National Quality Forum

Moderator: Benita Kornegay Henry
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08:00 am CT

John Luke: Hey Rose this is John Luke.

Rose Baez: Hi. I panicked a little bit because I - in the meeting invite it didn't have the information, but I did see it in the agenda.

John Luke: Oh, good. All right. Well I wonder if maybe we can make an update on that quickly.

(Hannah): I thought I updated it this morning. Hi, I'm (Hannah). I'm a new…

Rose Baez: Hello.

(Hannah): …Project Analyst.

Rose Baez: Hi, nice to meet you.

(Hannah): Nice to meet you too.

Rose Baez: John Luke am I in the subconference is directing me to press the 1 ##.

John Luke: Hi, (Rose). No, you're in the main conference with us.

Rose Baez: Oh Okay.

John Luke: So, yes, I think we'll go ahead and start the subconference right now, actually.

Rose Baez: Okay.

(Eddie): Hi, it's (Eddie) I joined as well.

John Luke: Hey Ashley and all, this is John Luke, and Hannah over at the NQF Office. I think we'll be ready to get started in about five minutes.

(Connie): This is (Connie). I've gone through the instructions to the URL and it's - all it is is spooling and it says opening phone lines. And it's just not going anywhere. It says calling default and then it's got my phone number. And then it just starts opening phone line.

John Lindquist: Okay, great. Well we will - well let's send you a direct link and see if we can - see if that'll work.

(Connie): Okay.

(Melody Dancom Holsenbeck): Hello, this is (Melody Dancom Holsenbeck).

John Luke: Hi, (Melody) this is John Luke with NQF. We've got a few folks on the line, but I think we'll give it another few minutes or so. So, maybe about a minute after the hour and then we'll get started.

(Melody Dancom Holsenbeck): Sounds good.

Woman 1: Hello.

John Luke: Hi, this is John Luke with NQF. We're still waiting for the Committee to dial in so, we'll wait another few minutes and then get started.

Woman 1: Thank you.

(Olivia Traveria): Hi, good afternoon. This is (Olivia Traveria).

John Luke: Hi (Olivia). Thanks for joining. We're just going to give the Committee another couple minutes to dial in and then we'll get started. This is John Luke with NQF.

(Olivia Traveria): Thanks.

Ashley Wilbon: John, this is Ashley (unintelligible) are you ready to get started, do you think? Or give it a few more minutes looks like we have people on the Committee?

John Luke: Yes, I figured about (unintelligible) on the line, so if you want to go ahead and get started, I think we're all set.

Ashley Wilbon: Okay great. Thanks. Welcome everyone. This is Ashley Wilbon, Senior Director here at NQF. Thank you all for joining us today. This is the first of two Webinars that we'll be focusing on this week to really dive into looking at some of the pilot options and how we have assessed the strategies and cost and benefits to date for the strategies that have been recommended.

This Webinar - these next two Webinars are really a culmination of all the work we've done up to this point. And as you probably have seen throughout this process, it's been very (innovative). We're using all the deliberations and work that we've done up to this point to really get us here. Which is to really figure out the best path forward for putting the different strategies together into a few different options or approaches to how we would pilot a new and improved (feedback booth) here at NQF. So, that's what we'll doing over the next couple Webinars. We're really looking forward to hearing your input and to really give us a sense of where we go next.

Just a couple of notes about these next couple Webinars, to give you a bit of context. These two Webinars are the last Webinars, if you will, that we have before we offer CMS a Pilot Option (paper) in which they will review work from today to determine which option they will select for us to then develop an implementation plan and hopefully future work to actually implement a pilot.

So, these two Webinars are very critical in really determining our path forward and we will be using the input from these two Webinars to (inform) that paper and lay out the various options for CMS to help drive - help them make a decision on which pilot would be most impactful and feasible for them.

So, with that, (per) the agenda for today pretty straightforward. We're going to discuss the cost and benefit analysis that we started here at NQF for you and then have sent out various surveys and documents for you guys to review to give us input on that. So, we'll be reviewing the results of that analysis. And then we'll dive into the actual Pilot Options and some (unintelligible) options or approaches that we have pulled together as a team here at NQF for your consideration.

And then we'll be looking certainly, for your feedback on other ways to approach the development of pilot options if there are other, you know, ways or approaches (or themes) to grouping the strategies that we did not come up with. Then we'll wrap it up with public comment and (excess) of course.

Our goal for today is to get through as much of the materials in the Slides Deck as possible. We only have one Slide Deck for both days. So, we'll get through as much as possible today and then whatever we don't finish, we will continue on Thursday.

So, with that, I did also want to mention that my teammates are on the phone with me today. John Luke, and Hannah are in Madison, unfortunately in the office today and won't be joining us, but you have a willing and able team here to support you today. And we're looking forward, again, to hearing the discussion.

Before we move into roll call, I did just want to check in to see if Rose and Eddie are on the line and if you guys have any opening remarks.

Rose Baez: Hi, good afternoon everyone. This is Rose Baez. I just want to also extend my welcome to everybody for our sixth meeting. Thank you for your continued participation and engagement in these discussions. I would also like to thank the NQF Staff. I think they've done a great job in incorporating the Committee's comments and taking us to the next stage of this project. I'm looking forward to today's discussion.

Eddie Machado: Hi, good afternoon. This is Eddie Machado. Again, I'd like to echo Ashley and Rose's words in terms of thanking the Committee for their continued commitment to the work. We have quite an agenda over the next two meetings, but I think this is where the work gets really exciting as it slowly becomes closer to implementation. So, I'm looking forward to the discussion today. Thanks.

Ashley Wilbon: Thank you both. And at this point, maybe just a couple of reminders that you're probably familiar with in terms of the Webinar setup. Feel free to use the Chat feature to communicate with anyone here at NQF. The (folks) here can also see your chat. If you have questions, feel free to use that. We'll make sure that we bring those questions into the discussion when there's an opening.

You can also use the raise your hand feature if you'd like to speak. That will help us queue you in to the discussion. We do also ask that you keep your phones on mute on your line to keep down on any background noise or interference or feedback during the session.

So, with that, I'm going to hand it over to Hannah to do a quick rollcall. We'll get a sense of who's here and then we will sign in.

(Hannah): Okay, thanks Ashley. Thanks everyone for being here. I'll do the roll call now. Rose Baez?

Rose Baez: I'm here.

(Hannah): Edison Machado?

Eddie Machado: I'm here.

(Hannah): Constance Anderson?

Constance Anderson: Here.

(Hannah): Robert (Centor)? Olivia (Traveria)?

(Olivia Traveria): Yes, I'm here.

(Hannah): Dan Culika?

Dan Culika: Here.

(Hannah): Melody Danko Holmsback?

Melody Danko Holmsback: Here.

(Hannah): Ann Deutsch?

Ann Deutsch: Here.

(Hannah): Tricia Elliott?

Tricia Elliott: Here.

(Hannah): Lee Fleisher? Mark Huang? (Unintelligible)?

Man 3: Here.

(Hannah): Claire Noel-Miller? (Hector Pinloni)?

Woman 2: I'm here (I think).

(Hannah): Koryn Rubin? Beth Rubinstein?

Beth Rubinstein: Here.

(Hannah): Jill Shuemaker?

Jill Shuemaker: Here.

(Hannah): Heather Smith? Deborah Struth?

Deborah Struth: Here.

(Hannah): And Sarah Toomey?

Sarah Toomey: Hey, this is Sarah.

(Hannah): Great. So, to remind everyone of our approach for a word, we've broken down in steps in the next Slide. During last month's Web Meeting, Web Meeting Five, we reviewed the goals of the feedback (loop) pilot and the problems and strategies associated with each goal. While we did not make it through our review of goals four and five and the definition of cost and benefits during the web meeting, we did complete the discussion via survey.

Thank you to all the committee members who took time to provide your feedback. For today and Thursday's Web Meetings we'll be discussing the results of the cost benefit analysis and the potential pilot options. I'll pass it back to Ashley now.

Ashley Wilbon: Thanks (Hannah). And we'll just move onto some of the material that you've already seen. A couple Slides you're probably familiar with. Just a quick image, if you will, for a figure illustrating the way that we have been thinking about the NQF Measure Feedback Loop with these three, kind of key stakeholders with Measure Users, Measure Developers, CDP Standing Committees all centered around the NQF Endorsement and Maintenance Processes. And keeping in mind that it is a loop, in that all of the comments and feedback is going back into the endorsement process, but also that information is going kind of both ways between each of the various stakeholder groups which often can be facilitated by NQF, but also can happen outside of NQF, particularly between users and developers. And, again, but hopefully, keeping in mind that all of that information does eventually feed into the endorsements and maintenance process.

