

Intended Use Advisory Panel

Final Recommendations



NATIONAL
QUALITY FORUM

November 10, 2015

Overview

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Introduction

- Stakeholder groups have questioned whether NQF should incorporate the specific intended or actual use(s) of a measure as part of the endorsement process
- This effort by the NQF Intended Use Advisory Panel seeks to consider the merit of, and the various approaches to, considering a measure's specific intended or actual use(s) as part of the measure endorsement process.

Background

- Consensus Taskforce (CTF)
 - CTF advised the NQF BoD to convene an Advisory Panel to consider transitioning from a binary endorsement decision (endorsed/not endorsed) to a more nuanced recommendation of endorsement
- CTF recommended that this Advisory Panel consider two potential options:
 - Endorsement of measures for a specific intended or actual use(s)
 - Distinguish levels or grades of endorsement

The Intended Use Advisory Panel Charge

- Discuss several critical topic areas, including identifying various use cases for NQF-endorsed measures, distinguishing among the use cases, and identifying the need, if any, for different measure attributes, depending on the specific intended or actual measure use(s);
- Determine whether the NQF measure endorsement criteria requires updating;
- Propose a path forward on whether, and if so, how, to incorporate the specific use of measures in the endorsement process.

Intended Use Advisory Panel Members

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The Advisory Panel was convened four times

- June 8 & 10, 2015
 - Oriented to panel charge and key considerations outlined by the NQF BoD
- July 10, 2015
 - Considered the various uses for NQF-endorsed performance measures
- July 29, 2015
 - Considered how NQF endorsement criteria might vary based on the various use cases
- October 20, 2015
 - Reviewed public and member comments on draft report and updated recommendations

Five Recommendations from the Advisory Panel – An Overview

- **Recommendation 1:** NQF should not try to distinguish between the measurement needs for pay-for-performance, public reporting, and other types of accountability applications.
- **Recommendation 2:** Create a “NQF+” designation for endorsed measures that exceed the criteria for endorsement in key areas, and include a requirement for vetting by those being measured
- **Recommendation 3:** NQF endorsement should focus on endorsement of measures intended for accountability applications
- **Recommendation 4:** Encourage the Measures Applications Partnership (MAP) to consider how the NQF+ designation can be used in the selection of measures for programs
- **Recommendation 5:** Pursue future work to consider the interaction between program attributes and individual measure attributes

Recommendation 1: NQF should not try to distinguish between the measurement needs for pay-for-performance, public reporting, and other types of accountability applications.

- Considered the question of whether there are differences in measurement needs among accountability applications (e.g. pay for performance, penalty)
- Some argued that there are differences, noted risk of misclassification is higher and the financial impact is higher for pay-for-performance programs
- Others noted that most accountability applications have a financial impact on providers, regardless of whether there is a direct penalty
- Others also noted that identifying measurement needs based on financial impact to providers is misguided
- All endorsed measures should produce reliable and valid information , regardless of use

Recommendation 2: Create a “NQF+” designation for endorsed measures that exceed the criteria for endorsement in key areas, and include a requirement for vetting by those being measured

- The following characteristics should be used to identify measures that achieve the “NQF+” designation:
 - Meet or exceed evidence for measure focus sub-criterion without an exception;
 - High or moderate certainty or confidence that the measure is reliable, as demonstrated by reliability testing of the measure score;
 - High or moderate certainty or confidence that the measure is valid, as demonstrated by empirical validity testing of the measure score (i.e., not via face validity only); and
 - Confirmation that the candidate measure is well vetted in real world settings by those being measured as demonstrated by those being measured given:
 - » Measure performance results and data,
 - » Assistance with interpreting the measure results and data, and
 - » An opportunity to provide feedback on the measure performance and implementation by the community of entities being measured.

Recommendation 3: NQF endorsement should focus on endorsement of measures intended for accountability applications

- NQF endorsement should support the use of measures for accountability applications and performance improvement
- Measures that are endorsed for accountability applications can be used for internal quality improvement (QI); however NQF should make it clear that it does not endorse measures for QI-only.
- QI-only measures are exceedingly important and that efforts to develop meaningful measures that facilitate both local improvement and shared learning should be accelerated.
- Not supportive of the development of a new process by NQF to endorse or otherwise approve QI-only measures.

Recommendation 4: Encourage the Measures Applications Partnership (MAP) to consider how the NQF+ designation can be used in the selection of measures for programs

- The Advisory Panel encouraged the Measures Applications Partnership (MAP) to consider how the “NQF+” designation can be used when selecting individual measures for specific programs.
 - For example, in an effort to align program and measure attributes, the MAP may determine that an individual program requires “NQF+” measures.
- The Advisory Panel generally agreed that the MAP Coordinating Committee would be most appropriate to develop an approach for applying the “NQF+” designation in their future work.

Recommendation 5: Pursue future work to consider the interaction between program attributes and individual measure attributes

- Identified a preliminary set of measure attributes that should be considered, including; (1) inclusion and exclusion criteria, (2) potential for misclassification based on reliability and validity testing results, and (3) the precision of the risk adjustment models.
- Identified an initial set of program attributes to consider, including (1) methods used to define performance categories (e.g. measure score thresholds), (2) whether or not statistical tests are used to distinguish between performance categories and the approach to those tests, and (3) the nature of the financial incentive (e.g. tied to performance or improvement, upside or downside risk or both, etc.).
- This work should begin with identifying and categorizing measure and program attributes, and move further to provide guidance on the interaction of these various elements.