

NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM

CONFERENCE CALL OF THE RESOURCE USE STEERING COMMITTEE

December 13, 2010

Committee Members Present: Doris Lotz, MD, MPH (Co-Chair); Bruce Steinwald, MBA (Co-Chair); Paul Barnett, PhD; Jack Bowhan; William Golden, MD; Lisa Grabert, MPH; Ethan Halm, MD, MPH; Jack Needleman, PhD; Mary-Kay O'Neill, MD, MBA; Steve Phillips, MPA; David Redfearn, PhD; William Rich, MD; Barbara Rudolph, PhD, MSSW; Joseph Stephansky, PhD; Dolores Yanagihara, MPH, Tom Rosenthal, MD

NQF Staff Present: Helen Burstin, MD, MPH; Sally Turbyville, MA, MS; Ashlie Wilbon, RN, MPH; Sarah Fanta

Other Attendees: Kate Goodrich, Susan Arday, Niall Brennan, Pamela Cheetham, Louis Diamond, Kavita Choudhry, Jesse Leavy, Alicia Messalala, Frederick Thomas

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Wilbon and Ms. Turbyville welcomed the Resource Use Steering Committee members, took roll call and gave a brief overview of the agenda.

PROJECT UPDATE

Ms. Wilbon gave the Steering Committee an overview of the Resource Use project.

- The Resource Use Measurement White paper has been finalized and will be posted to the website by the end of December.
- The Resource Use Measure Evaluation Criteria was approved by CSAC on November 4, 2010. The criteria is aligned with the quality measurement evaluation criteria as appropriate.
- NQF project staff has continued to reach out and meet with several measure developers to identify those interested in submitting measures to the project. The most recent outreach has been with Adjusted Clinical Group (ACG) at Johns Hopkins and 3M.
- Webinars to educate measure developers and organizations on submitting measures will be conducted in January. These webinars will focus on the submission items and process for submitting measures to this project.
- Development is underway for the new online resource use measure submission form; testing should begin before January 1, 2011.
- Staff will provide the Committee with an orientation to NQF's Consensus Development Process and measure evaluation in early February prior to the close of the Call for Measures.
- The Call for Measures is expected to begin ~January 24, 2011.

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OVERVIEW OF MEASURE EVALUATION PROCESS

Ms. Wilbon explained the NQF measure submission and evaluation process to the Steering Committee.

- As the measures are submitted, NQF staff reviews each measure to ensure the NQF conditions have been met; for example, that the measure steward agreement is attached and that the submission form is complete.
- Prior to Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Panels (TAP) evaluation of the measures, a NQF statistical consultant will review certain aspects of the measure submission. The consultant will provide input on the risk adjustment methodology and measure testing results. Once the statistician has assessed the measures, their analysis will be sent to the TAPs for review.
- The call for TAP members is concurrent with the Call for Measures to ensure alignment of TAP expertise with the type of measures submitted. TAPs generally include 5-7 experts and are predominantly clinicians. TAPs may also include methodologists or other experts whose expertise would compliment the evaluation process.
- TAPs are tasked with review of the statistical analysis and evaluation of the sub-criteria. TAP chairs have already been selected and also sit on the Steering Committee.
- The Steering Committee reviews the statistical consultant's input and the TAPs' ratings to inform their recommendations for endorsement. Measures that are not condition specific will be evaluated by the statistical consultant and move straight to the Steering Committee for review.

MEASURE HARMONIZATION AND BEST IN CLASS

Ms. Wilbon presented to the Steering Committee the measure harmonization and best in class evaluation procedures. These are important concepts during the evaluation of resource use measures. The NQF Harmonization Draft Report was sent to the Steering Committee for review prior to the conference call.

Measure Harmonization

- The purpose of harmonization is to eliminate unintended differences among related measures. NQF staff will be doing a preliminary review of harmonization issues for each measure as part of the evaluation of NQF conditions at the time of submission. Harmonization of measures should be considered when the measure addresses the same measure focus (i.e., the target process, condition, event, and outcome) or the same target population. Conceptual harmonization can be thought of as the “what” and “why” of the measure. For example, the target population and time window, exclusions and level of analysis. Whereas technical harmonization focuses on how the concept is being measured (i.e., codes and algorithms.)
- Harmonization may result in several outcomes depending on whether technical (e.g., codes) or conceptual (e.g., measure focus) harmonization is warranted. Harmonization may result in two similar measures remaining distinct measures.

