risk model
- Convene the new Scientific Methods Panel and Disparities Standing Committee to provide guidance on the methodological questions that arose during the initial trial period

The Committee had questions about how the Methods Panel would review submitted measures with respect to their approaches to social risk adjustment. Staff clarified that the Methods Panel would review the measures but noted that the Committee would make the final decisions. Committee members noted that NQF had previously conducted a trial of the policy to allow adjustment for social risk and questioned when this change would become a standard part of

NQF's process. Staff noted that there is still a lack of consensus among stakeholders about whether risk adjusting for social risk factors could worsen healthcare disparities, and as a result, NQF is continuing to examine the policy. The committee members wondered if there should be a broader discussion of what factors could affect what measures rather than having each developer assess risk factors individually. Committee members noted the need to explore the potential pathways through which social risk could influence healthcare outcomes to help determine which factors could be appropriate for adjustment.

Feedback on the Attribution Project

Ms. O'Rourke presented on the first and current phases of the NQF Attribution Project. Recent legislation such as the IMPACT Act and MACRA demonstrate the continued focus on value-based purchasing to drive improvements in quality and cost by re-aligning incentives. Implementing pay-for-performance models requires knowing who can be held responsible for the results of the quality and efficiency measures used to judge performance.

NQF is moving to develop a new white paper on this topic, which will build on NQF's first phase of attribution work. NQF will convene a multistakeholder Advisory Panel to guide and provide input on the direction of the white paper, which will summarize existing evidence, interviews, and recommendations.

Specifically, the Advisory Panel will build upon its previous work to help identify:

- Current approaches and best practices for testing attribution models;
- Unintended consequences of attribution;
- The challenges that data integrity and collection pose to developing attribution models;
- Approaches to attributing care in team-based care delivery models;
- Challenges in attributing complex patients and those in special populations;
- The evaluation of attribution models as part of the endorsement and selection processes; and
- Recommendations for improving the Attribution Selection Guide, its dissemination, and use.

Committee members asked about how costs should be attributed when evaluating measures. They suggested looking at which expenses for patients should be attributed to which providers. They noted that this issue relates to provider concerns of patients that are traveling away from their current providers as well as other issues. Committee members suggested that attribution be better integrated into the CDP processes and that developers should provide justification as to why a particular attribution model was suggested. Committee members agreed that it is unlikely that only one attribution model will always be sufficient, and they cautioned about models that might inadvertently incentivize siloed approaches as compared to team-based approaches.

Public Comment

Ms. McQueston opened the web meeting to allow for public comment. No public comments were received.

Next Steps

Ms. Moy presented on the Committee's next steps and upcoming meetings, included below.

Meeting	Date/Time
Committee Measure Evaluation Tutorial Web Meeting	Thursday, June 7, 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
Committee Measure Evaluation Web Meeting #1	Wednesday, June 27, 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
Committee Measure Evaluation Web Meeting #2	Thursday, June 28, 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
Committee Measure Evaluation Web Meeting #3	Friday, June 29, 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
Committee Post-Measure Evaluation Web Meeting	Thursday, July 12, 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
Committee Post-Comment Web Meeting	Wednesday, September 12, 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm