NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM

Moderator: Benita Kornegay Henry
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1:00 pm ET

(Beth Rubenstein): Hello. This is (Beth Rubenstein) on one line.

(Anne Deitches): Hi, it’s (Anne Deitches) with the NQF call.

(Beth Rubenstein): I believe so, this is (Beth Rubenstein), so I think we're in a holding queue.

(Anne Deitches): Okay, perfect. Thank you. I guess we’re five minutes early.

(Beth Rubenstein): Better early than late because I lose track of things. So you know.

(Anne Deitches): Me, too. The emails get distracting.

(Beth Rubenstein): Whereabouts are you calling from?

(Anne Deitches): Chicago. How about you?

(Beth Rubenstein): Michigan. Detroit area. So beautiful weather today. I'll take this all year round.

(Anne Deitches): Good. But you also have the dome recently.

(Beth Rubenstein): Beautiful weather. I don't know, the rain has kind of gone around us.

(Anne Deitches): Yeah. Are on the web…

(Beth Rubenstein): I'm on the Web site and there was just the pop-up thing from the chairperson. They'll be joining us in a moment.

(Anne Deitches): Perfect. Okay.

(Beth Rubentesin): Thank you for your patience.

(Anne Deitches): Okay, good. I'm ready then.

(Beth Rubenstein): I'm ready too, take care.

Woman: Hello? Is anybody on the line?

(Anne Deitches): Yep. Hi. There's just a couple of us. I think we're on hold waiting for them to…

(Lee Fleischer): It’s (Lee Fleischer), also.

(Beth Rubenstein): Yeah. Okay, thanks.

Operator: That conferencing is no longer active.

(Madison Jones): Hi, everybody, this is (Madison Jones), project manager with NQF. Is (Ashley Wildon) on the line?

(Ashley Wildon): I am. Good afternoon.

(Madison Jones): Great. (Ashley), I think we're ready to go ahead and get started then.

(Ashley Wildon): Okay.

(Ashley Wildon): Give me one second to, get in the - I think my webinar's still coming up here. So good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining us. This is our first webinar in a series. We will be discussing the measure feedback loop pilot, and several of the components that we'll be seeking the committee's feedback on to, ultimately recommend hopefully a pilot that we will develop an implementation for in the coming months.

So thanks again for joining us. And, I'll just start with a few housekeeping items. Again, we've used this webinar platform before, just a few reminders. Feel free to use the chat box for messages to any of the presenters. If you have any issues or questions you'd like shared with the committee, feel free to use the raise your hand feature. Also, if you have a comment. Also we'll ask that you please keep yourself on mute if you don't have any - if you're not currently making statements or comments. That way we keep down on the background noise and the feedback for everyone.

Also for those of you that are public participants and joining, you listened to the committee discussion, we will also have an opportunity at the end of the discussion today for there to be public comments for the committee to consider, as well as for others to, to share any thoughts. So stay tuned and if you have that, you're also welcome to use the chat feature. We will queue any questions that come up from the public as well, for the committee to consider, during the webinar.

Okay. And with that, I'm joined by my team today. On this call Jean-Luc, (Madison) and (Navia) who I think everyone is familiar with at this point. Also wanted to recognize our federal liaison from CMS, some of whom may not had an opportunity to join us today. But if so, please welcome them as well. And, we will, obviously be working with them closely over the next several months. As the committee provides us input on developing the pilot option.

So for our agenda for today, we'll kick off with a roll call to get a sense of who's on the call. We'll be focusing on the pilot - feedback loop pilot goals. We'll be discussing some of the proposed strategies that we have developed so far to address those goals. And then we'll talk a little bit about the approach that we have set forth so far, to have the committee assess those strategies and activities for the pilot in terms of the costs and benefits of those activities, in terms of - to give us some input on how we might select them for implementation in a particular pilot option.

And then towards the end again we'll have an opportunity for public comment and then we'll wrap it up with next steps. So at this point I'm going to hand it over to (Navia) to give us - to run the roll call and we'll see who's on the line. (Navia)?

(Navia): Thanks, (Ashley), this is (Navia) speaking. So I'll start with the roll call. (Rose Base)?

(Rose Base): Yes, I’m here. Hi.

(Navia): Thank you. (Eddie Machado) unfortunately will not be with us for this webinar. (Constance Anderson)?

(Constance Anderson): Yes, I'm here.

(Navia): (Robert Center) was also not be available. (Elvia Tavaria)? I think as noted that she will also not be available. (Melody Danko-Holmsbeck)?

(Melody Danko-Holmsbeck): Yes, I’m here.

(Navia): Thank you. (Unintelligible).

Woman: Here.

(Navia): (Tricia Elliott)?

(Tricia Elliott): Here.

(Navia): (Lee Fleischer).

(Lee Fleischer): Here.

(Navia): (Mark Quan) said he'll be joining us for the second half of the meeting. (Joe Kunish)?

(Joe Kunish): Here.

(Navia): (Claire Nola-Miller)? (Atsa Binwani)? (Corinne Reuben)?

(Corinne Ruben): Here.

(Navia): Thank you. (Beth Rubenstein).

(Beth Rubenstein): Here.

(Navia): Thank you. (Sue Sheridan) will not be able to make this meeting. (Joel Schumaker)?

(Joel Schumaker): I'm here.

(Navia): Thank you. (Heather Smith)?

(Heather Smith): Here.

(Navia): Thank you. (Debra Strup)? (Sarah Toomey)?

(Sarah Toomey): I'm here.

(Navia): Thank you. Has anyone joined while I was taking roll call?

(Atsa Binwani): Hi, sorry. This is (Atsa Binwani).

(Navia): Thank you. And with that I'll pass it back to Rose to go over the meeting objectives for today. Sorry, (Ashley). (Ashley), are you on mute?

(Ashley Wildon): Yes, I am sorry, I was talking on mute. Apologies. Today our goals are to reach consensus on the goal of the feedback loop pilot. You will recall that the team developed some goals and sent a survey out to the committee for consideration. So we'll go over those, to make sure we're on the right track. With those we'll discuss an approach for recommending the feedback loop pilot option.

The team has also been working on establishing a process for how we come to the various decisions that we need to make over the next several months in order to end up with at least two pilot options for both the committee and for CMS to consider.

So we'll talk through the process that we have established to date for your consideration. and then we'll spend most of our time today talking through the various strategies or activities that we are proposing kind of the straw man to the committee that would take place within the various - within the pilot options, which have, you know, you have to be grouped into to varied options, but we'll talk through those strategies, and get your feedback on whether or not we're on the right track with those and if there's others for us to consider.

And then finally, the last hopefully kind of action item for today is to get some input from the committee on which costs and benefits we should be assessing each of these strategies for. You may or may not recall from our scope of work for this project, we want to have some sort of objective evaluation of the various activities that we choose to implement for the pilot so that we've done some analysis on what it would take to implement them, as well as the benefits of those and how well it would help us achieve the goals of the pilot.

So we'll get some input from the committee on a few of the costs and benefits that we've identified so far and hopefully come up with some next steps on how to push those forward.

And with that, I'm going to hand it over to (Madison) to start talking us through our approach for getting to the pilot options.

(Madison Jones): Great. Thanks, (Ashley). So we wanted to start off with- next slide please. We wanted to start off by just getting a foundational understanding and coming to consensus on what our definition of a CDP feedback loop is. You recognize there's a lot of different feedback loops that can occur, but for the purpose of this project, we wanted to focus - the charge of this committee and this project is to focus on the CDP process and how we can get information to and from the process, the different stakeholders.

So right on this slide, on slide nine is a graphic kind depicting our initial thinking about what that CDP feedback loop process is. There are four main stakeholders in this process. So of course there's us and (unintelligible) and we really are the stewards of measure endorsement. We provide tools to facilitate the collection of and generation of feedback and ensure that information is passed along to our different stakeholders.

So ENTRA’s role us is that central repository for information collected and feedback on endorsed measures and also ensures that endorsed measures adhere to the evaluation criteria.

The next stakeholder group is the ENTRA standing committee and those are the ones applying the criteria of endorsement to the measures that come into our process. And they're the ones coming up with feedback to measure developers during the measure evaluation process and also respond to some of the comments generated.

The next role is measure developers. So they are the ones that are also creating these measures and soliciting and collecting feedback during that process on those. Using their measures, they report feedback on their measures for endorsement consideration. They consider the feedback and take action on whether or not to modify the measure as needed. And they also have the role of responding to commenters who submit feedback.

And lastly, the last stakeholder group we've identified in this loop is measured users. So the ones who are using the measures to make decisions - those would be patients or caregivers. They're also the ones that are being measured, the ones who implement measures and they can be implementing these measures for a variety of different purposes, such as performance improvement programs, payment, other accountability functions, internal quality improvement.

And these measure users are also submitting feedback from - on their experience to - on their experience with the measure. So I'll pause here and open it up for committee discussion. What we're looking for is an understanding of if the committee agrees with the conceptualization of how the ENTRA feedback loop should function. Do you agree that these are the roles as defined for the key stakeholders of this feedback loop?

(Joe Kunish): This is (Joe). Just kind of a question. Where would you see like the regulatory piece of this fitting in or do you not see it? Like, you know, from CMS and, you know, even joint commission. So I guess when you look at this as just the quality measure, but then there's also when a measure becomes required or put into a payment program, you know.

I guess I don't know if that type of feedback, you know, like in the typical way what under the, you know, let's say the ITPS giving comments on, you know, quality measures that CMS is going to adopt is one way it's happening now. But do you see that completely outside of this process or anywhere in there because CMS is the big stakeholder in this process, as is that joint commission.

(Ashley Wildon): Hi Joe, this is (Ashley). I think I'll just kind of go a couple of slides back to here. I think the way we conceptualize it at this point is that the feedback loop would be centered around endorsement, the endorsement process and measures that are being considered for endorsement under evaluation, under maintenance review, either for an initial endorsement or for maintenance, endorsement, maintenance of endorsement.

And so for measures that are under consideration within the endorsement process, certainly feedback that has been collected through CMS's processes or comment period would certainly be within scope. Feedback that is gathered through the measure applications partnership as it relates to measures being considered and coming into the endorsement process or that are - have already been endorsed would certainly be within scope.

I think the tricky part or maybe the gray area may be potentially other measures that CMS has and programs that are not within the NQF process. And I'm not sure if that helps to delineate it for you, but I think we were really centering our focus on the feedback loop on measures as they kind of come in and out of the endorsement process through our evaluation of the measures. Does that help or make sense or is that maybe not quite in alignment with what you were thinking?

(Joe Kunish): No, no, I mean that's what I was really just trying to clarify. You know, just, you know, as a note, in my experience getting actual clinical feedback from the frontline clinicians and knows - that now have to meet this measure typically doesn't happen until it gets, you know, in a way that it's going to impact them.

Like, you know, under NQF there's, you know, over, well over a hundred managers. Well, you're not going to have your front-line clinician going through saying, oh, you know, what measures are going to, you know, have to do with my specialty or whatever. Now sometimes I'll reach out to some clinicians I know to get feedback, but to really get engagement when something comes into the program or seeing this as proposing it, that's when I start getting engagement on that part of it.

So again, you know, really the frontline clinician is critical to this feedback loop, but how to engage them when it's not going to impact them is a different story.

(Ashley Wildon): Right.

(Tricia Elliott): (Tricia Elliott), if I could kind of build on a few of the comments that Joe has made. On - the measure developer role makes sense. And NQF standing committee, NQF, all those, those all make sense. But when we get to the measure users, I think that's where Joe's calling out some of the challenges. And I think (Ashley), you spoke to a gray area.

So one of the things we're challenged with as a measure developer is the secondary use of our measures. So we typically develop our measures for our use and either accreditation or certification programs. If the measures go through the NQF process, then they have, and become endorsed, there's the possibility they're then used in a CMS program, or other programs.

So as a measure steward and developer, we do not always have control over who picks up our measures and uses them. So I think it's going to be challenging to capture all of that - all those pieces regarding measure users. So those who are being measured, you know, to Joe's point, their voice coming to the table. We address it through our internal processes that include technical advisory panels. So we try to bring in that voice from the field to either influence or adapt or adopt our measures as well as giving the results of the measures back out to the organizations to then have the quality improvement discussions.

So we try to get at that clinical feedback, but I think this measure user piece is going to be really challenging. So the third bullet of those who implement the measures, how, you know, I'm not quite sure how we get them engaged in the process.

(Constance Anderson): This is (Connie) and I would echo that and I think the measure users is going to be the most difficult portion of this because I think also part of the problem - and I think we're going to get to it later on, is the measure users aren't really clear in terms of what their role in providing feedback is. And I think they're the ones that are left implementing the measures or secondarily using them, based on whatever regulatory issues. And I think this is probably the most critical area to really take a good, hard look at. And it's going to be the most difficult to figure out how to improve - make improvements in communication and feedback for the measure users.

(Anne Deitches): Thank you. This is (Anne). So I guess I’m going to build on actually what everybody's said so far. The way I interpreted this, and I could be off base, but it sounded like the process always included NQF in a central role. But my experience - I’m a measure developer and one of the things that we do is we basically have - we solicit measure user feedback through either expert panels or, you know, if we're out presenting at conferences and get feedback about a presentation or whatever, or you know, obviously if we're writing manuscripts, things like that, we do get feedback that way.

And then, you know, there’s help desk. So there's - and training programs. And so there's like all kinds of ways that users can provide feedback about data elements and calculations, et cetera.

So, I guess I just wanted to clarify that measure developers in my opinion have a role in soliciting feedback from users directly that may not include

NQF, and that work happens basically as part of the development and, like, ongoing maintenance of the measure to ensure that, you know, as you get new data that you're, you know, making the measure as good as it can be.

So I guess that's my first question. Is that - I guess is what we're talking about maybe above and beyond what the measure developer does on their own? Or would you're thinking be that everything always goes through NQF.

(Ashley Wildon): Hi, this is (Ashley). I just want to clarify. I think that's actually exactly it and I pulled up this slide 12 to show that we were actually intending to illustrate that developers often do as you describe and have their own communication and properties for soliciting feedback, but that that feedback is shared through the endorsement process when you submit a measure, when your measure comes back for maintenance. But we may not necessarily be involved in your, in the collection of that feedback, but that there would be an expectation that during - if your measure is being considered by NQF in some capacity, that information would then be shared through the process. Does that make sense?

(Anne Deitches): Yes. And I think the current forms do allow that. But I guess it's, yes, I guess you do have questions that basically ask if you solicited feedback. And I think we, you know, in my most recent experience we did have maintenance measures and we did provide information, so okay. That's helpful. Thank you.

(Ashley Wildon): Sure.

(Tricia Elliott): This is (Tricia) again to build on (Anne)'s comments and that question. I don't think enough weight is placed on that feedback that we provide from the measure developer perspective. So perhaps through this process we can shine more light on that. I don't think that feedback, as the forms, you know, work their way through the endorsement process, that there's enough emphasis on that. So then when we get onto the measure users, once again, my greatest concern is then when as a measure developer measures do get adopted by other entities, let's say a clinical data registry, and then it gets used and potentially altered, we have no control over that. And then that could come back and negatively impact views of the measure.

(Beth Rubenstein): This is (Beth Rubinstein). This also - I agree with the comment just stated. This also goes to the need for education, the education throughout the entire pipeline, from lay users to the lay people being measured to professionals. So it's an education pipeline that doesn't exist right now. And I think we need to consider that as part of the measurement feedback loop because if you don't provide education, we're not really compiling a rich base for feedback.

(Karin): This is (Karin) from the AMA. I think the other challenge - someone kind of alluded to it, is sometimes the CMS program requirements get in the way of the intent of the measure. So that then impacts how it's being implemented. So I don't know how you take that into consideration.

(Constance Anderson): This is (Connie) again. I'd go back to the process and the feedback loop process, and if you have multiple ways to provide feedback, if you don't have a central repository for that information and feedback, then for those who are going to be the implementers and/or the users of the measures or whatever, it makes it very, very difficult to find where that feedback process is and what that feedback comment information is.

I think it's important that as we look at the schematic of responsibilities if you want to call it, that there is a central repository where when a measure is seen that forward and NQF becomes the main central repository, if you want to call it, that the feedback and the information goes to a central place, so that the developers aren't talking directly to the users and the users to the developers, so that when the measure comes forward to NQF for endorsement, the committees have all of that defined information available to them and can then see what the comments are.

Woman: This speaks to standardization of the process, which I think is one of our primary goals.

(Tricia Elliott): Yes, I agree.

(Madison Jones): Hi, so this is (Madison). I don't want to cut off discussion but I think a lot of the points that we're raising are excellent points and actually things that were - we'll be asking you to consider in the upcoming slides in the presentation. But before we dive into kind of setting a framework of our goals and how to achieve these points, I do want to go back and turn it over to (Ashley) to kind of review our approach to these next few web meetings and how we plan to tackle all of these points that we've laid out.

(Ashley Wildon): Thanks (Madison). Apology vibe, I got mixed up with my slide numbers and accidentally skipped over this slide. But we just wanted to give folks kind of a bird's eye view of what our plan was for the next few webinars and orient folks on how we plan to - kind of the approach again and the process we use, we’re going to use to collect your feedback and build a case for the pilot options that we'll present later in the fall.

So for today, again, we're going to be looking at setting the goals of the pilot, making sure that we have identified the problems that we need to address, the solutions and the strategies or the activities that we will propose in terms of implementing for the pilot and then talk about the cost and benefits to assess the pilot strategies.

And then after the webinar we're going to discuss a plan later on about how we will be assessing those costs and benefits based on the strategies that we end up with. Our next webinar will focus on that cost/benefit analysis and then began to discuss the actual potential pilot options and how to group those strategies together based on whether or not we believe they are - come with high benefit or low cost and so forth. And so we'll really be focusing on kind of grouping strategies or activities into various options for how the pilot might be implemented.

And then on webinar seven, we'll really be discussing what those final pilot options are and be looking for some recommendations from the committee on which pilot option that CMS should focus on in terms of considering and selecting for us to develop an implementation plan.

So, again, just again, a bird's eye view of how we plan to use the next several calls, and hopefully to give you guys a sense of where we'll be focusing our energy, for today and going forward. I'll pause for any questions and if there aren't any, we can kind of jump back in and apologies for the, again, apologies for the interruption there in terms of our flow. But, if there aren't any questions about this, we can kind of jump into the goals of the pilot and continue the discussion on the strategies that we'll look to implement with the various pilot options.

(Madison Jones): Okay, this is (Madison). Hearing none, I think we can dive back into the proposed goals of the feedback loop pilot. So, just from this conversation we had, it sounds like we definitely need to do some work in defining - more detail into defining some of these stakeholder groups and especially measure users and how they're interacting with the process.

But these goals - our proposed goals ENTA staff had put together and included in that survey that we sent a few weeks ago. So these goals are improve - goal number one is improve accessibility and ease of the use of ENTA's tools designed to collect feedback. This is in order to minimize burden for users to provide feedback. So making it easy for people to - and removing the barriers that we had discussed with some of the currently existing tools on how to get that feedback back to us.

Goal two is that the relevant stakeholders are aware of opportunities and channels to comment and provide measure feedback to NQF. So not that the tools are easy to use, but that people actually know about the tool. Goal three is ENTA's standing committees receive meaningful and adequate information to apply the relevant criteria and make recommendations for endorsement.

Goal four is developers are provided with meaningful and actionable measure feedback for consideration in a timely manner. And goal five is those who provide feedback are provided and acknowledgement and disposition of the feedback and how it was adjudicated. So, that goal was in response to one of comments we had that, you know, there's not really a way to know about when you give feedback and ENTA's process if it's been received and what's going to be done with that.

This next slide shows you the survey results of, and the level of agreement that we had on these five goals. And overall from the committee there is a high level of strongly agree or agree across the (unintelligible). I think only one or two votes was a disagree or neither agree nor disagree.

This next slide. So we'd asked the committee to provide additional suggestions for goals and this next slide is just to show you the results of that question. ENTA staff did incorporate them into the currently existing goals explicitly, as those overarching ones. But we did feel that a lot of these suggested goals are either going to be addressed in some of their proposed strategies for the problems or addressed in some of - or noted as problems themselves.

So with that I will - oh, there. I'm turning it over to the committee for discussion on feedback as these goals do adequately addressed the key areas of focus for the feedback loop pilot? How, you know, if they don't, how might they be better - be modified to better delineate the goals and then are there any additional goals that should be considered?

(Crosstalk)

Woman: I don't know where this fits in and maybe it’s - the stakeholders are aware of opportunities. So somehow there has to be a way to do some marketing in terms of the process. And market the opportunity for feedback and reach out to those that are going to be impacted. And I don't know where the market fits in, but I think there’s such a lack of awareness of how to give feedback or the whole entire maybe process. So I'd like to see somewhere in here that there's some marketing strategy or under one of the goals, probably goal number two.

(Madison Jones): Great. Yeah, I think that's definitely one of the points that we'd like to discuss in more depth. So, as we get to some of the problems (unintelligible). But I do just want to note before we dive into this discussion, that this - at this point in the process, we are not looking exactly for specific implementation strategies. We want to just make sure that we are - at a very high level, these are the things that we should be aiming for. And then a little bit later we're going to dive into, okay, how are we going to achieve those things? So just want to make that note.

(Beth Rubenstein): (Beth Rubenstein) here, I think one of the goals which isn't mentioned is standardization of the process. We allude to it, but you need to have a clear goal as to standardization. So we have increased accessibility, increased with - but we don't have the concept of standardization of the process.

(Madison Jones): So, this is (Madison). To ask you a little bit more about what you mean by standardization. Is it standardization you're thinking of one pathway or standardization of the questions being asked or…

(Beth Rubenstein): I think it's a combination of both. Definitely the pathways, the pathways for feedback, creating those vehicles and tying that into marketing. We have to be speaking with a standardized voice, a collective voice so the message is clear. Especially when you have a public-facing type of measure or the public is being measured. So that standardization leads to a clear, concise message probably. So I think it's a combination of both.

(Lee Fleischer): So this is (Lee). I'm in the marketing. I realize you're going to go over that. Are there outlet channels that would be important that could help us see if this works as you think of specific groups, or will you go over that shortly to get the feedback?

(Beth Rubenstein): From a patient perspective, (Beth Rubenstein) again, I know there's many social vehicles, social media vehicles from a patient perspective, and one day at the National Quality Forum has actually been doing hand-in-hand work with an organization called Patients With Me. And these are very powerful vehicles in which we can solicit vast amounts of information.

So there is some strategy being worked on in other committees within the National Quality Forum.

(Madison Jones): Yes. So this is, so I think we just, let me rephrase to make sure I'm understanding your question. The question was that, will we be developing marketing strategies for more specific like specific marketing strategies for specific stakeholder groups?

(Lee Fleischer): Well, I just - the key to whether or not this works is whether or not, I link the feedback back to the person providing the feedback and how it's incorporated. Because you know, if you talk to either patient groups or provider groups, hospital groups, they don't always feel fully listened to. So the better, the more defined what the response back to the person who actually made the complaint, or feedback we'll call it, is really critical.

So almost, you know, soliciting additional complaints and really formalizing what feedback means.

(Madison Jones): Yes, yes. So that is something that we are hoping to discuss in the presentation today, in detail. I think it's - I think it's goal five.

(Lee Fleischer): Thank you.

(Madison Jones): Okay. Well…

(Ashley Wildon): (Madison), just real quick, this is (Ashley). Just really quickly. So, it sounds like that we're on the right track with the goal just based on the survey results and the comments so far. I do think that a lot of the suggestions are either covered as (Madison) mentioned as problems that we identified to address or strategies, specific strategies that we wanted to implement that would be kind of strategy to reach one of the goals we identified.

The one addition that I do think we need to probably pull out is this idea about the standardization. We did mention it. It is actually listed as one of the strategies, but I tend to agree that it's a pretty major - should be a pretty central focus of our efforts. And so that is one that I think we do - we will probably pull out and maybe join with the kind of the larger, overarching goals for the process and we can maybe rearrange some of the strategies that we had for maybe some of the other goals to move under there.

So, I think that seems to be the one that we are probably maybe missing at that goal level. Unless there are other suggestions that kind of - that meet that level of, I would say strategy if you will as opposed to kind of implementation versus, goal.

(Constance Anderson): I think it's - this is (Connie) again. I think it's really important to have that standard process. I would - I think pulling it out and making it more major process is a great idea.

(Madison Jones): Okay, great. (Ashley), you said exactly what I was going to say. So I will turn it over you over to you for us to start going over the goals and turn it over to you to go over the process and goal one as well.

(Ashley Wildon): Okay. So what we've done for this webinar, because there are so many goals and strategies, and rather than listening to NQF staff talk the whole time, we wanted to make sure that it was more interactive and that the committee had more of an opportunity to really take a deep dive on each of these as well. So what we've done is to assign various folks to the different goals and strategies as lead discussants to help us walk through them and make sure that each of the goals and the strategies that we propose under each have adequate discussion, and we're, you know, addressing all of the issues that we need to.

So, I, all of you have been notified at this point, so we'll be sure to kind of call on you throughout. So we won't be able to have this slide up the whole time, but we want to just flash this here.

Our structure for the discussion coming forward will be to list the goal. We'll talk about some of the ongoing activities that we currently do that we propose to kind of continue through the pilot.

And then we'll go through for each goal and talk about some of the problems that we have identified through the committee's discussion, that have been identified through the environmental scans or basic usability report that we've developed that we're pulling from various places that we have already done a lot of background and legwork to get to this point and identify and pull out those problems that we've identified, and then try to come up with strategies to meet the goal and also address the problems that we identified under each goal.

So, that's essentially the structure that we'll follow for each goal. As we go along we'll be looking for the committee's feedback in particular on whether or not there are other problems that would need to be addressed to accomplish the goal. And then of course, whether or not there are other strategies we should be considering or activities we should be considering for implementation in order to further that goal as well.

So with that, there are a few kind of key questions based on that, that we have pulled out. So again, how we identify the correct problem. Are there other problems? Are these the right strategies? Are there other strategies we should be considering? And, if time allows, we can start to discuss some of the pros and cons of some of the strategies, although we will have some time at the end to talk about how we should be evaluating some of these strategies.