So, the goals of the feedback loop pilot, I think you guys are all familiar with these. I do just want to point out that based on the Webinar that we had last - out last convening for Webinar Five, we did add one goal based on the Committee discussion, which was that the standardized pathway for generating and collecting measure feedback - an approach for how we do that.

So, we have expanded the goal for pilot now (to fix) those from the five that we initially started with. So, thank you again for your input there. And we certainly agree that that is an important goal to have in the goals for the pilot moving forward.

So, with that, I believe I am handing it over to John Luke to walk us through the initial summary of the cost benefit analysis.

John Luke: Yes, great. Thanks Ashley. So, I just run off on this first Slide, so you'll see the goals that Ashley just referred to. So, the first concern of our approach is just to attribute a strategy to a particular goal. So, the total number of strategies that arose as part of this, (as the slide said) there were 40. You know, we assigned, you know, somewhere between eight to 19 to each of the goals. You know, with obviously some strategies applying to multiple goals.

And this is just so that we can be aware of, you know, as we think further along in the exercise packaging strategy is together in an option is making sure that we have strategies that address as (far ranges) of goals as possible and making sure that, you know, where maybe a somewhat weaker strategy is where the cost benefit analysis might fall off, you might want to keep it on if it addresses a particular goal. You know, especially for those goals that has a relatively limited amount of strategies that might address them, such as Goal Five and Goal Two.

On the next Slide - on the next Slide, you'll see the different benefits that we talked about. So, we have identified five benefits and scores each strategy based on how they did on each of these five benefits. so, you'll see the - well actually - so the benefits we scored, high benefits scored a three and moderate benefit scored a two and a low benefit scored a one.

So, that middle column in the table there is just the average score that strategists received across all the strategies for that particular benefit. So, you know, for example, you know, that 2.4 there, in the second row, tells you that most of the strategies that we looked at, you know, generally addressed at least one pilot goal or problem, which is good. It validates our approach.

You know, whereas, strategies were a little bit less likely to be specifically addressing, enhancing the quality of feedback to developing (and standing) committee. So, those scores give you kind of an idea of a range there. You'll also see we did some tallying of summary scores. So, the average kind of total benefit score which is to say, the total score that a strategy would have received as evaluated across all the benefits and with those benefits weighted equally, the average there was 1.8. They range from 1 to 2.8.

So, for example, a strategy that received that 2.8 for benefit scores was a proposed partnership between NQS and Specialty (Societies). And we'll kind of, you know, (unintelligible) look at individual strategies and we'll see a breakdown of those scores.

And then on the next Slide, you'll see, we're talking about cost now, the picture looks pretty different there. So, we had four (targets) - four categories of costs that we identified. And here we scored the cost using an inverse scale, such that a higher score is a better option in a sense. So, the lower the cost the higher the score. A low cost got a three. A moderate cost, a two. And a high cost, a one.

So, you'll see, you know, again with that middle column the distribution of the scores, you know, we didn't really identify any strategies that would have increased the burden to those providing feedback which is good and consistent with our goals. But most strategies, as you'll see, did result in at least a moderate cost to NQF workload and resources. So, that's where, you know, we can somehow work on our part. Which is, you know, again, consistent with our expectations.

You know, I looked at it - generally speaking - the summary score showed a cost where it would be relatively low, just sort of in general, you know, the average was - the average cost of the summary score, which is to say, the average summary score across the four cost categories for each strategy was 2.6. Which is say, somewhere between a low cost and a moderate cost, with a range of between two and three.

So, really the strategies - we didn't really see any strategies with any high cost identified and most were even, kind of, inching towards that low-cost territory. So, there's a little bit less differentiation there even.

And so then, I think with that, I'll just quickly turn it over to Rose and Eddie to get any kind of questions about the approach to the cost and benefit analysis approach and if we can answer any of those before we proceed with walking through the strategies.

Eddie Machado: Hi, this is Eddie. Rose, maybe I'll start and jump in, but thanks John Luke for that summary. I guess we can open it up to the Committee and see if there are any questions folks might have about what John Luke just covered. I don't see any hands raised currently. Feel free to pipe in if you have a comment or reaction. (Ann) I see you have your hand raised.

(Ann): Right. Great, thank you. I apologize if I missed this point. But in terms of this idea about, you know, the feedback loop, I guess I'm talking as a Measure Developer, so that's the hat that I wear. So, you know, when the applications are put in for NQF review - like you've already done all the analysis for liability validity. And so, getting feedback at that point in time, like, you're not able to update things.

So, I think I brought this up on the last call. Like, is the feedback going to be more than outside of just the NQF Review Process so that somebody could maybe like provide feedback and, like, maybe a year before the measure is due for NQF Endorsement or Maintenance Endorsement so that the Measure Developer can actually, you know, like make changes based on that feedback?

Ashley Wilbon: Hi, this is Ashley from NQF. I will take a stab at responding to that. And John Luke if you have any additions, feel free to add. So, certainly I think the way we've been thinking about this is that there should be some differentiation in feedback that is collected during the Endorsement Review or Endorsement Maintenance Review and what is collected kind of after endorsement is done and during that, kind of, three-year maintenance period.

So, during the Endorsement Review, our thinking is that, you know, the feedback that we get, that certainly there should be an expectation for those to submit comments. But there really is no, kind of, room, or time, or flexibility to be making changes to the measure - specifically to measure specification, during the Endorsement Review Process. And that comments taken during that period are, you know, kind of noted - weighed by the Committee, but there is no expectation that actually changes will be made to the measure during that time.

One of the strategies that we've recommended for collecting and soliciting feedback after endorsement for during that maintenance period would be that certainly there's more of an effort then we currently do, to kind of regularize and standardize our outreach for feedback. So, you know, perhaps we do a commenting - solicitation for comments in some forum every quarter for measures around maintenance. And any feedback received kind of off cycle or out of the evaluation cycle, that those would be filtered to the Measure Developers and during that period there would really be more of an opportunity for consideration of whether, you know, (unintelligible) need to be changed or specifications need to be updated or something like that. So, hopefully that helps and John Luke, if you have anything to add, feel free.

John Luke: Nothing from me other then just so - specifically Goal Four, I think is intended to, you know, address the question of feedback in a timely manner. So, you know, as we think about strategies that are addressable for, we want to think about that intersection there.

(Ann): Okay, great. Thank you. And I think, you know, like as a Measure Developer, you know, the Measure Developer should be trying to solicit feedback and whether they have expert panels or, you know. open calls for feedback themselves, I think if NQF is doing that, you know, you might be reaching different people and a wider audience. So, I do believe that what you mentioned makes sense to me that you would do some kind of outreach outside of the kind of Measure Endorsement, you know, process, so that there is - like if there is, let's say, some feedback that would result in potentially improving the measure by changing specifications, that, you know, feedback is really important. So, thank you, you've addressed my question.

(Connie): This is (Connie). I'd like to (add something to what) she's saying because I think it's really important that if the Measure Developers are providing specifications prior to the Committee's meeting and endorsing or non-endorsing the measure, it's really important to be able to get feedback back to the developers if there are flaws within a measure where they might be able to change some of the specifications that then would make that measure - the committee would be able to endorse the measure.

And we just experienced this last year in the Renal Standing Committee. And I think this is a real critical point is how do you get Measure Developers feedback prior to it coming to the Standing Committee for endorsement or not? And I think that this is a part of where I think we really need some further discussion in terms of what can NQF provide and how do we go about doing that?

Bath Rubinstein: Okay. I forgot to raise my hand. (Unintelligible).

Woman 4: If I ask, that's the way it's done.

Beth Rubinstein: I just raised it so. I agree with you (Connie). I was looking at the Renal Committee and especially from (Devars) viewpoint. Especially when you're trying to incorporate any type of patient caregiver perspective and considering (baby) testing, there needs to be a way prior to the measure - the information feedback to the developers. Especially incorporating any type of (baby) testing with the end user to incorporate into the development of that measure.

I'm not seeing that now and there's no vehicle to incorporate that. Does that make sense?

Melody Danko Holmsback: This is Melody Danko Holmsback just a - not a developer, but a clinician - to kind of give some other thoughts to that. Is there a process similar to what we look at with the proposed physician fee schedule rule every year? That there's a proposed period that goes out for comments to come back? Because I hear you talking about a Review Process, but it's really either one side is submitted or after it's been out and it's coming back for review. When I agree that before these meas - you know, any measure is put out there, getting that feedback to fix it prior to and make sure that there's still evidence to back that up is really important.

From the provider's standpoint, I think it would help with measures that have really good intentions, but maybe end up just being Process Measures rather than showing the (impactfulness) of the measure. It may be taking the measure and looking at it and, you know, say you want to measure how many - we're just going to take a blood pressure measure that's out there. If we have patients who - you know, you want to develop a measure where you can see if patients are within range for their blood pressure, is that measure that's put out there effectively doing that? Or is it measuring something different rather than the end that you want to have?

