## Measure Feedback Loop Committee – Final Web Meeting

The National Quality Forum (NQF) convened a public web meeting for the Measure Feedback Loop Committee on April 24, 2020.

### Welcome, Introductions, and Review of Web Meeting Objectives

Kim Ibarra, NQF Managing Director, began by welcoming participants to the web meeting. Shantanu Agrawal, NQF President and CEO opened the web meeting to thank Committee members for their commitment to the project amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Agrawal also thanked the Committee for their continued time investment in the NQF Measure Feedback Loop project, given the extension of the project's timeline. Measure Feedback Loop co-chairs Eddie Machado and Rose Baez provided opening remarks as well. Ms. Ibarra then provided an overview of the agenda and reviewed the following meeting objectives: 1) Review project progress and reflect on accomplishments to date, 2) obtain Committee input on the draft Pilot Implementation Plan, and 3) discuss next steps including how to increase awareness of the measure feedback loop.

### Reviewing Project Accomplishments to Date

Hannah Ingber, NQF Project Analyst reviewed the importance of the measure feedback loop, the previously set goals of the Committee with respect to the feedback loop, and the progress made on the Measure Feedback Loop project so far. The measure feedback loop is vital to answering key questions such as: whether measures are being used or not, and why; the costs and burden of measurement; issues or risks in measure implementation; and the impact of measurement on improving quality of care and health outcomes. Work already completed on this project includes Committee convenings and a series of reports: the Environmental Scan report served as a way to comprehensively describe the current feedback mechanisms at NQF; the Use and Usability report explored how NQF can improve practices for feedback on the NQF use and usability criterion; and the pilot options report integrated the Committee's recommended strategies and goals for the measure feedback loop into options to pilot. Ms. Ingber then outlined the structure of the Draft Pilot Implementation Plan report. It includes three steps, each with an associated set of Committee-generated strategies.

### Discussion of the Draft Pilot Implementation Plan

Ms. Ibarra described the overall approach to the proposed pilot implementation plan. In order to help ensure the feasibility of implementation, sustainability of successful strategies, and increased potential for benefit to the field, the plan includes strategies from the pilot options report that were rated as high impact (meeting more than one goal) and low to medium cost to implement. Strategies that would require capital investments in IT infrastructure were not included. The plan, to be implemented over a 12-18 month period, follows a human-centered design approach, driven by stakeholder experience, and a continuous quality improvement approach that evaluates the success of strategies throughout the pilot rather than only at the conclusion of the pilot period.

## Step One

Ms. Ibarra then provided more detail for step one: *Generate Meaningful and Actionable Measure Feedback*. NQF will use three strategies in this step. First, NQF will work to improve stakeholder understanding of when and how to provide feedback and also reduce the burden on those providing feedback by improving the accessibility of the tool and making it easier to use. These strategies are aligned with goals one and two. A third strategy for increasing the volume and quality of measure feedback will be to enhance communication, collaboration, and partnerships with stakeholders. Ms. Ibarra then presented qualitative and quantitative methods for measuring success of this step.

Ms. Baez and Mr. Machado guided the Committee through their discussion of this step. The Committee advised prioritizing measures for feedback that are in payment programs and to consider not only prioritizing measures that were recently implemented as some longstanding measures may have been recently updated but not recently implemented. Measures in value-based payment programs could also serve as a built-in incentive for providing feedback. The Committee also advised collaborating with large Electronic Health Record (EHR) vendors and organizations, such as the Electronic Health Record Association, to explore how to support an increase in electronic clinical quality measurement, reduce the burden of data collection and reporting, and increase opportunities for measure feedback within the EHR (e.g. embedding links for feedback within EHRs). The Committee also recommended targeting patient advocates and advocacy organizations in order to ensure that measured populations directly impacted by care quality are involved in the measure feedback loop. The Committee also suggested including Accountable Care Organizations and Medicaid managed care programs as potential collaborators in the pilot.

## Step Two

Ms. Ingber then provided more detail for step two: *Standardize and Streamline the Measure Feedback Tool and Process*. NQF will use three strategies in this step. First, NQF will create a process for automatically acknowledging feedback submitted. Second, NQF will test efforts to harmonize the NQF Commenting Tool and the NQF Measure Feedback Tool to create a more standardized pathway for submitting measure feedback to NQF. Lastly, NQF will refine the Measure Feedback Tool to guide users to provide more targeted, specific, and actionable feedback.