But, for now we can talk at the level of making sure we've addressed the problems that we've identified with the right strategies or activities. So with that, what I'll do is just give a high-level overview of goal one and hand it over to the lead discussant, which will be (Connie) along with (Mark) and (Sue), to provide any additional feedback and collect any additional comments from the committee on this goal.

So our first goal is to improve accessibility and ease of the use of the tools designed to collect feedback and to minimize the burden for users to provide feedback. So some of the ongoing activities that we would like to continue to do would be to provide the - continue to provide the portal for public commenting on the project page for each of the active commenting periods. We will also continue to provide the link or accessibility of the measure of feedback tool on the NQF page and via the QPS page.

Now how those are displayed certainly will be a point of discussion going forward, but I think certainly we want to make sure that that continues to be a feature on our homepage that can be accessed. And then obviously we'll talk more about the - how easily it can be accessed going forward in some of our problem statements.

So, some of the problems that we identified with this is that we do require a login in order to comment and then again, the difficulty of finding the commenting tools on the Web site, while they are available there with a couple of clicks usually to get through to the commenting tool, they're not very visible. And it requires quite a bit of knowledge of navigating our Web site in order to get to them. And I'm going to actually move on to the next slide on the problem and then hand it over to (Connie).

The login requirement again is very discouraging and one of the things that we are proposing to do would be to allow commenters not have to log in, but to provide an option for them to leave an email address if they would like a follow-up response or other contact information. They can leave their name or organization or other information if they would like follow-up, either acknowledgement of receipt of their comment or to allow the developer to contact them for further questions. And this would be up to the commenter to leave that particular information.

So with that, I'm going to hand it over to Connie and other discussants to see, to give us some discussion and feedback on the problems and strategies we've identified for goal one.

(Constance Anderson): Excuse me, this is (Connie). And, I think we have identified the problem correctly because the users that are impacted by the measures are not aware of the various methods to provide feedback. And those methods are very cumbersome.

And so based on some of the data that was in the usability report, there's even been a significant decline in these stakeholders using the feedback mechanisms on the NQF Web site. So I think the login process, I think that whole strategy number one is very important because if there's a burden to users to get in, to provide feedback, they're not going use it. And I think that part of what you're seeing in the decline of the stakeholders not using the NQF Web site.

Also, I think another problem with that, and I think it's difficult to navigate the Web site. And so I think from a user standpoint, they are unaware how to navigate through that Web site. And so I think there needs to be an educational tutorial or something within their - to be able to help people navigate to the Web site.

Also I think it's important to - other problems to consider is how you reach the correct audience in order to solicit feedback and how to notify them of what the feedback timelines are. And I think that's all part and parcel of the accessibility, but it's also the ease of use of the tools and it's a great beginning. But I think the whole Web site needs some new design and better tools.

And then our other strategies to consider again are the outreach to the affected communities to improve the communication about the navigation for the NQF Web site.

So, I think those are some of my comments. I think it's important. I think the login requirement is discouraging and I think any way that we can improve accessing the information for the users is going to be a very important first step. And it has to be a standard process, a single mechanism where they go into the Web site and a single spot. There's not, you know, oh you can give feedback here or you can give feedback to the developer directly. I think that standardization and making it simple and easy to use is very important.

I think this is an important strategy, it’s a beginning strategy because without a user-friendly Web site, and being able to provide the feedback, you’re going to see even further decline in the number of people providing comments.

(Karin): Yes. This is (Karin) from the AMA. I mean one thing too, if anything, the individual project pages have to be improved because in order to find out what is actually being reviewed, you have to, you know, download various PDFs and in reality what people just really care about - want to quickly, you know, figure out if they need to follow the project, is what measures are being considered. And it's not easy to determine that, but since it's not flashed and clearly stated on the Web site. You just have a lot of like verbiage of what the project is, but without the clear specifics attached to that.

(Jill): Hey, this is (Jill) from ABFM. And, I think last year CMS did a really good job of aligning some of their measures pages and Web sites such as the QPP and the ETQM, ACQI Web site. And it really helped the users that I work with to navigate those pages and define information about measures, et cetera, et cetera. Is it possible to have feedback and kind of a feedback loop page on ACQI or at least the link there that was visible that users wouldn't have to dig, but something that was kind of incorporated into that kind of page, because that's where a lot of the users are going any way.

And so I think if there was something that was part of that where it was easily accessible to them, and right there face up to them, I think it would, that would decrease a lot of the burden that I think that they're currently feeling.

(Melody Danko-Holmsbeck): Hi, this is (Melody) from (unintelligible). Just some thoughts and suggestions for discussion. If it's something that, you know, there's not a sign into the actual NQF page, but when you use it the first time, maybe register your email so that we just have - they just have to put their email on and it attaches the additional information, you know, so that, you know, what status. You know, is it a, a physician, is it a developer, that type of thing. So you know who that feedback is coming from.

But they only use their email as an identifier for that actual identification process without, you know, a full login and then vary. But maybe - try to reduce some background noise here - have it easy to get to on the Web site. So you click on the link, you make your comments, and then you put your email on with that registration that connects all the other information in the background for the developers of the measure. Does that make sense? I guess that kind of sums it up.

(Ashley Wildon): Are there other - thanks for that, that was actually really helpful. We're writing those down. Are there other comments from the other discussants for this goal that wanted to make any additions or…

(Asta Binwani): Hi, this is (Asta), I just wanted to add just a couple things and it's not anything new that people haven't said. I think it's really important. I think (Connie) said at the beginning, somehow getting the communication out there that we are, it’s feedback commenting time on whatever measures that are out there so that people are aware, number one. Otherwise they won't come to provide the feedback. That's the first thing.

And then the second thing is I agree the idea of only having one place to go to submit feedback is going to make it a lot easier for folks not to have to find it through the Web site, but just immediately from the homepage be able to go to measure feedback.

And then I like - I know we talked about this previously, but the idea of whatever we do want to collect on the person, so whether it's the role that was just mentioned, just some real general information will give us better information on the background so that when folks want to - when we look at strategy three here and people want to look at all the comments that are submitted, then we can start - there is a way to categorize or a way to produce some type of summary that folks can really see from, you know, whether it's a provider or a measure developer, et cetera, what kind of comments are coming through.

So I know we don't want to do the full login process but we still probably would want to capture a little bit of information more to help on the back end.

Woman: Yeah. And then whatever process is developed, having a little, you know, icon that they can click on to give a general instruction of, you know, you only need to enter this information once. Then every time you put your email on it, it'll be filled in or something. However, it’s a development thing - it'll be developed that way. But just some little pop-up at the beginning so that they understand how to navigate quickly rather than having to even dig for directions I think would be helpful as well.

(Joe Kunish): This is (Joe). I mean, I think something that would be very helpful is knowing what comments were already received. You know, one thing I kind of pointed out and in the (unintelligible) process of getting feedback on ECQMs is, a lot of people give comments and they are there for you to go look at, but they're not aggregated and you can't quickly identify common themes. So you're not putting in the same information.

And if there was a way to kind of aggregate that information and say, okay, this is a common theme, that's - somebody's already identified. And then even having maybe like a vote button where you could say, you know, quickly hit, I agree with this, where you wouldn't have to be entering the same information. And then on the - first on the receiver’s end, you're not getting the same thing over and over.

So you get ten new comments today and they all say the same thing and you already have - know that's an issue, being able to put that there and that it's being addressed or again, allowing people to vote and then you can start seeing, is this a problem, you know, just from one person reporting this or is this something that multiple people are.

(Ashley Wildon): That actually is a really cool suggestion, (Joe). Thanks for that. That's not one we had considered yet. Other comments or suggestions around the - I hadn't been over, I've verbally said these, but had to flash this slide before I handed it over. Just obviously thinking, the feedback tool more prominent and visible on the Web site, on the homepage and also increasing visibility and the in the quality positioning system and then obviously enabling more simple, accessible viewing of all the comments submitted on any endorsed measure.

And I think we got some feedback on how we can maybe make that, the viewing of comments more usable to folks with being able to filter or add a, I agree or kind of co-signing on other comments that have been submitted.

(Lee Fleischer): It’s (Lee) again, just to ask, and I apologize, I had to walk out for a minute. But is there a possibility of also putting a link that would get you directly in from other potential stakeholder Web sites?

(Ashley Wildon): Sure. That's certainly something that we have proposed, I believe, in goal two or three. But I think what we'll find as we go through with a lot of these strategies that we're proposing might actually help to meet and support multiple goals. So I think that's actually one that did come up, but I think it also would fit nicely here as well, (Lee). Thank you.

Okay. Why don't we go ahead and move on to goal two, I think we've got a nice list for goal one and some additional strategies that we can add there. We'll move on here. The second goal that we'll review is around the stakeholders being aware of opportunities and channels to comment and provide feedback to NQF.