So, I do agree that there should be some kind of a standard platform for proposed measures that have a, maybe a three-month or a six-month review period for comment prior to that final submission.

Rose Baez: This is Rose. I think this is all good feedback and as we go through the different strategies, I think there might be an opportunity to expand on this. Any other comments before we move onto the next couple of Slides? I'm not seeing other hands raised. Okay.

Eddie, did you want to walk through the first two and then I can jump in?

Eddie Machado: Sure. I see Elizabeth's hand raised. Is it still up Elizabeth, or did you make your comments?

Beth Rubinstein: I made my comments.

Eddie Machado: Okay.

Beth Rubinstein: Thank you.

Eddie Machado: Yes, no problem. So, if it's okay I guess with John Luke and Ashley and the staff at NQF, maybe we can move forward?

Ashley Wilbon: Well Eddie, I'm happy to go over the Slides for you guys and then hand it back over for you to lead a discussion with the Committee members if that's easier.

Eddie Machado: Okay. Yes.

Ashley Wilbon: Okay. So, as this Slide here - just to kind of get up front a bit of an overview of our thinking process to initially laying out the various strategies and (private) options - so once we had assigned kind of a cost and benefit score for each of the strategies, we were looking to kind of compare and weigh the cost and benefits and really try to focus on strategies that we thought where the benefit outweigh the cost or at least was equal to that.

And then, certainly we wanted to make sure that we had some (unintelligible) of whether or not we thought some strategies were, kind of, more important enough, or foundational than others based on their relationships to supporting a particular goal in mind. Certainly, there's some thought to be had about whether or not some goals should be weighted more than others in terms of whether or not such strategies would be put forward before others based on the goal that it is associated with. Certainly, that's something we can discuss more with the Committee as we move forward.

But ultimately, we wanted to make sure that each goal had at least one strategy associated with it and that as we move into grouping the strategies into pilot options, that assuming each of the goals was addressed within each pilot option, that there was at least one strategy for each goal within a pilot option as well, so that that pilot option was very well-rounded and represented in terms of strategies that were identified to really drive the success of the pilot through each of those goals.

Ultimately, we did end up with two pilot options at (Unintelligible) for you guys to consider. And what we're going to move into next is a discussion with the Committee on some of those strategies that were identified through feedback from various Committee members that had either concerns or recommendations about the cost or benefit rating. So, we'll talk more about that.

But we just kind of wanted to give you a little bit of an overview of how we landed with some of these buckets of measures - I'm sorry - measures, buckets of strategies and how we have grouped them together in different categories or buckets if you will.

So, the two pilot options that we ended up with - and we're going to certainly talk about these in much more detail coming up - the first is around improving NQF Stewardship on the feedback loop and the second is around enhancing communication channels and partnerships.

So, with that, I think I'll hand it back over to Eddie and Rose. We did just have one Slide here, just to remind folks about the scale for the cost and benefits just because it does get a little tricky because, while the scale is the same for one, two three - it's kind of split for cost - low cost gets a three and a high benefit gets a three. So, just a brief reminder there as you're looking at some of the summary tables that we have coming up with the summary scores. So, with that, I will change it back over to Rose and Eddie to discuss some of the strategies that were (poled) by Committee members.

Eddie Machado: Great. Thanks Ashley. I'll do the first two Slides and then I think I'll hand things over to Rose. So, if we could move to the next Slide? Okay, thank you. So, as Ashley said, you know, thus far the Staff has reviewed some of the results from the cost benefit analysis survey information that (unintelligible) were asked to complete in between this meeting and the prior meeting.

And in addition, really gave the Committee a group - a high level understanding of where things were intended to go in regard to the strategies that were presented. I think the next few Slides are really just an opportunity to dig a little bit deeper on a few of the strategies and see if, in fact, the rating that was initially applied to them, should potentially be changed in some cases.

In each case there is a lead discussant who I believe was the individual who proposed maybe increasing or decreasing, you know, the rating for a particular strategy. So, we'll just go from top to bottom on this Slide. So, the first one relates to the NQF Strategy - NQF to make access point for feedback to a more prominent visible on the Website Homepage. And the rationale being to potentially increase its rating from - meets the needs of those providing feedback from moderate (unintelligible) to high.

Let me hand it over to Melody if you want to just elaborate on what your thinking was here?

Melody Danko Holmsback: Sure. It looks like I gave a lot of feedback. For this one, I think, you know, if the tool is not visible and prominent on the homesite easily accessible, it's not going to garner the feedback that it needs. I think it's going to be kind of put in the background like it is now, just being able to find the measures, the tool where to go and where to navigate.

I was on the homepage just trying to navigate through some stuff prior to this meeting, you know, and sitting and searching for ten minutes to try to find something. When you have busy providers, there's going to be a point, if they get pulled in another direction, they're going to give up or forget and not get back in time and those type of things.

So, I really think that this is something that needs to be in the forefront. That it needs to be something very accessible. Very visible on the homesite and/or have those linkages that bring you right to that point where, you know, the -

either the developer or the provider or whoever, can get into review those measures and provide the feedback quickly and easily.

It's - everyone is just so busy and it's harder and harder with the multiple layers of things where there's more electronic connections and there's more (drill) down to this and that. I just really think that that - it should be a little bit higher priority.

Eddie Machado: Thanks Melody. So, just for folks to understand before we go to questions. The suggestion here is to increase the scoring under the Meets the Needs for those providing feedback. One of the benefits to increase the score from a moderate to a high, if I understand this correctly. Well go to Elizabeth, she's raised her hand.

Beth Rubinstein: Yes, I agree with Melody 100% because prior to this meeting I also went to the Website. I wanted to pull up the Renal Report and, I mean, if you think that the site is difficult for professionals to navigate, imagine from a patient's perspective? One language level, the search function that point out the Renal Report from 2015 is many different things I put in the search thing, I kept bringing up old information.

I wanted the most current one and short of going to the link in the email that I had received directly from NQF for this Committee, there was no easy way for me to access information. It's very confusing and if I wanted to give feedback for any particular thing, again, it would be an impossibility from a patient perspective.

Eddie Machado: Okay, thank you. (Joseph).

(Joseph): Yes, hi. I also agree and I'm kind of surprised that it did score the way it did. Because I think this is really one of the highest priorities. You know, working with clinicians - and I've walked them through different exercises of providing feedback and, you know, one of the most, you know, number of steps mean it is going through the quality positioning system and (giving) that feedback. And the fact that there's multiple ways to do it.

So, the more simple you can make it and the more accessible for clinicians, the more you're going to get utilization of it.

Eddie Machado: Thank you. And (Connie), I think you have your hand raised?

(Connie): Yes, this is (Connie). I also went onto the Website just to navigate through it to see. And I think this is probably one of the most critical strategies. Because people are going to get frustrated and I think that the benefit of having easy access to the information is critical so that people will use it; will be knowledgeable. And it is tough. Even for us as Committee Co-chair for the Renal Committee, I'm having difficulty navigating through that Website. So, I can imagine - and I know this was part of our discussion when we presented these strategies. That we needed a single access, easy access, and availability.

And I think the benefit score is much higher than a 1.8. I'm really kind of surprised at that. So, I would say it goes from moderate to high. Because if you don't have easy access to the right information, people are going to get frustrated and they're going to give up.

Eddie Machado: Great. Thank you (Connie) and Melody. I think you may have raised your hand as well?

Melody Danko Holmsback: Sorry, it's still up from before.

Eddie Machado: Oh, okay. So, I guess it sounds like it's fairly unanimous from those folks who offered up comments that they agree, I guess, Melody with your perspective that the benefit score under, you know, the benefit listed there should be potentially increased from a moderate to a high. So, let's keep going, because we have a listing of these (so) I think Melody we'll go back to you in terms of this next strategy. Again, to explore opportunities for (unintelligible) to standardize NQF (QSC) (unintelligible). And it goes on.

And again, the suggestion here is to actually increase the benefit score under two of the items, again, from a moderate to a high. So, I'll turn it back over to you to comment.

Melody Danko Holmsback: Sure. And again, this kind of follows where we start with that initial strategy is how to do that. You know, so exploring those opportunities for adding links to the feedback tools and/or to other organizations. So, if you have measures that are affecting, you know, that we had the Renal Committee, or developers on or, you know, maybe it's just affecting AMA, or one of the other specialty groups, that those measures specifically effect - you know, is there a way to kind of do standardized links that directly feed to that main focus point we were talking about previously for those developers and/or, you know, to even put out in publications whether it be for patients or - who are active, or, you know, whoever, to kind of have that standardized way in a public view with the link.