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- The updates to the harmonization process were recently approved and will be applied to projects that begin in January 2011, including the Resource Use project. NQF acknowledges that measure developers for this project will likely be unable to achieve harmonization *prior* to submission.
- Resource use measures submitted for this project must be fully developed and tested prior to submission, limiting any opportunity for measure developers to harmonize their measures with other resource use measures prior to their submission. However, if NQF or the Committee identifies measures that require harmonization after submission, the measure developers will be asked to harmonize their measures or submit justification for lack of harmonization. The Steering Committee will determine if the harmonization or justification provided for not harmonizing (including limited time to accomplish harmonization) is sufficient. The goal for harmonization across measures is not intended to hinder innovation but to make the NQF endorsed measure portfolio more parsimonious. Statistical risk adjustment, risk stratification, and statistical methods for estimating measure results are not subject to harmonization.
- In order to facilitate future harmonization efforts prior to submission, NQF is currently enhancing the measures database to store and search on endorsed measures and their specifications. Staff is currently working with measure developers as part of the 2010 update to ensure all specifications are up to date. The new database is likely to be ready in late spring- early summer 2011.
- During the evaluation and recommendation process for similar measures, the Committee must weigh the burden and added value for endorsing similar measures, The Committee will have three options for measure recommendations for similar measures that require consideration of harmonization: (1) Recommend measure for endorsement only if harmonized, (2) Recommend and accept lack of harmonization with justification, or (3) Not recommend this measure for endorsement.

Best in Class Measures for Competing Measures

- Competing measure have the same target population AND same measure focus.
- The Committee previously expressed a preference to forgo the “best in class” criterion for this first resource use endorsement effort; however, the Committee will be required to identify competing measures.
- Justification for endorsing competing measures will be required

CONCURRENT HHS ACTIVITIES

Ms. Turbyville explained the concurrent Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) activities to the Resource Use Steering Committee. Niall Brennan from CMS also provided input.

- Phase II of the Resource Use project, which is the CDP and measure evaluation portion, has been informed by White Paper from Phase I. The project plan identifies 18 conditions and non-condition specific per capita measures. The end

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goal is to have NQF endorsed resource use measures by 2012.

- CMS/HHS has recently awarded four contracts to vendors to develop a Medicare Episode Grouper. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) calls for CMS to have a public domain grouper by 1/1/2012. However, given the complexity of developing a tool like this, it will likely require iterations over time. The initial deliverable from the four vendors will only focus on a subset of high priority conditions. The measures that complement the selected grouper will require NQF evaluation for endorsement at some point. NQF will be working with CMS/HHS to further define a scope that best aligns these efforts. Prior the inception of the ACA mandate for the Medicare grouper, there was an existing contract mechanism with NQF to endorse cost of care measure, which leads to some confusion as to how the efforts should or could compliment each other. Measure developers submitting to this initial resource use measurement effort will likely put forth measures that have been tested on commercial populations,. While NQF is interested in all payor measures, measures are endorsed for use in the populations in which they are tested.
- The TAPs and Committee will not be evaluating the actual grouper; however, they will need to understand its basic functionality in order to understand how it will affect the measures.
- An early goal of this project was to establish an approach for value based and efficiency measurement by aligning endorsed patient outcomes measures from the 2010 Patient Outcomes project with endorsed resource use measures from this project. NQF staff will continue consider the alignment of these efforts. .

Challenges to Aligning Efforts between NQF and HHS

- It is important to be mindful of potential avenues for alignment with external activities and NQF wants to ensure it is addressing and meeting the needs of HHS/CMS, particularly understanding areas of overlap.
- Measures are endorsed for use in population they are tested. It is anticipated that most of the measures submitted for the resource use project in 2011 will be tested in commercial data. After meeting with several measure developers, NQF is identified 500 measures that could potentially be submitted to this effort. NQF is working with developers to further understand the types of measures included in the estimate and determine the impact on the management of the project and the measure evaluation process.
- The high volume and complexity of these measures will have implications for the CDP process. Each measure will still need to undergo public comment, member comment and vote. Consequently, the project may need to be extended into phases.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments at this time.

UPCOMING PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Ms. Turbyville informed the Steering Committee of upcoming project activities.

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- The Resource Use team is working to finalize the Phase II project plan.
- NQF is working with the internal web team to complete the Resource Use online measure submission form. While the evaluation criteria changed very little to accommodate resource use measures, the submission form has changed significantly in order to account for the construction of resource use measures. Few changes have been made to the resource use submission form previously sent to the Steering Committee. The form has been shared with measure developers in order to get their input; ideally, measure developers will be able to test the on-line form prior to the call for measures.
- The anticipated start date for the Resource Use Call for Measures is January 24, 2011. If the *call* request covers many conditions, it will be divided into two different calls; each made up of 30 day periods (a total 60 day call).
- The Steering Committee and TAPs will be provided Phase II and CDP training for. Concurrently, training for the measure developers on the new submission form and the evaluation process will be provided. These webinars will take place in January-February 2011.
- The dates for the TAP and in-person Steering Committee meetings will be determined once the call for measures is finalized. Taps will likely meet in the spring and during the in-person Steering Committee meeting in the summer of 2011.