So some of the ongoing activities, that we do would be to solicit comments for measures that are actively under consideration via blast e-mail to members and others who have opted in to receive project notices around specific topic areas. Some of the challenges or the problems that we've identified with our ability to currently notify folks and make sure folks are aware of our processes and opportunities to provide feedback is that currently the way that we solicit feedback from it is passive.

So we kind of put the information out there, and are hoping that it is consumed by the right people. And there's obviously not as much of an active engagement or outreach to specific groups. And those that are using the measures and implement measures often do not know how to provide feedback. Maybe they want to or don't - aren't aware that, don't, you know, don't know how to navigate the Web site or don't know how to find the right link. And then this issue number 3 which has come up and we will elevate to the goal level but this issue around the way that feedback is generated or the way that we are collecting feedback is via, you know, multiple different mechanisms -- and different commenting tools and there is a lack of standardization in the way that that is currently done.

So I will go through here and just do a quick review of the problems and strategies and again I will hand it over to the lead discussion group for this goal which is (Lee), (Elvia), (Tricia) and Heather. So just bear with me really quickly and we'll - I'll hand it over to that group shortly.

So the first problem again is that our current practices for our solicitation of comments is passive and our strategy here again is one that's come up already is to expand our marketing and communication strategy to promote the use of our feedback tool by measure users.

And some of the steps that we've identified would be obviously to identify a target list of key stakeholders based on the topic area. So this would be, you know, patient-focused organizations so I think they have started to come up like - organizations like Patients Like Me, specialty societies and other groups or organizations that - whose interest would align with specific topic areas to develop education materials or guidance tailored toward the needs of the specific stakeholder group.

So for example, for patient groups we would want to make sure that they, you know, obviously know that NQF exists, know that there is an opportunity to provide comments. Perhaps even provide some, you know, rollover bubbles that describe kind of the nature of what comments or feedback might look like -- and any other additional guidance that we think might be helpful for a particular group to provide more meaningful feedback.

Again establishing partnerships to enable communication of our feedback opportunities through target organizations again by, you know, putting links on their Web sites to our commenting tool. Or making sure that they are including information about our communication channels through their communication channels.

So for example, Patient and Family Network for example would include links to our feedback tool to their email group or distribution list or other publicized opportunities for commenting through their distribution list and email groups as well. And really leveraging those partnerships to make sure that we are getting the word out for similar topic areas and measures that warrant specific stakeholder input.

And again using established practices for social media outlets to publicize commenting periods Twitter, LinkedIn and maybe some other outlets.

The second problem that we wanted to focus on and this has had quite a few strategies but again those who are using measures to implement do not know how to provide feedback to NQF. And I will just do a quick summary here of some of the strategies that we've outlined or suggested for implementation.

Again developing educational resources to those groups, aligning the submission of feedback with workflow or data entry for - with data collection and with other tools that we've talked about in prior webinars with the committee on how we might be able to incorporate. For example, links to NQF measure feedback tool and say a portal to like a registry or a QCDR where they are, you know, entering data or collecting information for implementing measures by those who are actually doing the work.

Also encouraging measure stewards and developers with NQF endorsed measures to share the link to the measure feedback tool of NQF to the folks who they know are using the measures so that again we're standardizing that feedback. And collecting it the same way from, you know, both from the developers and from NQF resources so that all the feedback can be collected and stored in one central repository.

And again providing guidance to submitters on how to - to this idea again about, you know, how to provide - how to submit a comment through the NQF Web site or feedback and, you know, what a comment looks like, the different categories of feedback and so forth to give folks a sense of what that looks like.

And then the next and final problem that we've identified is that feedback is generated in different or unstandardized ways. And the strategy that we will be looking to implement would be to standardize the collection of all comments and feedback collected by NQF into the same format or tool or the same interface. So that no matter how or who comes in to submit a comment or feedback on a measure it looks the same.

Currently we have a commenting tool that is used to collect comments or feedback for measures that are actively being evaluated. And that tool looks different than the NQF feedback tool which is generally used to collect feedback on measures that are currently under evaluation or consideration for endorsement or maintenance.

And so again trying to align those channels so that they do look the same and feel the same no matter how you come in to provide feedback that it's all very standardized.

And also to provide some structure for how we're collecting that feedback and I think this might align a little bit with what (Joe) was alluding at for a way to get some structure for a way that we could potentially filter or group comments around particular areas.

And our initial recommendation was to kind of group those around the criteria so around, you know, improvement data or impact on measurement, the feasibility of implementation, unintended consequences, how the measure is being used.

So those are some of the categories that we've identified so far that we might want to at least have folks kind of focus their comments underneath particular categories so that it can be easily distilled and filtered.

So with that I'm going to pause and turn it over to our discussion for feedback here on these various problems and strategies that we've identified so far.

Elizabeth Rubinstein: Actually I think you read off the lead discussion group for goal 3. The goal 2 discussion group is actually Elizabeth Rubinstein, Jill Shuemaker and Koryn Rubin.

(Ashley Wildon): Okay. Great. Go ahead. Sorry about that.

Elizabeth Rubinstein: Hello, this is Elizabeth Rubinstein and I wanted to (unintelligible) Koryn if she is on the line and I know Jill is on the line to please, you know, add any comments. I'm presenting the Patient Advisor Eye View.

Coming from that standpoint I think in looking at our different goals and problems we have to understand that our end users from a lay point patient caregiver you interpret measurement data, measurement language, medical language in general differently than providers do. So the measurement developers and providers need to understand that there needs to be some type of interpretation vehicle to explain it. So I think education is a primary vehicle in that.

Understanding the context of the intended audience is also important in addressing these problems. If we don't understand the context of the audience that we are addressing especially if it's an end user making a decision or a choice this can often look easy and not considered.

So in order to get that type of feedback with is invaluable and is becoming more and more important in health care going into the future, on end user sites where information is used for decisional choice the possibility of having a portal or a survey link at the bottom very much is the way social media operates.

You know, when you review a product you know you can give a rating to it or you are asked certain specific questions and that would be able to be directly sent to the National Quality Forum through, you know, an established vehicle.

From an end user viewpoint, from a lay viewpoint something where you have to go to submit often does not work. But if it's immediate right there a link that, you know, like here is your question blah blah Yes/No and have an ability to add qualitative comments. We have found when we do surveys in our area for patient quality experience we are really amazed at how people do fill in open text qualitative experience. Frankly, it's very surprising.

There is a wealth of social vehicles that are opening up that are sponsored by national organizations - the National kidney Foundation, Cancer Foundation, the UNOS Ambassadors.

I mean, there is a wealth of qualified organizations that if we could provide educational vehicles or educational basically a marketing program for the National Quality Forum we could tap into a wealth of feedback.

Now, the other side of the context of those being surveyed that's a whole another area of being able to find out what really matters to the people that are being surveyed and this again is from a lay person. My understanding is that this is another area that may be outside of our realm as part of establishing a measurement feedback loop. But we have to understand the context first before we can educate and establish, you know, a looped feedback.

My fellow presenters, please, any comments? Hello.

(Melody Danko-Holmsbeck): I'm not - this is (Melody). I'm not one of your written in presenters but, you know, I agree with your comments that, you know having those specific links from where they are and understanding their context, the world they are coming from in measures is important -- because they are interpreted different by the people who are actually doing them and know how they impact the care or the stream of care.

So it may make sense to the developer, oh, while the clinician is seeing the patient they can just do this. But if you are interrupting a conversation about something that, you know, may be an extreme health issue or unimportant the clinicians are going to be the ones that can interject appropriately.

And you need to understand, you know, where they are coming from, who this is coming from and, you know, the intent of the measure and what, you know, the approach to getting that measure completed and understanding. So I agree with a lot of what you said there.

Elizabeth Rubinstein: Well, I think the future of the quality of patient experience is going to be and quality improvement and measures is going to be a very heavy lever in the development of measures in the future. And I think from our committee standpoint if we can start beginning - to begin to standardize a feedback loop to start, you know, being able to gather that in the development for measures as far as usability.

We are looking to the future here and I think we need to be on the band wagon now. I may not realize (unintelligible) in another person's talk so, you know, I'm just trying to express from a patient's advisor viewpoint.

(Melody Danko-Holmsbeck): Yes. I agree.

Elizabeth Rubinstein: I think that we have a pretty redundant theme going through all of our different goals that we're speaking in the same direction. The strategies that we're presenting especially through the social media the strategy 6 I believe standardization is extremely important.

I have seen the benefits from a patient's eye view when these - the collection methods are standardized and it's easy for patients to submit. Also language is very, very important is literally taking medical language and interpreting it to lay language.

We find this through the OPTN, UNOS transplant organs allocation Web site, we have a public commentary twice a year. And we have found that we have had to interpret the proposals throughout for lay consumption and this is where we are now leveraging social media.

So this is something that, you know, is being done in other areas throughout the nation so these comments drive a lot of these policies just as these comments could drive measurement development in quality improvement.