And again, that is increasing that number one, which is just the prominence in visibility. You know, it may not be directly on the Website that they're going to, but it's leading to that easier place to access it within the Website. So, just those two kind of linked together to me - to me, the whole purpose of this Committee is to figure out how to make this all more visible and more actionable to providers to get the feedback that you need, instead of hearing the complaints after the measures are developed and there's nothing that you can do about them. So, that's my comments on that.

Eddie Machado: Okay, thanks Melody. And I see, Elizabeth, you have your hand raised?

Beth Rubinstein: No, it's not on my screen. But before it said blue lower hand, the other one white, so my apologies.

Eddie Machado: No, no, no problem.

Beth Rubinstein: I'm just waiving my hand in the air that's all.

Eddie Machado. Why don't we go with (Joseph) first, and then we'll go to (Mark)?

(Joseph): I think, it seems to me that the cost summary score might be a little higher than it needs to be. Because, I think it's offering a, you know, the ability to link it to let's say for instance I wanted to put it on our organization's internal website. We already do that with a lot of external portals like our prescription drug monitoring program, you know, to other outside vendor's products and stuff. So, I don't think it would really, from the NQF perspective, why would you think that it would add any, you know, significant cost to what the NQF has to do?

Eddie Machado: Maybe we can turn that over to Staff. So, for folks there was a spreadsheet that was also circulated with the material that have all the strategies and the scores for the benefits and costs listed out. And I think, along the lines of the cost that (Joseph) is alluding to, I think three of the items were listed as moderate, I believe, for this one.

So, I don't know if, Ashley or John Luke, you guys have any comments in regard to what (Joseph) brought up?

Ashley Wilbon: Sure. This is Ashley. I think the consideration there was more around, you know, developing partnerships and, you know, identifying those - it's more the behind-the-scenes effort that has to happen in order (identify) organizations and develop partnerships with those to make sure that that information can be shared on the Website and so forth.

Certainly, this is a new area for us. And so, if it's something that the Committee believes is a lower effort for NQF to do something like that, certainly we would take that under advisement and we can adjust the rating. But I think that was the thinking. It's more kind of the behind-the-scene relationship building and partnership development.

Eddie Machado: Thanks Ashley. Why don't we go to (Mark) for the next comment?

(Mark): Sure. So, I was going to say, this is really important because I think that the clinicians, like, literally probably, if I would query medical staff, about zero would say they go to NQF to go look for measures to provide feedback on. So, you know, having it prominent on the Website is great, on the NQF Website. But having it linked to other places where clinicians may more frequently go is probably even more valuable.

The only people who are going to know to go to NQF Website are people like myself, a CMI or someone else who does intimately involve with Quality Measures and things like that. And virtually nobody else is going to do that. So, those links, really, between this point and the next point down, which is on the EHR Vendor Linkage, you know, those are really critical. Because you're not going to get more feedback from clinicians and frontline users.

And then even, maybe some of the Administrators - even like they look at clinician's performance and provide feedback on that or something like that. They're not going to necessarily think to go to NQF's Website to go provide that feedback or on a measure. So, some sort of linkage to other Websites, organizations, you know, whether it's like some specialty organization has say a quality webpage. You know, and here are the common measures that are relevant to this organization or specialty.

You know, this is, you know, a linkage to there to provide feedback is really critical. They do it well, such as here are the measures that are appropriate for whatever the specialty. Then for each - literally each measure, it would be great to have the individual link to that measure to provide feedback is an even better way to do it.

So, I think that you're going to reach more people. But I agree with you there's a little bit more leg work to, you know, reach out to organizations and the specialty providers, you know, to get - buy in, to put that in there. I would suspect most people would be more than happy to provide some sort of linkage onto their organization association website. Anything to sort of, help promote, you know, better measures, or make a better awareness of the measures that are out there.

Eddie Machado: Thanks (Mark). So, it sounds like both your comment and (Joseph) really speak to this idea of really trying to increase - that we should put a higher score on the benefit side and potentially reconsider what the cost might be. But it sounds like folks are in line with trying to adjust the ratings from a moderate potentially to a high for at least these two domains.

I don't see anyone else's hand raised. So, I'll move on (unless) folks jump in. So, the next item, again, is similar, as was mentioned. Just as (it takes full opportunities) to partner with EHR vendors and other commonly utilized tools for measure implementation again, to incorporate links. So, again the same theme here about reach and expanding reach and accessibility for folks and maybe going closer to them so that it's easier to help them get the feedback we want from some of the groups that would otherwise not venture onto the NQF Website directly.

So, I don't know, Melody, do you have other points you want to elaborate here?

Melody Danka Holmsback: No, I was just going to say that that kind of connects to the above. You know, using EHR vendors and they're, you know, some of them have reports developed for reporting Quality Measures for people that use their products. You know, so getting them involved and understanding they can provide feedback where it may be extra burdensome to collect certain things, it would help them in understanding what they need to develop to implement within an EHR to be able to electronically report, so that it's less manual.

So, again, working with them, made - the cost may be a little bit higher than previously. I think it would be a little less. I agree with the Measure Number 27. But I still think this is really important because of that connection with the reporting and one of the biggest issues we have with reporting - well really for any payer - is that object in a reportable field within the EMR. Is it easily retrieved or do you have to have man hours digging into charts to find the information? Which is why I feel that this is - you know, should be a little higher priority.

Eddie Machado: Thanks Melody. And I just want to clarify - I fumbled a little bit, you know, again, despite the previous Slide. Again, a higher cost score means lower cost and a higher benefit score means greater benefit. So, what we're looking at is, again, higher benefit score potentially, maybe even increasing the cost to represent that it's lower cost.

Others had their hand raised want to comment here? Elizabeth?

Beth Rubinstein: Yes. Right now, my thing it says lower hand, so, I believe it's raised now. So, I agree with the partnership with the EHR, because now within the hospital system, we're in the Quality Committee, we are becoming very, very dependent upon our EHR data as far as Quality Improvement. And I'm not seeing how we're linking this to the National Quality Forum. It's almost like there's different entities and that partnership would be of great value in speaking the same language across the board.

Because right now, we have measures all over the place from a lay perspective, that no common (unintelligible) goes between everybody. And this is even reflected in the National Quality Forum Field Guide to NQF Resources. And it has a comprehensive list of NQF Endorsed Resources, but it's called National Quality Forum Quality Positioning System.

And we're not speaking the same language here across the board. And I know EHR is a very specific (location information) but we're mining data from that. And how we use a common language to tie this all together, I think we need to look at that. And I'm coming purely from a lay perspective, but it's like we're speaking different languages and we need to be speaking one.

Eddie Machado: Great. Thanks Elizabeth. Any comments from folks? All right. We'll move forward then. Shall we go to the next Slide? I think we have another set here.

All right. So, this is another strategy. Down on Line 22, in the Spreadsheet Document. This is related to the NQF Strategy to Revise and Measure Summation Forms (unintelligible) question. And the thought here is to add it as being applicable to Goal Four, which is developers are provided with meaningful and actionable measure feedback for consideration in a timely manner. Melody?

Melody Danka Holmsback: Sorry, I was on mute. Yes, I think, with this one again, I think it also aligns with that Goal Four. You know, we need to make sure that correspondence is more timely, and - I'm trying to find - I'm sorry I'm trying to find my spot on the Spreadsheet for this so that it makes more sense to me right now.

So, right now it is added to…

Eddie Machado: It looks like Goal Three. Yes.

Melody Danka Holmsback: Goal Three and Six. Sorry, I'm trying to align them to see where they are.

Eddie Machado: It's on the Slide also. There's a Goal column, just for a quick reference, it tells you which Goals are (unintelligible).

Melody Danka Holmsback: Oh, so for changes in the evaluation criteria, I think that, you know, that's something that the clinicians and others need to have timely feedback for, you know, because the - if you have - if you're not able to respond to it, it's after-the fact that you find out that things are changed. And it's sometimes too late to affect the outcomes at that point. So, that's why I felt that it needed to be added to that one as well.

Eddie Machado: All right. Any comments? Elizabeth, I see your hand's raised. I'm not sure if it was inadvertent or not.

Beth Rubinstein: Yes, I show nothing on my screen again. So, no it's not raised. But I know in my feedback on this point too, I mentioned there needs to be a definition (at a term) (unintelligible) and use a good (or term) to (unintelligible) again is a language thing minor in comparison to what we're trying to accomplish at this point.

Eddie Machado: Other comments from folks? Does anyone disagree with adding Goal Four to the goals for which the strategy is applicable to? All right. All right, let's move forward then. For the next strategy, and again this is Line 36. This is currently applicable to Goals Three and Four. And the thought is potentially to consider adding it to Goal Six. Again, which is the newer one which is define a standardized pathway for generating a collecting measure feedback.

Melody, any other comments?

