NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM
Driving measurable health improvements together

Diagnostic Excellence Committee Meeting

The National Quality Forum (NQF) convened a meeting of the Diagnostic Excellence Committee on November 16, 2023 at the NQF office in Washington, DC, as part of the **Advancing Measurement of Diagnostic Excellence for Better Healthcare** initiative.

Measurement can be a powerful tool to improve patient care and reduce harm throughout the diagnostic process. Yet despite the importance of diagnostic excellence, it remains difficult to measure. NQF's Diagnostic Excellence initiative is designed to break through barriers to the measurement of diagnostic excellence to improve patient care. Here we highlight key insights from the November 2023 meeting. A more comprehensive description of the convening can be found in the **detailed meeting summary**.

PURPOSE

NQF convened the Committee to identify the key challenges impeding the effective development and use of accountability measures for diagnostic excellence. The goal is to identify and prioritize opportunities for NQF work to address these areas.

The Committee reviewed themes identified in an environmental scan conducted by NQF and heard from a patient panel, a subset of the Committee members, about challenges they have faced on their diagnostic journeys. Panelists highlighted several significant problems, including the following:

- Communication challenges
- Clinician bias and assumptions clinicians make about patients
- What sources of information are considered factual by clinicians
- Proliferation of clinicians and institutions
- Insurance coverage

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Through an environmental scan, NQF identified obstacles to developing and implementing diagnostic excellence measures, which fall into four categories:

- Lack of data specificity and data standards
- System fragmentation
- Limited work to date on patient-reported outcome and experience measures specific to the diagnostic process
- Diagnostic inequities

The Committee identified and discussed the top three challenges in each category and potential solutions. It then voted on which challenges to prioritize for further work, specifically, to better define them and develop actionable solutions. NQF discussed the voting results with the project's Advisory Group, comprised of experts in the field, regarding the potential impact and actionability of each challenge. Following this input, NQF is focusing follow-up Committee work on the following three challenges:

1. Mismatches between patients' and clinicians' mental models regarding what constitutes diagnostic excellence (to inform patient-reported measures)

2. Disadvantaged groups inadvertently often omitted from measurement

3. Measurement of bias and discrimination

NEXT STEPS

After the Committee meeting, NQF examined the three challenges in more detail and developed initial approaches that could be used to address them. Subcommittees (composed of Diagnostic Excellence Committee members) met to discuss the challenges in more detail and provide feedback on potential solutions. NQF will next summarize their insights for the full Committee for discussion. NQF will include the Committee's findings and recommendations in the two major products this initiative will produce: a technical report and a call to action.

NQF staff are also addressing an additional challenge—gaps in standardized data relevant to diagnosis—as part of this initiative. NQF prepared **a memo for the Office of the National Coordinator of Health Information Technology (ONC)** to advance interoperability of key data elements needed for diagnostic excellence. Finally, in partnership with the American Medical Association, NQF is also **advancing data standards for symptoms** under a separate Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation grant.