Actually I don't know if I'm accomplishing these goals or not from the patient advisor.

(Ashley Wildon): Yes. Yes. You are doing great. I was just going to say I think your point about what we can learn from other organizations is well taken. And so we'll certainly note that and, you know, have to come up with some strategies on how we, you know, take some of those best practices and apply them for our purposes. So thank you for that.

Are there other comments either from the other discussers or other committee members in any of the problems or strategies for this particular goal before we move onto goal 3?

(Anne Deitches): Yes. This is (Anne) and I'm putting on a measure developer hat and I certainly welcome comments from other measure developer too. But - so on let's see. Slide 27. So this is about, you know, the relevant stakeholders their way of opportunities and channels to comment and under strategy - Maybe it's - hold on a sec.

Yes. Strategy 4. Thank you. So it talks about encourage measures towards with NQF endorsed measures to share the link to the NQF measure feedback tool with known users of their measure.

And I guess I wanted to just bring up like from my perspective it's important for a measure developer to get feedback from users very early in the process. And the reason that that's important is that let's say there is some feedback that comes in and it's about adding in a new risk adjuster and I'm, you know, just making up an example.

That would require reanalysis and like completely redoing a lot of the, you know, information - excuse me. A lot of the information that like in the NQF documents encourage, you know, maybe not majorly but could affect reliability and validity of results.

And so I guess to me measure developers should be engaged with their users at a very early and very focused, you know, level.

And so I guess I'm just - it feels like the NQF process is kind of happening after that to me but I could be off base. I wonder if - I don't know. If other measure developers have any comments about that or?

(Joe Kunish): Well, this is (Joe). And I will give you I'm not a measure developer but we do a lot of activities in assisting measure developers in, you know, getting clinician feedback and actually testing them in a live environment. And I get your point exactly and I had the same thoughts.

It's because there is really different phases where you really need feedback right from the Alpha testing and getting it from the concept that this even makes sense. And that really takes an active role of the quality measure developers to reach out to organizations and do that.

So this - I agree in this process it seems like the measure has already been developed and has gone through those Alpha and maybe even Beta testing phases and now it's in the NQF phase where you can give feedback.

But a lot of times decisions have already been made where it would have been nice for you to know that way ahead of time -- because I think from your perspective you have limited resources so it's not like you can survey 1000 hospitals across the nation. So you have got to target, you know, a few that are willing to participate and so you are really just getting a very small slice of what reality is to that local environment.

So I don't know if you would say that's out of scope for this or if it can even be addressed. But maybe in the kind of marketing part of this is you could at least add some information to say here is additional ways outside of what we are presenting here if you want to get into actual quality measure to testing at your organization or so forth. Just to give that information. I don't know.

Elizabeth Rubinstein: Ms. Rubinstein here. I agree 100% with both comments and, you know, we have suggested for Beta testing especially for end user data because of the allow the social determinacy, the dynamics of different communities, health literacy.

This goes to speak very highly to the work that (PCORY) has done and being involved early on in the development of measures I think is extremely important. And whether this applies to our measurement feedback loop, you know, goals this may, you know, be in another venue.

But I think it's very important that it's something to be considered in the usability of measures.

One of the things I wanted to go back to I know in a lot of organizations we have started to leverage our Electronic Health Record information for quality improvement. And I think it's also an area that we have a high affection with your partner with our Electronic Medical Record vendors because when we do quality improvement for example quality work or clumsy work.

We are finding that when we go back to quality analysis our EHRs have been invaluable in getting timely information. So this speaks to getting information in real time versus after the fact.

We found with our organ donation statistics, our transplant statistics with FRTR database that the data was not relevant because it's out of date. So we've taken a look at that how can we revamp it to get more timely information.

So I think for measurement feedback loop timely information is also important and the time when we receive it speaks to both the development and throughout the process of developing our measures.

(Ashley Wildon): So thanks for that. This is (Ashley). I think that you bring up very good points. We did try to address that. I think its goal 4 that talks about that developers receive timely information and we - yes. Goal 4.

So we are going to get to that shortly and I think some of the concerns that you raise we tried to address there. So we will be certainly interested in hearing your feedback about how well you think those might work specific to that issue.

I would like to try to move on and try to get through goal 3. It's pretty bulky and if we can get through all 5 goals before the end of the call I think we would be doing pretty good. We may not be able to get to everything that we planned in this call but if we can get through all 5 goals I think we will be in good shape.

So if it's okay I would like to move on unless there are any kind of burning issues for goal 2 that we should talk about before we move on.

Okay. Let me go ahead and hop ahead here. So - sorry about that. So with goal 3 it's that NQF standing committees receive meaningful and adequate information in order to apply the relevant criteria.

And some of the activities that we do currently do to try to collect that information is that obviously developers completed the mission form with information that they have available to them that they can provide to the committee to consider during evaluation of their measure.

We do also solicit comments for measures that are actively under review for the committee to consider as well as we include the comments and recommendations from the measure application partnerships, deliberations and standing committee measure evaluation material.

So those are things again that we would continue to do in order to make sure that standing committees have as much information as possible.

The problems we identified that we would certainly want to address with the pilot are around some of the measure submission form items are often incomplete or have inadequate responses from developers.

And we've talked about this with some developers, you know, haven't - aren't aware who is using the measure or don't have access to users or information about the use of their measure to really provide a more, you know, robust response to some of those questions. Again they don't know who is using the measure, who to collect feedback from.

And we also as an organization through NQF efforts are receiving fewer comments from users to provide to the committee for consideration during their maintenance review for existing endorse measures.

So this goal is actually pretty dense so I'm going to break it up a little bit so I don't, you know, have to read through so many slides at once. But I wonder if there are any other problems that you guys might - that you think we need to consider for this particular goal that we have and articulated here.

(Tricia Elliott): Hi, this is (Tricia Elliott). Just a question. In the actual goal where you mention that NQF standing committees receive meaningful and adequate information. Can we assume that information also includes education -- because I think particularly as a measure developer in the space of ECQMs it's, you know, evolving quickly and there is a lot of, you know, a major technical aspect to that that I think the standing committees may benefit from, you know, additional education and trying to stay current with all of that.

I know it's challenging even as a developer to stay current with all of that. So can we assume information includes education on that or would that be kind of a problem challenge to keep up with, you know, the evolving science of building that type of measure particularly as it relates to use and usability and feasibility?

(Ashley Wildon): So this is (Ashley). I think that's certainly a relevant suggestion.

(Lee Fleischer): And it's (Lee). I mean, this could confabulate two issues which is I'm not convinced this acting NQF has a good definition of use and usability right now. In fact from the Surgery Standing Committee that was a huge issue. So I don't know where that fits into this feedback issue.

(Ashley Wildon): So there are a couple of parallel - this is (Ashley) again. There are a couple of parallel or at least one parallel effort going on to reconcile some of the challenges that have come up with the use and usability criteria. So certainly we are currently operating under our current criteria. And as we do with all of our criteria, we are constantly reevaluating that through (unintelligible) to oversee the consistent development process as well as the criteria.

So we are actively working with them to focus on a few issues that have come up with use and usability criteria including the recommendations from this committee. So any, you know, any issues that are addressed here ultimately have to be, you know, reviewed and considered by the (CFAC).

So we are kind of correlating those in parallel efforts and those will ultimately be evaluated or assessed and discussed by the (CFAC) later on this year.

So that's kind of where we are right now but until then we are operating under our current criteria.

(Lee Fleischer): Yes. I do think they converge in some way. So thank you.

(Ashley Wildon): So with that why don't I keep going here to try to - let's try to get through this goal here. So the first problem with the submission form items being incomplete for the committee and evaluation of measures. The first strategy is to try to clarify some of the questions in the submission form to make it clear for the developers on what we are looking for.

And essentially some of the questions that we will be looking to clarify is the process that the developers use for obtaining feedback, a description of the feedback and the developer actions that they took in order to respond or address the feedback.

Then potentially adding questions around the intended audience for their measure in terms of usability and specifically for patients and consumers. And then potentially, you know, moving some of the questions on the feedback under usability such that, you know, the comments that come in can be considered on how usable the measure has been for those that have been using the measure in the field particularly for maintenance measures.

Again, a few more strategies for this problem that we are recommending that NQF takes a more active role in (unintelligible) out there including (JERA) impact report, the QRS, 2HP reports and other resources that NQF staff would take on a role of collecting that and filling it in the submission forms for the committee to consider.

Also for NQF to take a more active role in identifying measures that haven't been submitted with feedback or there has been no feedback submitted within five years. And NQF would offer potentially to collaborate with developers to identify a strategy to help support them in collecting feedback that can be incorporated into the NQF process and the evaluation of their measures for maintenance.

And again to align the submission of feedback with workflow and data entry for measure data collection with other tools like we have discussed before.