Melody Danka Holmsback: No. I just felt that, you know, that's kind of the standardizing and the process is kind of what we're trying to do overall so that it kind of fell in line with that. If the measures are getting less than, you know, five comments, is that because there's not a standardized feedback process?

Eddie Machado: Great. Are there anyone else - any thoughts or reactions to that? No. All right. And then the final one here. Again, I don't see a line attributed to this strategy to enhance (unintelligible) communication channels. To those who are using measures on it's applicable to Goals Two, Three, and Four. And the thought is maybe to have it also apply to that same Goal Six here. So, I don't know Melody if you have any…

Ashley Wilbon: So, Eddie, this is Ashley, just real quick. So, the (unintelligible) is to just note here that in our process of kind of looking at all the cost and benefits, we did notice there was some duplication in the way that some of the - the intent of some of the strategies. So, we removed some and tried to, you know, clarify the ones that maybe was very similar to and to try to kind of limit the number of strategies but have them be more specific. So, this was one that we thought was a little more general. But we have one that kind of really encompasses already. So, whatever comments come out of this one, we'll make sure to link those back to the other strategy that kind of replaced this one, before you start that.

Eddie Machado: All right. Thank you for that.

Ashley Wilbon: Sure. And this one I kind of linked to our first question, you know our first point strategy that we talked about, which is marked as the standardizing that feedback process. Because I think you need to do that to enhance and strengthen the communication channels of the people who are using the measures and part of that is by establishing the guidance for, you know, the measures.

And also, there's links and so forth. So, I think that, I agree, this is one that kind of fits within the others, but it's definitely, you know, part of that standardization process for Goal Six.

Eddie Machado: All right. I see (Mark) has had his hand up, so that you want to comment?

(Mark): Yes, I actually did just on 36. So, in regard to this pulling back in terms of all these, well you know, trying to, you know increase the feedback. So, obviously you want to fine tune the measures that need adjustment or refinement, but I guess what about the ones that work really well. We should be letting them know that, hey this is a great Quality Measure. We like it. Or would there be minimal burden or it's measuring what we want. You know, the Holy Grail, like someone's actually hit.

So, I guess the question is, you know, on these, you know, I'm thinking about, you know people making public comments. Maybe they're not giving public comments for one of two reasons. One, nobody's really got any comments. Two it's working really well. Or three, it's not utilized.

So, just in terms of capturing the, what if the measure works well? Like, maybe we should all learn from the ones that we figure out that people say, this is a good measure. And I don't know what the mechanism is in place now for NQF to say, like this is a good measure. This is a measure that we want. This is a low burden or a low, you know, low burden of reporting and clinicians feel this is relevant.

Eddie Machado: I don't know what the thinking is there. I don't know if other Committee members or Staff have any thoughts on that point?

Ashley Wilbon: I agree with that feedback whether positive or negative will enhance and strengthen those communications. You know, I think that's part of enhancing and strengthening the communication channels is making areas for positive and/or negative feedback and then, you know, have it a two-way feedback. So, they're giving you information, but you are giving them information back on how that affected, you know, thanks for letting us know that this is, you know, a good measure type of thing.

Or we received your comments, thank you for submitting type of thing so that there is communication that you received the information for one thing. And then maybe anyone who submitted when you made any changes, get - you send those changes back to them as to, you know, this is what we plan on doing with all the comments that were received.

And then that will strengthen the fact that they've been heard and they will, you know, again, comment in the future.

(Mark): You know, I think that's great. Because I think that's, you know, I think exactly what you want to get at is, we've been harping on the feedback and a lot of times, you know, everyone always loves to give feedback when it's negative. You know, when they want to change things. But we also want to - we don't want to beat down Measure Developers, you know, to always respond in the negative. We should be rewarding them when things are going well. And they should be recognized for that.

So, I think it's you know, offering a mechanism for positive feedback somewhere in this standardization is, I think, going to be helpful to say, hey this is a good one. Or we like this one. Or this is the best measure that we use. So, I think those kind of things help us in the future right? For all future and current measure development, if you enhance or encourage both positive and negative feedback on this.

Because I think everyone always tends to love to talk about the negative. So, I think the positives need to be highlighted as well.

Eddie Machado: Great. Thank you (Mark). I did see Melody raise her hand. And then (Joseph). Do you have other comments on this?

Melody Danka Holmsback: No. For some reason, and I'm not touching my mouse or anything. My hand keeps going up. I don't know why. Maybe it's just because it's hovered over it a long time.

Eddie Machado: Yes, no worries. I was…

Beth Rubinstein: Thank you Melody for joining the club.

Eddie Machado: (Joseph), you want to offer a few thoughts?

(Joseph): Yes, I just wanted to add onto (Mark's) comments. You know, I think that's a good point to maybe somehow elicit positive feedback so maybe in constructing that form is you know, kind of, you know, in some way stating what don't you like about the measure, or what do you think needs to be changed, but what works? Or what do you like about the measure? Or how it helps enhance your delivery of care. Something along those lines.

And that way, they kind of think that way because I agree, most people are going to take the time when they don't like it. If everything is going smooth, you know, we have a saying in the clinical domain, when you put something out new and you don't hear anything, you know it's going really good. It's when you start getting all those complaints, you know there's something wrong that needs to be fixed.

Eddie Machado: Thanks (Joseph). Point well taken. (Connie), I don't know if you've got your hand up?

(Connie): Yes. I echo, kind of what everyone else has said. The other thing I think is important in terms of being able to get channels of communication open going in both directions, positive and negative feedback, is also being able to identify measures that have had unintended consequences and measures that are topped out that really, you know, the feedback mechanism needs to go back from clinician providers, whoever, that these measures are topped out.

And how do we provide that so that we don't - we have a good channel of communication going? And we're able to tell them early on, gee this measure came out, but here's the unintended consequences that has happened over time and we need to go back and take a look at the measure.

So, I think this is very important and glad to see that the benefit score is high at 2.4, or whatever. Because I think this does tie into all of our goals in terms of opening those channels of communication between everyone that are using the measures and those that are developing the measures.

Eddie Machado: All right. Thank you. All right. I don't see anymore hands raised. So, otherwise I think we can move onto the next line and I'll pass it along to Rose.

Rose Baez: Okay, thanks Eddie. If you can advance the Slide, I think we're now onto Strategy Number 35. Okay. So, this next strategy was specific to Goal One. (Unintelligible) to (consider) offering the measure feedback tool as an online form bulletin board. And the recommendation here is to add it to Goals Two, Three, and Four. Melody did you want to give further rationale on this?

Melody Danka Holmsback: Yes, just let me get to Goals Two, Three, and Four here so I know what they are. I shifted my pages around. The relevancy to Stakeholders Standing Committee receiving meaningful and adequate information and developers. So, again, with this I think that by adding it to, you know, some kind of an online bulletin, it may be something that there's a standard link that would be added to Stakeholders whether Website or newsfeeds, as well as the Committee's newsfeed, and/or developers.

So, it might be a standard link that's leading, as we kind of talked about before, to one spot that's for each measure. You know, this is where you comment on that measure. But getting that online to a different organization, which include, you know, Two, Three, and Four Goals. I think it could encompass all.

Rose Baez: Okay, great. (Mark) I see your hand raised. Did you want to add to that?

(Mark): (Unintelligible).

Rose Baez: Okay, I think (Mark) might have…

(Mark): No, that was - it was up for some reason. I don't know why. Just like the other people.

Rose Baez: Oh, okay, okay. Thank you. Okay, any other feedback or comments to go? Okay, we can move onto Strategy Number Two here that's associated currently with Goal Three. Measure Developers to respond to commenters in month or quarterly batch responses with acknowledgement in next step. The recommendation here is to add it to Goals Five and Six. I know Melody, this is yours again. I can read Goal Five. Those who provide feedback are provided in acknowledgement and juxtapositions of the feedback and how it was adjudicated. And then Goal Six which would standardize the feedback process.

Melody Danka Holmsback: Right, so with Goal Five, I mean, we talked about something that would be maybe an immediate response that they - we've received your submission. That could be then tied into a monthly or bimonthly or quarterly process to say, you know, this is where we stand currently with that measure to make that kind of a two-part process to tie those two together. So, that way you're not individually replying to a person. After they've submitted something. you can, you know, acknowledge their submission, but it may not be acted on for quite a while until they can compile those and look at those.

So, if you're looking at a quarterly or monthly feedback type process to anyone who has submitted, it will just update everyone at once and hopefully make the process less burdensome. And again, Six, standardizing that feedback process. That is another way to standardize across the board. So, that was my thought on those.

Rose Baez: Okay. Thank you, Melody. I don't see any other hand raisers so I'll keep this moving. We'll go to Strategy Number 16. This is related to Goal Two. (Unintelligible) to develop educational resources and opportunities to inform individuals of where they can provide feedback and provide guidance that should be tailored towards the needs of the user and stakeholder's perspective.