Ms. Baez and Mr. Machado guided the Committee through their discussion of this step. After being asked specifically about potential unintended issues from an end-user perspective that might arise from consolidating the pathways to measure feedback to NQF., The Committee did not raise any issues with combining the two commenting tools. The Committee made several suggestions for improving the Measure Feedback Tool and process. One Committee member noted that providing details on the next steps for a measure at time of commenting would be helpful to set expectations for the person providing feedback on the timing of when their feedback would be reviewed and adjudicated. For example, the automated acknowledgment and/or the Measure Feedback Tool could note when the next standing committee endorsement review will take place or when the next annual evaluation will be submitted. The Committee also stressed the importance of closing the loop with the end user and giving them a clear point of contact – either at NQF, at the measure developer, or at the measure steward. Other specific suggestions centered around collecting information on providers' workflow issues, receiving feedback by measured populations (including unintended consequences or patient harm), specific considerations related to the measure from a patient perspective, and reviewing the equity of measures.

### Step Three

Ms. Ibarra then provided more detail for step three: *Support Stakeholders to Apply Measure Feedback.* NQF will use three strategies within this step as well. First, NQF will help to ensure that standing committees see the measure feedback in a timely manner and are able to apply the relevant NQF endorsement criteria to make recommendations. Second, it is vital to also ensure measure developers receive this feedback in a timely manner. Lastly, NQF will inventory the various ways that different types of feedback are addressed. The work in this step of the plan will help NQF continue to refine its communication, outreach materials, and educational resources around why feedback is important, what type of feedback is actionable, and what those who submit feedback can expect in terms of follow-up actions. These materials will enhance the Measure Feedback Tool and help to close the measure feedback loop.

In discussion about this step, the Committee highlighted the potential need to triage different feedback on measures, with the revised fields from step two informing which measures might be considered high priority for a response. For instance, high priority feedback related to unintended clinical consequences or patient harm could be shared with NQF standing committee co-chairs outside of a review cycle, whereas other feedback that is lower priority could wait until the next endorsement review. The Committee suggested being clear about the best timeframes for providing measure feedback. For example, some timeframes to consider might include: the standing committee review cycle, annual updates for measures, quarterly updates for chart-abstracted measures, and measure submission deadlines.

The Committee also recommended categorizing feedback based upon from whom it was received to focus Committee recommendations when they apply measure feedback in their measure review. Other suggestions from the Committee included aggregating feedback and responding to key themes (e.g. by stakeholder group or concern) rather than responding to individual feedback to reduce responder burden, and reviewing comments each year for measures within NQF topic area portfolios, even if they are not under review. Once the measure is up for review, the Committee will already have a position on those comments and can evaluate how they were addressed.

### Continuous Quality Improvement

Ms. Ibarra described the approach to continuous quality improvement for the pilot implementation plan. Throughout the pilot, NQF will evaluate the strategies against the six goals the Committee defined earlier on in this project. NQF will also assess feasibility, costs, and benefits of the various strategies: is the volume of measure feedback increasing, enhancing the quality of feedback, and meeting the needs of those providing and using measure feedback. NQF will use data that it naturally collects through its regular processes, and assess data throughout the pilot to help quickly address strategies that aren't working, and learn how NQF might scale strategies that are successful more broadly. The Committee suggested an additional metric of success to measure would be the number of measures adjusted based on feedback received through the Feedback Loop. One Committee member commented that there may be some concerns for proposed changes within the pilot and how it will impact measure developer timelines. Ms. Ibarra shared that measure developers are a key stakeholder and the intention is not to replace or duplicate processes that measure developers use, or to create undue burden. Rather, the aim is to supplement and strengthen collaboration and alignment around measure feedback.

## Public Comment

Ms. Ibarra opened the web meeting to allow for public comment. No public comments were offered.

## Next Steps

Ms. Ingber described the next steps on this project. NQF will post the draft report for public comment from April 27 to May 8, 2020. The final report will be published on June 10, 2020. NQF encouraged the Committee to comment on the report and to disseminate it for commenting among their colleagues. Finally, Ms. Ibarra thanked the Committee and Co-Chairs for their commitment and leadership throughout the project. Mr. Machado and Ms. Baez also recognized the Committee members for their contributions and thanked them for their valuable insights.