Also again NQF taking on a more active role in soliciting feedback or collecting feedback through literature, searches and any other published information about the measures that could be considered by a committee.

And also this came up previously from other committee members in that NQF should make an effort to ensure that comments that are submitted for measures are carried from cycle to cycle so that committees have that continuity of information to consider -- in terms of whether feedback that was submitted, you know, for a maintenance cycle three years ago has been addressed and whether or not there has been action taken by developers for prior recommendations.

So why don’t I pause there with problem 1 since again this is pretty dense. Before I move onto problem 2 are there any comments, suggestions or other strategies that we should be considering for this particular problem or other kind of thoughts about what we have proposed here?

(Lee Fleischer): Yes. This is (Lee). Since I was assigned to lead I think the - one of the (XM) ones that I have been waiting for is the carry forward of previous feedback where - so thank you. So that it doesn’t get lost from meeting to meeting and that we really hold the developers accountable to our comments.

There is a lot of NQF will be doing some of the searches. That's a moderately heavy lift and I'm wondering how you are thinking about learning from the various searches for the committees because this could be all done at the committee level versus will this be done by a smaller group almost like a message panel?

Or will this be done individually at the steering committee level - standing committee level and therefore you may not learn as much across standing committees?

(Ashley Wildon): So we are still actually grabbing around some ideas about how this might happen within NQF. Certainly we would incorporate committee feedback as much as possible. So far we have been considering that this would be done at the committee level because we have already grouped out measures into portfolios that are assigned to specific committees.

And so along with NQF staff and our maintenance team there will be a strategy or a process put together where measures either that were coming up for maintenance review or within a particular timeframe that there would be a process implemented that we would begin to collect this information from other resources such that it was kind of collected and collated in time for the committee to consider for their maintenance review.

And (Joe) certainly you can add or modify anything I have laid out. But the way that that would be implemented is certainly still up for discussion.

(Joe Kunish): Yes. I have nothing to add for maintenance from us.

(Lee Fleischer): Anybody else has comments?

(Tricia Elliott): Hi, this is (Tricia). Sorry. If I can jump in I think it goes back to some of the prior statements I think you had kicked it off with asking or speaking to, you know, the definitions of use and usability.

I mean, to have - having to have so many strategies around this particular topic does somewhat point to the fact that maybe there is better definitions or, you know, criteria that can be put around that that would help clarify these two particular items on the submission forms.

(Lee Fleischer): Okay.

(Ashley Wildon): Let me keep moving here a bit since we are starting to run a little bit low on time and certainly if there is any other comments please feel free to jump in here and I will pause as well after - ops. Sorry about that. I'm just trying to find the right slide here. Pause after we finish the next couple of slides to make sure that folks don't have to wait too long to make a comment.

So this issue is problem around developers not always knowing who is using the measure, we talked about, you know, measures often get picked up for programs outside of the developer's control and sometimes they are not always aware of when and how that happened.

Again you will notice the repeat in the strategy number where we are kind of suggesting the same strategy to address maybe a different problem or a different goal. So again, you know, collaborating with developers and also doing some additional work with the developers to see how we might be able to find out whether or not their measure is in use and who is using it to be able to collect that feedback more directly from those entities.

And then also partnering with CMS to get information through (GERA) to distribute that to developers and certainly giving it to them in a more kind of coherent fashion. And also integrating that into the standing committee's review based on the criteria that needs to be evaluated.

And the other strategy under this problem would be to partner with specialty societies and relevant organizations to identify opportunities for using the feedback tool again as a standard method for collecting feedback. Again this would be done by topic area given that obviously specialty societies are often clinically based.

And also identify and seek out contacts and establish relationships such that folks kind of understand who we are and what type of feedback we are looking for and the opportunity to participate and how to actually engage in NQF in our channels for commenting.

And for this last problem again that we at NQF as an organization is receiving fewer comments for the committee to consider. Again a bit of a repeat here of some of the strategies that we have articulated here to obviously work on our communication strategy but also to collect information from other sources and partnering to receive information through (GERA) and other existing resources.

So I'll pause there before we move onto goal 4 to see if there is any other comments or suggestions that we could consider for our strategies.

(Lee Fleischer): This is (Lee) again. This is great. I was urged to be careful about the five then you have got to have a minimum. But I like that if you have fewer than a certain amount that you ensure you go out to key stakeholders perhaps the developers and we have some on the call. Other key stakeholder therefore if you solicit that there are not comments from them patient groups, provider groups et cetera then that's sufficient.

(Sarah Toomey): I think (Lee) brings up an important point. This is (Sarah Toomey). In the sense that, you know, measure developers can (unintelligible) so much to get feedback. And so I think if there were standard ways that we could come up for which measure developers could illicit some of the feedback (unintelligible) if this feedback doesn't come there does have to be some sort of active acknowledgment of effort well done.

(Joe Kunish): Yes. This is (Joe). I was just going to add that that's a good comment also because, you know, if you get feedback from just say 5 brands of individual clinicians, you know, versus somebody that's representing an organization of 10,000 positions. It carries a little bit different weight. So that might be factored into that not so much a number but the value of the feedback.

(Lee Fleischer): Perhaps in submissions one of the things that developers could add are the who do they think are the key external stakeholders so that when those measures if its, you know, an anesthesia measure you would want the American Society of Anesthesiology, you know, setup like a patient-oriented measure. Is there a patient advocacy group that you - as long as you email or solicit directly and if they had none that's fine.

(Sarah Toomey): This is (Sarah Toomey) again…

((Crosstalk))

(Sarah Toomey): Oh. Sorry.

((Crosstalk))

Benita Kornegay Henry: Go ahead.

(Sarah Toomey): This is (Sarah Toomey). I wanted to agree with what (Lee) was saying and I think that's right on target. But I also think we need to take it a step further and incentivize participation. Everyone is overwhelmed and it's almost this just adds to the burden. It's a good burden because NQF needs the feedback when you go to stakeholders and request that, you know, and have to prioritize all of their work. That might be something that doesn't get the priority at the time.

And so is there some kind of way to incentivize the feedback? I think that would be helpful. I don't have an answer for what that incentive should look like. But I think that something that we should explore and investigate and discuss how we can not only reach the stakeholder but make it worth their while to give the feedback.

Benita Kornegay Henry: This is Kornegay. I was also going to - before what (Lee) was saying in terms of reaching out to especially the specialty areas that have, you know, for example on renal nephrology and really reach out to them in terms of we can go through the, you know, American Nephrology Society. And there is lots of different organizations that cover loss of stakeholders.

And I think this is such a critical factor to get the input of those stakeholders. So I'm not sure exactly where the ownership should lie but I think it's a critical piece.

(Ashley Wildon): Thank you for that. So we are at 2:44. We have about 30 more minutes and I would like to have us skip through the last two goals and at least present a plan for how we will assess all the strategies that have been recommended for our next steps.

So at this point let me hand it over to Jean-Luc to give us an overview of goal 4 and 5 and the problems and strategies we have identified and then we will pop in to next steps public commenting and next step in how we will begin to assess the various strategies for feasibility and importance and impact.

Jean-Luc: Excellent. Thank you (Ashley). So I will move pretty quickly through these slides. So certainly, you know, goal 4 is right there at the top, you know, I want to make sure that developers are provided with meaningful and actionable feedback for measures and use your product in a timely manner.

You know, some kind of current things that NQF is doing to advance that goal or to as far as the CDP process sharing those comments submitted prior to the evaluation with the developer and then giving developers an opportunity to provide responses to those comments when they were submitted after the evaluation and before that -- that post comment call. Those comments are posted on the project page in a kind of attachment which we have on there forever.

So some problems in this space. So there is no real process or even a technical capability on our side to send feedback to developers in real time. So NQF staff have to correlated and then pass on the feedback, you know, the small interruption in between when the feedback is submitted and when developers are able to start working on it.

You know, the expectations in timing for addressing that feedback can be unclear especially as far as, you know, in the context of a continuous development process it’s generally fairly clear. We get some guidance in terms of what are the responses but, you know, as you move out you look at the comment tool and the feedback tool to the measure application partnership or through other sources then it's clear.

And then yes, of course all those different sources mean that the feedback is being generated in somewhat unstandardized fashion. You know the sort of the leading questions that are being asked to generate that feedback look somewhat different across the different paths.

Other problems that we should be thinking about when we think about making sure developers are being provided with meaningful feedback in a timely fashion?

(Anne Deitches): Jean, this is (Anne). Are you specifically on this slide asking about committee feedback or public comment feedback or both?

Jean-Luc: I suppose - I mean, generally we think about those as public comments. But yes or I guess could you say more about what you mean by how committee feedback would apply in this instance?

(Anne Deitches): Yes. Sorry I wasn't clear. Yes. So when you provide feedback to us because I did recently go through the process the document it did incorporate public feedback but with also the committee feedback and the scientific methods feedback. So I guess I have thought that this particular committee was really focused on the kind of public comment and I just wanted to clarify that.