Elizabeth, this came from you, with the recommendation to add it to Goal Three. Did you want to…?

((Crosstalk))

Beth Rubinstein: Yes. And the more I listen to all the different comments and that, this wouldn't just be for (end users) but possible (unintelligible). I'll give you an example. The OPPN and (unintelligible) and we have annually two public comment periods on policies. And I've got - trying to implement. And we want to get public feedback on it.

And many a times, public feedback comes from clinicians (unintelligible) into it. And we wanted to get more of the patient perspective. So, working on the Patient Affairs Committee, we were developing ways to extend that invitation. And one of the comments we saved is that the (information) was highly technical. So, this year we developed an at-a-glance educational piece, an overview of a policy.

So, if we (unintelligible) it will present an overview of a measurement inn laymen terms as to why, what, where, and how the need for the measurement? Because (we find) that we have different vehicles for measurements, but the rationale behind it, especially for end users and the public domain is not understandable.

Comments from patients on HCAHPS scores. They complained that one, when we receive it, it's not timely, but the feedback isn't getting back to developers in (unintelligible). And the other thing is they're not questions that we would want to be (asking). We want to have other questions answered.

So, in the development of HCAHPS, it's like how are we soliciting that feedback. So, the educational resources and opportunities to inform individuals where they can provide feedback can (be) a very important component. And we and share giver providers goes to an end user site to compare nursing home sites. And there should be a link from NQF within that site to provide feedback. Was this helpful? Did it provide the information? Because that ties into a whole plethora of measurements that are established to actually rate the nursing home.

So, if we're not providing the right information for end users to use it, how are we supposed to submit feedback? Would taking and making things easily accessible and providing an overview. Educational short pieces that kind of at-a-glance. This is what we're trying to accomplish.

So, I don't know if my explanation makes sense. I did send a link to the (LPN), to the facilitator to just get it so you can actually click on it. And then you can click on any of the public (proposals). And they have an (unintelligible) page. And we're further refining that into patient language because we presented it to the patient (unintelligible) group who then distribute it to some national groups. And the national groups gave us the feedback saying they wanted to have particular terms defined. The acronyms defined. They have little glossaries available. So, we need a way to solicit the feedback from individuals and end users.

The other thing that according to this (unintelligible), there's a lot of reference to Stakeholders or those, wording of those, and I may be jumping ahead. That may be another number. But we need to define which Stakeholders are we applying this measure to. Which - are they end users, are they permissions? Are they performance measures? Who are the Stakeholders assigned?

When you go to the word those, this measure is for those. Who are those? We kind of assume that these measures are for particular groups, but sometimes we really can't define that overall. I'm thinking again from a lay patient advisor eye view, but I'm just setting this on the table for conversation. Thank you.

Rose Baez: Thank you, Elizabeth. I think Melody, you wanted to add to that?

Melody Danka Holmsback: Nope. Again, I did not raise my hand.

Rose Baez: Okay. Okay. Any comments from others on this one before we move on? I don't see other hands raised. Okay.

Melody Danka Holmsback: But I will say I agree with her comments.

Rose Baez: Thank you. So, if we can advance to the next Slide, I think Elizabeth, what you had touched upon in your last comment, it's the last row here, where we talk about defining who those are. Anything else you wanted to add here?

Beth Rubinstein: No, it's pretty self-explanatory. We need to be more explicit in the audiences that we're addressing.

Rose Baez: Okay, thank you. Okay, then let's start back at the top. I think Heather may have just joined us. This came from her. This is Strategy Number 28. You can see that there's a number of Goals that are associated. We've got a total of Five of the Goals associated with this strategy. NQF to partner with specialty societies and relevant organizations to identify opportunities to using NQF (unintelligible) tool as a standard method for collecting feedback on the NQF Endorsed Measures.

I think the question that came from Heather here is why NQF Investment in Technologies Technical Complexity is rated as high? Heather, I know you're just joining us, but is there anything additional you want to add here?

Heather Smith: No. No, thanks for just brining that up. I just was wondering if we could get clarification on that?

Rose Baez: NQF Staff. Is that something you can help answer?

Ashley Wilbon: Sure, hi. This is Ashley. I think that if it, looking at this now I was actually wondering whether we meant to put high for workload or for the technology. But I think in general, the thought was similar. The thinking was similar to, I think, with another strategy about, like, putting links on other vendors Websites and things like that.

I think, particularly with specialty societies and other organizations, you might already have a (system) or a process in place for collecting feedback on measures that may be relevant to that particular specialty society. Or they may have a (registry) already that they're already using some sort of standardized tool that, you know, certainly it's more than just saying, here's our tools. Can you use it?

Oftentimes there's a lot of kind of discussion and negotiation about, you know, what information is actually collected. Is it something that they're comfortable with putting out there to their membership, or their network? So, certainly it's less of maybe an IT issue. But maybe more so behind the workload and just working with organizations and informing them on what our tool is? Our intent. How we would like the users to use it. And how that kind of may compliment any existing compliment or potential conflict with any resisting resources and mechanisms they have in place to already collect feedback on their own tools and resources.

So, I think that was kind of the thinking behind it. And certainly, again, we're hoping to see suggestions about, you know, changing the ratings or the score. But I think again, this might have been, I would say, probably less so around technology, but more so just around resources and workloads. So, that's something we can certainly adjust there with that reading.

Heather Smith: This is Heather. That makes sense. I was figuring that the workload would be high. I just was questioning the cost (fee). So, thank you for clarifying. I really appreciate it.

Ashley Wilbon: Sure. Thanks for the question.

Rose Baez: They (have) the same strategy and I think, Elizabeth, you might have touched upon this in your earlier comments with the, is this specific to the same strategy for Goals Four and the recommendation to define or add terms for public (facing and user groups, or external users). I think you might have covered it, but anything else you wanted to add here.

Beth Rubinstein: Yes. CMS is now regulated (beneath) the Patient Family Advisory Council. And this is the first year where it's mandatory and it's been (unintelligible) for the last two years. We need to partner - NQF needs to partner with Specialty Societies and CMS would be a partner in this. Because now there's a nationwide effort to establish Patient Family Advisory Councils all across the board in every single entity.

And then you have the national group. You know, just for example, Renal Committee consulting with the National Kidney Foundation being able to source feedback from the public domain to the specialty society relationships. Again, you have the professional relationships, (the specialty society), but you also have the patient (side). And those partnerships are invaluable.

The Mission Hospital Association (for this state in) collaboration within the (Unintelligible) Project, we now have a Patient Family Engagement Council with the Mission Hospital Association in which we do patient outreach and solicit their feedback on Quality Improvement. And I think we're overlooking a wonderful opportunity.

The NQF has done work and research with the PROMs Measures and works in partnership with the Specialty Groups which have the ability to actually send test surveys and information to solicit feedback to a large (cohort). So, I think that's an opportunity in this Measurement Feedback Group and something that I don't know what the cost resources would be involved, but, again, it's establishing those relationships and making patient friendly society or any group friendly to solicit feedback in a standardized manner. Thank you.

Rose Baez: Okay, thank you Elizabeth. Does anybody else want to comment on that? Okay, I think we've reviewed all of the strategies. Before we move on, are there any other comments? I'm not seeing any hands raised. I think, Ashley, should be return it back to you?

Ashley Wilbon: Yes. Thank you Rose. And thank you all for your input. It's super helpful and I think that certainly we looked at a lot of strategies and did a lot of reading and it's certainly helpful to have a second or multiple eyes looking at it to make sure that our assessment was accurate. So, thank you for your input on that. And we'll certainly go back and make adjustments as recommended to those strategies. So, very helpful.

So, our next sessions, we've got about 40 minutes left and we'd like to try to get at least through, I think, through some of the groupings of categories of strategies that we've developed based on our initial analysis. So, hopefully, we can at least do that. And I think maybe we'll reserve the deep dive into the (two) (unintelligible) pilot options that we recommended for Thursday. But we'll see how far we get. Just to do a bit of a contract and kind of agenda check based on where we are so far.

So, again, this is a repeat Five. You've already kind of been through this. But again, just a reminder as to how we ended up grouping the strategies into the two pilot options and some of the considerations that we weighed as we did that. (Again) (523) is again a key to just remind us how we rated the cost and benefits and it is, you know, they're (inverse) of each other so a high benefit is three and a low cost is a three. So, again, just keeping that in mind, and where possible, we tried to have that key on the Slide because it is a bit confusing.

What we did try to do for the next potion was to provide a bit of a color key. So, anywhere where the cost was low and there was a high benefit, it got essentially, the lower the cost the higher the benefit, you'll get a green. If it was a high cost, low benefit - or low benefit, the star would be red. And then something, kind of in between would be yellow. So, we hope that this color-coding kind of helps, kind of put our minds in the right place in terms of understanding the relationship of the costs and benefits and where they were in terms of their rating.

