

## Changes to NQF's Measure Endorsement Process

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Why did NQF decide to change its process for measure endorsement?**

NQF made these changes as part of its commitment to improve healthcare quality and to achieve better care and health for all Americans. NQF is transforming to make measure endorsement more efficient, foster innovation, and enable greater access to NQF expertise.

NQF's measure endorsement process, also referred to as the consensus development process (CDP), is essential to providing the nation, including HHS' public reporting and pay-for-performance initiatives, with a portfolio of measures that meet rigorous evaluation criteria, are up-to-date, reflective of the current evidence, reliable and valid, useful for accountability and quality improvement, and feasible.

#### **What are key changes in the measure endorsement process?**

Among the most significant changes is that every standing committee will review measures twice a year. Previously, standing committees reviewed new and current measures for a select few areas each year. Changing to a twice-a-year review will reduce committee downtime and allow for more frequent opportunities for measures to be submitted and considered for endorsement.

In addition, NQF will require measure developers and stewards to notify NQF at least two months in advance of their intent to submit measures for review. This advance notification will allow measure developers and NQF to prepare for submission periods.

NQF also will establish a Scientific Methods Panel to assist in conducting methodological reviews of submitted measures. Previously, the complexity of measures and the review of methodology could impair the full engagement of standing committee members, particularly those less steeped in measure development. Shifting the scientific, methodological review of measures to this panel and NQF staff will allow for greater engagement and participation, particularly of consumers, patients, and purchasers on NQF standing committees.

Other changes are described in the [2017 Consensus Development Process Redesign](#) report.

#### **How did NQF decide upon the changes?**

The changes reflect input from a process improvement event that NQF held in May 2017, during which it thoroughly examined how it endorses measures, specifically to make the process more agile and reduce the cycle time for measure submission and review. More than 40 private- and public-sector stakeholders—including experts from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and other federal agencies, NQF standing committees, and organizations that develop measures—also provided input, as did NQF members and the public.

**When will NQF begin implementing these changes, and in what areas?**

The changes will be implemented through a phased process and timeline. Some changes are already underway, specifically enhanced education and training for stakeholders beginning in August 2017. Some changes, such as the intent-to-submit requirement, will be implemented in the fall of 2017. The twice-a-year cycle review is currently planned to begin in the fall of 2017. Future, additional changes may be implemented with direction from NQF's governance committee and Board of Directors.

**How will the new Scientific Methods Panel work? How can I nominate someone to the panel?**

The panel, which will have about 25 members, will be appointed in August, and the slate will be posted for public comment. The [call for nominations](#) for the panel is open July 24-August 7.

The experts will provide NQF standing committees with evaluations of the scientific acceptability of measures. Their feedback will be critical to understanding how well measures score on this criterion for NQF endorsement—especially for more complex measures, including those that address outcomes, cost/resource use, efficiency, are composites, or are instrument-based (e.g., patient-reported outcome performance measures).

**Will endorsed measures still follow the three-year maintenance cycle?**

Yes.

**Will the topic areas in which NQF committees review measures change?**

Yes. NQF consolidated some committees to balance measure portfolios and group cross-cutting clinical areas. NQF staff will assign new measures to a standing committee on a case-by-case basis, based on an assessment of the measure population, measure focus, and the topic area of similar measures in the NQF portfolio.

**Will the process for public commenting on measure reviews change?**

Yes. The public will have more opportunity to comment throughout the reviewing process. The commenting period will open approximately three weeks prior to a standing committee's measure evaluation meeting and close 30 days after NQF posts the draft technical report on the NQF website. NQF will continue to communicate to its members and the public about all opportunities for comment.

**Will NQF members' involvement in the measure endorsement process change?**

Yes. NQF members now will have the opportunity to inform committees' recommendations by expressing their sentiment ("Support" or "Do Not Support") for each measure during the same 12-week span as the continuous public commenting period.