Jean-Luc: Yes. That's right. So the feedback that's coming through the CDP process that kind of refers to the individual criteria and so on that I think we are keeping sort of internal to the CDP process and here thinking a little bit specifically with an eye towards the public comments. But they are the same because the CDP are packaged together but in other instances are more than one.

(Anne Deitches): Right. So…

((Crosstalk))

(Anne Deitches): Oh. Go ahead.

(Tricia Elliott): No. I got you. Finish your chain of thought. This is (Tricia). I will jump in when you are done.

(Anne Deitches): Okay. I guess the current time - so I'm going to go back to my timing issue and just kind of just speaking about timeline relative to, like, the examples that I, you know, just went through.

So, you know, we submitted our materials in January. We got a review of methods panel, you know, done first. And then we got this public comment opened up and then we went to the committee. So fortunately, you know, we didn't have anything that came up in public comment that we had to address that required any kind of analysis.

But in the event like if we did, you know, is like I said before like if there was something that maybe we want to change some kind of specification based on the feedback. Theoretically, like, you know, that could change some reliability validity results or, you know, the analysis at the very least. And, you know, that's kind of already, you know, been done for the measure for this, you know, endorsement process.

So I guess for timing is there I guess - I mean, the timing to me just seems to be a concern and I wonder if there was public comment a year before which I know you don't need to know what a year before all this is. But I guess I'm just worried about the timing if measure developers are supposed to be responsive.

And, you know, I do think measure developers have a responsibility to gather their own data and, you know, in many instances that might be similar to what might come through NQF on public comments. But I guess I'm just really focused on being able to turnaround analysis based on feedback and then - yes. Sure.

(Ashley Wildon): Hi, this is (Ashley) from NQF. I just wanted to just provide a quick comment because we did do a little thinking about this and I think our perspective is that we, you know, we completely agree that at the time you enter the NQF process there is little, you know, flexibility for making changes to your measure at that point.

You know, we actually instruct our committee to evaluate kind of what's in front of you? What's in the submission form? And so I think as we kind of move forward I think maybe on problem 2 within this goal we do offer some suggestions or strategies about how, you know, what the response time will be for developers to respond to a comment.

And it may not be necessarily that you've actually taken action to do what they want to do but just say like, hey, we received your comment, this is what we think we might do and this is how long we think it's going to take.

Measure developers have their own committees that they have to convene and, you know, approval processes. And so I think, you know, setting expectations for folks potentially from the NQF - on the NQF side to say when you submit a comment it's for, you know, the committee to consider in their recommendations but also that there can't be an expectation for changes to specifications midway through the process, right?

This is feasible based on how our process is structured and the point in the development process that we get measures for evaluation.

So I think that's all, you know, very reasonable and we certainly acknowledge that challenge as well and I think our focus has been on responding to commenters but acknowledging that there shouldn't necessarily be an expectation that there is immediate action, right?

(Anne Deitches): Okay. Thank you. That's it.

(Melody Danko-Holmsbeck): Just really quickly. I know we are running out of time. This is (Melody). I think - I'm just wondering if there could be kind of a landing page for measure developers for proposed measures with a link to their specific Web sites where they could get feedback and stuff not necessarily in NQF. But just that link to theirs when they are developing or thinking about developing a new measure they could put that link ion this landing section to then get those three questions, you know, and input for your measurers. Just as a quick suggestion.

(Tricia Elliott): Yes. This is (Tricia). That's actually a great idea. And I was going to make the point that as a measure developer with the joint commission if we use measures within our programs we already have what we call a Wiki site for everybody, you know, whether be a technical or a clinical or a consumer perspective can submit questions. So we are constantly monitoring that and responding to those inquiries in real time.

When our measures are embedded into one of the CMS programs we then have e top monitor (GERA) and manage the questions, you know, the ones where we are, you know, a subcontractor to manage those and we are monitoring (GERA). So I would just have a concern if I have - if my team has to go to a third place to monitor questions and comments and all of that. But there is definitely some increased burden there.

And then it's how much do you share about the measure? And kind of back to the original comment about timing, you know, before we are in the process of developing measure I may not be at a point where I want to share all the technical specifications because they might be grabbed and used for another purpose and things like that.

So I think there is a lot of timing and process concerns with this particular piece that needs to be flushed out a little bit more.

Jean-Luc: Great. Thanks (Tricia). And I also want to acknowledge that Elizabeth Rubinstein had a chance to send in a description of the insight community and how, you know, a group of - a quite large group of patients that they are just using to kind of get from the same, you know, at least in principle the same kinds of feedback we are after.

And just certainly as you may know NQF has a- what do we call it? Our member connect space which is another online forum with administration and that I think it looks a little bit like that and (unintelligible) first listing additional feedback on measures.

So with that I think - I think that the problems that we have here, you know, in terms of the timing and expectations and so on covers the conversation so far.

So I think we will just very quickly walk through the few strategies that we have in this space and then (unintelligible) after that.

So the first strategy we have is essentially to, you know, modify the NQF measure feedback tool such that comments would be sent automatically to measure developers and give developers a path to respond to those, you know, either within the email or through some kind of a not very burdensome tool so that NQF doesn't have to play that middleman role. So that would ne strategy 1.

And our strategies 2 and 3 to address the expectation s and timing issues. So first strategy 2 is just to establish some guidelines for developer response. And yes, (Ashley) spoke to this really already - essentially it's just (unintelligible) acknowledging the receipt of the feedback without any action.

And then within about a month the developer would have at least some, you know, anticipation or some plan or some actions or, you know, frankly as could and should be the case and in many cases (unintelligible) explanation, you know, can be very brief depending on the level of detail needed. But, you know, about why the feedback, you know, may not apply to the measure, may already be covered in terms of inclusion or some other specification in sort of, you know, working to be responsive to the feedback.

And in strategy 3 NQF would work with sort of partners to establish some guidance for developers to just - in terms of how the endorsement process kind of plays into the rule making process which of course includes the measure applications partnership piece that NQF convenes which then is broader than that.

It includes the geo-submission pieces, the, you know, the actual published rules, the comments that are received and the proposed rules and so on. And, you know, the kind of expectations there.

And then problems what was to be problem 3 with labels from (unintelligible) and unstandardized pathways so there, you know, kind of standardizing those comment tools. We have some proposed questions there which we probably won't be able to go over today. And just some guidance to submitters actually just in terms of working with developers or working with submitters.

So, you know I think we had a suggestion at the top of the hour, you know, about developing some kind of tutorial, video document, you know, (unintelligible) comment on the Web site. So even if we can't, you know, do a direct link on the different tools then you have another tutorial document or video that we did to circulate to, you know, our different partners. And we will be using measures that people have some kind of guidance on how to (unintelligible) NQF Web site.

So I think from there unfortunately we probably won't have time to discuss these strategies but I hope (unintelligible) has started to put those into your mind. But we will I think move to public comment as quickly as possible.

Benita Kornegay Henry: So before that (Ashley) did you have any thoughts on our approach for next step or did you want to go to public comment and discuss after?

(Ashley Wildon): Yes. Let's go to public comment and get that in and then we'll do a really brief next steps.

Benita Kornegay Henry: Okay.

Operator: Okay. So at this time we will open the lines and unmute for public comment. Please if you do not - if you would not like to make a public comment please put yourself back on mute.

The conference has been unmuted.

(Ashley Wildon): Okay. It sounds like there aren't any comments at this time and I know we are right at the top of the hour. So I'm just going to do a really brief high level overview for next steps. Since we ran out of time today we did not get to goal 5 and we did not get an opportunity to discuss the kind of cost benefit analysis approach.

So what we are proposing to do given the timing of the next call in an effort to kind of keep things moving a bit we would encourage you to submit any comments you have on goal 5 or other strategies via email.

And what we will do as the next step is to also begin to correlated all the strategies that we had today into a document that we would be able to provide some initial kind of assessment of cost benefits based on some of the categories - based on the categories we've listed here on the slides.

And we will share that back with you via email to give you an opportunity to provide feedback on our assessment as well in terms of kind of cost benefits and to various stakeholder groups.

And with that information and with your feedback on that assessment we will use that to sort of start to group strategies into kind of pilot options based on how feasible it is and the impact that it would have on reaching or accomplishing the goals of the pilot. So we will be in touch via email with those.

Our next conference call is September 3 and followed by another call on September 5. So we will be in touch with more information but we'll certainly be looking for your feedback and more interaction via email to keep these - the goals of the project moving and making sure that we can continue to build on our work in a timely fashion.

So thank you all for your time today and your feedback. It's been great listening to the discussion and for all of the really insightful recommendations and suggestions for this pilot.

So again feel free to reach out to us with any questions and we will be in touch.

(Sarah Toomey): Thank you.

Elizabeth Rubinstein: Thank you.

(Ashley Wildon): Thanks everyone.

END