So, certainly if questions or things don't appear to make sense, let us know and we'll try to talk through it, so we recognize that it is a bit confusing and hard to wrap your brain around, as we learned as well, while we were putting this together. So, please just let us know.

So, again, I wanted to just explain a bit how we landed with the - where we landed with the proposed pilot option. So, we were looking to find some themes among the various options or strategies that we - the 40 strategies that we had, to really see how things kind of hung together in kind of a comprehensive way and maybe in a thematic way. And where we ended up was with two pilot options.

The first is Enhancing Partnerships to Promote the Feedback loop. And this, again, focuses on opportunities, or ways to (ink you up) and strengthen our Stakeholder's understanding of the Pathways (Intimate) Feedback and, again, this is - you know, some of the example of strategies will include education, not just on like where to submit feedback, but like how it should be submitted.

You know, what's the best way to, you know, type your comments? Or word it? Or what have you, so that it makes sense to developers and things like that.

But there would be more education and other partnerships with other Stakeholders to really promote that feedback.

And Option Two, is focused on enhancing our Stewardship of the Feedback. If we think of ourselves, at NQF, as kind of a Steward of Endorsement, so we kind of verse endorsement and make sure that all of the inputs and the right people and the right -- not the right measures, but all the right people and information is gathered so that the endorsement process can take place.

And so, in doing that, enhancing our stewardship of the feedback group, would also include activities where NQF would expand its activities to really advance the gathering and solicitation collection of feedback. So, this would include perhaps more engagement from staff to be more actively engaged in collecting feedback from external sources. Doing more outreach specifically. Working with developers to find ways or opportunities, or organizations that would essentially want to submit feedback and make sure that feedback is submitted and incorporated into a process. So, just a couple of examples of how we (unintelligible) those together.

A couple other points to pull out that aren't necessarily listed here, probably look through the different strategies. We also identified some that we felt that regardless of what pilot was selected by CMS, that we believe that they were important enough and high impact enough that they should be implemented regardless of what option is selected.

So, before we get into these two pilot options, we are going to go through some of those strategies that we identified that we just feel like were so important that they need to implemented regardless of what pilot option were - is selected. We also identified some of the strategies or activities that we do currently now that we think, you know, we would want to continue, that they have some kind of foundational support to how we are collecting and soliciting feedback and that we would still want to continue to do those things.

And then I guess, the third category of strategies that we've pulled out before we dive into these options, are some of the strategies that we identified that we didn't think that really fit in with any of those buckets. That we didn't think that they should be included in our Pilot Option. We didn't think it should be included as something that is implemented regardless of the Pilot Option.

That they really were either kind of out of scope, we felt, for based on the way the NQF Feedback Loop would be designed. Or, really the cost or the benefits was really so disproportionate that we didn't feel like it really was a worthy effort to implement the strategy.

So, those other buckets of what we're going to go through first and then we'll dive into the actual proposed Pilot Options as we move forward. I will also note that none of the options are overlapping. So, essentially Option One has its own discrete set of strategies. Option Two has its own discrete set of strategies.

The strategies that we pulled out that we didn't believe belong in any option, (and were its own set) also, the set that we will continue to do that represent our kind of current ongoing activities or its own (preset), and also the set of strategies that we believe should be implemented regardless of the pilot option or the preset. So, hopefully that makes things a little a little bit simpler. There isn't a lot of duplication in these and they're essentially what we have groups within a particular category is the set and there isn't a lot of overlap between those. So, hopefully that makes sense and certainly as we move forward if there are questions, please let us know.

So, the first section of this Slide is really to list the Slides that we did not include in any Pilot Option. And what I want to do is just kind of walk through these and kind of give our rationale for where we landed with these. So, the first strategy is one described as NQF for work with CMS Partners to just establish guidance for developers on submitting measures for rulemaking consideration and endorsement.

And this one we really felt was a bit out of the scope. It really seemed to us to focus more on how developers can get measures from endorsement to - (into) the Measure Applications Partnership Process. Or from the Measure Application Partnership Process into the Endorsement Process based on the rule making timelines which kind of took us a little bit out of the scope of the Endorsement Process. Although related, it was - and there is feedback that is provided as part of the Measure Applications Partnership, we did feel like it took us a bit out of the realm of the (CDP) and while it is an issue, we didn't feel like it should be a focus effort within this pilot.

I'll just move through all four of these and then I'll pause for questions to see where the Committee thinking lies with our proposal here. So, Measure Developers to respond to (commenters) in a monthly or quarterly batch process, with responses and acknowledgement on next step.

I think certainly this is something that we've discussed a lot. I think our thinking for this one was there really hasn't been consensus with the group to date on what and how and when Measure Developers should be responding to the commenters would certainly open some more discussion on this, but I don't think as a team, we felt like there had been a very clear kind of (top) forward on how we would implement a strategy where developers would meet to submit comments or responses to comments within a specific period of time.

It was also pointed out that it is one of the strategies where NQF, while we can, you know, tell developers that they have this particularly timeframe, that we don't really have any kind of control or - it's not a strategy that we can really control when developers, you know, respond. We can certainly put forth recommendations and guidance for when it should be done. If we were to settle on with that, the parameters would be, but it's one that we didn't feel like we could really control or manage ourselves.

This one around NQF has considered incorporating a landing page for Measure Developers on the NQF Website, where they can easily access and view all the comments. We did pull this one out because we actually already have a platform within our Website for Measure Developers where they can access comments. And so, we felt like this is a little bit duplicative of a platform that we already have. with the Dashboard for Measure Developers within the process or even outside of the process. There is a way for us to - for developers to view comments that have been submitted to them either through their Dashboard or through other (sites. It) already kind of exist and certainly there's always improvement that can be made to some of the existing resources, but we didn't feel like this one was one that kind of seemed to meet the threshold of this (for it), particularly considering it would require more of a technological effort to fix that or make any improvements to what already exists.

And then the last one is around NQF providing Standing Committee Training on (eCQM) and other evolving Measure Concepts. Certainly, we feel like this is a very important recommendation and strategy, but we felt like it was a bit out-of-scope for the feedback loop process and something that we certainly incorporate training for Standing Committees and other parts of our process, but wouldn't necessarily be a part of a Measure Feedback Loop Pilot.

So, with that, I will pause here and see, you know, Committee thoughts and considerations on our recommendations for pulling these strategies out of consideration.

Eddie Machado: Thanks Ashley, (Betty). I guess we can open it up for the Committee for their reaction to what you covered thus far. I'm not sure who raised their hands first. I'll go with (Joseph) and then Melody.

(Joseph): John, I agree with most of what you came up with on these. The one that I would kind of push back a little bit on is Number Two. I understand what you're saying is that you really don't have any authority that requires something, but you know, I would fear that, you know, (then it leaves it to) Measure Developers to decide how they're going to respond. If they're going to respond. And I think that the key component of getting a (buy-in to this) is getting some type of feedback when a decision is made.

Otherwise again, clinicians will just see this as going into a black hole and it doesn't mean anything and nothing has changed. I think you can either give some very strong guidelines or make it a requirement of using the system. So, if I'm a Measure Developer and I want to use this as getting feedback, well the requirement is part of this is agreement that you're going to a reporter and give everybody who sent comments, you know, a newsletter or something, talking about what you have received and if any actions were done.

Beth Rubinstein: Thanks (Joe), that's really helpful. And this is one that we get trouble with quite a bit. So, I'm not necessarily put (Joe) directly on the spot, but this is one where we feel like there's been a lot of kind of, less consensus I think on the committee on how best to go about this. So, certainly any suggestions or (nickel) discussion that the Committee should have about how we would frame this? What, may be some of the core kind of components of what that guidance would be in terms of timing or how we would frame that would be super helpful, I think.

Eddie Machado: Thanks Ashley. And thanks (Joseph). Melody?

Melody Danka Holmsback: Yes, and actually my comments are on Two as well. So, I totally agree with that and to just give some suggestions, as disjointed as CMS often seems to us, I think one thing they do have down is when they do the annual physician's fee schedule, which is proposal of measures, getting feedback, those type of things. So, a suggestion, I agree that this should be a part of that.

Maybe there's a quarterly update that has any questions submitted and they answer them simply like they do in the proposed rule where they'll add the comments of why they agree or disagree and kind of keep that going and then push that out to whoever - have it posted but then push it out to whoever had made comments, I think would be one way of dealing with that.

There may be other suggestions, but without reiterating what (Joe) said, because I agree with that, I think that would be one suggestion.

Eddie Machado: Thanks Melody. (Connie)?

(Connie): Yes, I think we're all on the same page. My comments were with Number Two as well in terms of Measure Developers responding. And I really sympathize with NQF on this one because you don't have authority over whether or not they do provide comments or responses. I think it's important. I think part of the frustration, at least I can say, from a provider side or whatever, is we never know if the developers are receiving the comments and/or taking the comments seriously or to heart.

So, this, in my mind, is really part of that communication and how do we - how are we able to get responses? And I liked Melody's comment about maybe, you know, quarterly or something. I don't have any great ideas. I wish I did and maybe need to ponder it a little bit more.

But to me, Number Two is as important. It's a very frustrating process for the Standing Committees knowing comments have gone in and not knowing where those comments have gone.

Eddie Machado: Thanks (Connie). I don't see any other hands raised. Do other folks have comments or thoughts or just…? Okay. So, I guess we'll hand it back to Beth to go through the next step. But…

Beth Rubinstein: Thanks Eddie. And if your point is well taken. And it's like I said, it's something that we struggled with quite a bit, but I think the suggestion that, I think it was Melody, that she gave about kind of liberalizing the pushing of comments out. And then we could say here's your quarterly you know, commenting batch. Please respond within 30 days and we'll distribute comments or something like that.

I think we can make a proposal about how that would look. So, thanks for that. That was really helpful actually. So, this next Slide is around some of the existing strategies or activities that we do that we will continue. One of the things I will point out that we did note, is that the benefit score is relatively low compared to the cost score. So, the cost score is green which means that it's a pretty low cost to us, but I think overall, we went with our rating process, we didn't find that it really strongly supported the goals in any way.

But we do still feel like these are pretty foundational activities that we need to continue. So, kind of keeping that in mind, I'll just kind of go through these. And I think all of you are familiar with these. They're pretty basic so I won't spend a lot of time on them. I will just pause at the end and certainly we'll take any questions about - or comments about these.

But essentially, we certainly have (CBC) Public Commenting Tool or portal that we keep available on each of the active project pages, during an active comment period. And this, again, is something that we do, that we will continue doing, although certainly the point has been well made throughout this process that things aren't easily accessed. But as many access points as we can provide, I think that we would like to keep those (OPPS) open, so I spoke to (on project pages and exploring with) (unintelligible) in a topic area, that they would still have access to submit a comment if there is an open commenting period.

For Strategy Six, the NQF Feedback Tool can be accessed on the NQF Home Page or the (CPS). So, certainly we would agree that although it is accessible on the home page, it's not very easily accessible. That's certainly something we will continue to work on to make the visibility more prominent on the website. But, again, we still feel like it is important to have that access through the home page, obviously more visible, more accessible, but also for folks to be able to access (ACCEA) the (unintelligible) positioning system. If they're in there, that, again, it's another additional access point that would be available to folks who are exploring the Website and may happen upon - to find something and see at either access point that they would be able to submit a comment.

One of the primary tools that we use to look at comments, is to send emails to members and individuals who have opted into our email pool or communication pool. This is one of the primary ways that we send communication to those who have engaged with NQF in some way, to notify them about commenting (theories) and opportunities to engage in our process.

Certainly, we feel like that is kind of a basic communication tool. Certainly, we are looking to improve that and find other ways to make that more targeted. But certainly, that's something that we would continue with more enhancement going forward.

Strategy Eight is around the development - I'm sorry, that the developers complete the submission form with information available to them for evaluation of their measures. Certainly, the submission form is the primary tool that we have for collecting information for Developers on Measures that are submitted to NQF. That is something that we are, you know, we must continue to do. So, that is certainly there.

And we certainly have opportunity within the submission form to clarify some items in the forum to make sure that developers understand what type of information and feedback we're looking for so that we, kind of get responses to those questions and items that are in alignment with what we're actually looking for.

So, again, kind of a basic activity that we're doing with the acknowledgement that we're looking to enhance that as well. But again, just acknowledging that that is something that we currently do that we'll continue to do. We also will continue to solicit comments for measures that are actively under review and include them in the Committee material for evaluation of the measure. So, anytime we have an active endorsement process, we have various points within the process where we do solicit comments.

There is essentially one long comment series, where we kind of gather comments to see before the committee convenes and present those to the committee. And then after the committee convenes, also we have the commenting process and those then are reviewed again by the committee for their consideration.

On Strategy Ten, we will include comments and recommendations for the Measure Applications Partnership deliberation, the Committee Manager Evaluation Materials. Certainly, this is what we consider as kind of an additional input. The Manager Applications Partnership or the MAP is another kind of body - NQF body that's not within the (Endorsement) Process, but it is a process where multiple Stakeholders do convene and have the opportunity to provide input on the usability, the feasibility of a measure that may already be in use before it is essentially (headed) to a program.

So, measures that are on the Must List or the Measures Under Consideration List, are often discussed. (We just pass) down that input to be very helpful to our Standing Committee, so that's something we would continue to do and provide to our Standing Committee, as an input to their deliberations.

And also, Strategy Eleven. Comments that are submitted prior to Committee Evaluation are shared with the Developer within one week and discussed by the Committee during the deliberation. So, as I mentioned before, we open the commenting period prior to each of the Standing Committees beginning their Evaluation Meeting.

And any comments we receive up to about a week before that meeting, we collate and distribute to the developers and they have an opportunity to respond and to prepare to respond during the Committee deliberations, so that those comments again, are incorporated into the evaluation process.

And I think our final flag here, around some of the existing strategies that developers do provide written responses to comments submitted after the Committee recommendations are discussed on the post comment calls. So, during our Endorsement Maintenance Process, once the committee has made their initial recommendations for endorsement, we do (seek) the managers out for a public commenting period.

Any comments that are received are then discussed on an additional Webinar or conference call for the Committee and the developer to discuss. And in the interim, between when the commenting series closes and when the committee reconvenes to discuss those comments, the developer does have an opportunity and we do require as part of our process, to respond in writing to each of the comments that are submitted. And those comments are then distributed to those who submitted the comments, as well as to Standing Committees. Certainly, that is something we would continue to do.

We do also, post comments to the project page with the Developing Committee responses after that commenting and deliberation process is complete. And we do include those comments as an appendix into the report so they are captured and in one place for anyone who is looking to do any research on the feedback that is received for measures under a review for a particular topic area.

Comment responses are posted on the Project Page and included (unintelligible) that's actually a duplicate. And (commenters) receive, written responses from the developers, which I already mentioned. And they can also attend the post comment call to hear the discussion of the comments. So, not only do they receive written responses from the developers, but there is an opportunity for commenters to actually engage in the discussion while it's occurring between the Developers and the Standing Committee for measures that are under endorsement review.

So, I'm going to pause there and see if there's any questions or comments, or kind of recommendations for these. Again, I think they're pretty straight forward and what we think, are kind of basic activities that we would envision ourselves continuing to do.

Melody Danka Holmsback: This is Melody and I agree. And I think some of those that are kind of in the lower benefit category, as you get more usage to the site, hopefully through this process, they will become more beneficial.

Ashley Wilbon: Thank you. So, we have about ten minutes left. We have, let me just see here - about two Slides to get through, which I'm not sure we'd be able to do that without completely rushing. Rose, Eddie, I just wanted to check in with you and see what you think. Should we try to push through the last couple Slides or would you like to, do you think this is a relatively decent place to break. The next section is around the Pilot Options that we would recommend implementing with any pilot that is selected.

Eddie Machado: This is Eddie. I think this is probably a good break point. Because I think the subsequent discussion really is going to dig deeper into the different options. But I don't know Rose, what do you think?

Rose Baez: Yes, I would agree. I would rather not rush through it.

Ashley Wilbon: Okay, that certainly works for us and I think we agree its good place to break. And these next couple Slides do take us pretty deep into it, so it would be nice to have one continuous discussion. So, with that, why don't we open it up for Public Comment. We're a little bit early, but we can do that now.

Eddie Machado: Great. At this time, all the lines are open, so if there are any public comments please go in.

(Mark): This is (Mark (Unintelligible). I do have a quick question with regard to just the organization of the two proposed Pilots. You know, the seem to cover sort of different focuses or areas which makes sense. But I'm wondering is there any consideration to some sort of hybrid approach instead of just going with Pilot One or Pilot Two?

Ashley Wilbon: Hi. Sure. There is - so we're going to discuss each of the Pilot Options and there will certainly be an opportunity for the Committee to recommend alternate approaches. A hybrid approach would certainly be another option we could present to say that rather than picking one or the other, that we would do the whole - do everything. So, certainly that can be a recommendation for consideration.

So, if there aren't any other questions, it doesn't appear that we had any public comments, we can go ahead and close for today. And we will plan to reconvene on Thursday at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time and we'll pick up right here with, where we left off, which the Pilot Options and the Strategies that we will implement within (the Pilot).

Rose and Eddie, do you have any closing remarks for us?

Rose Baer: Just to thank the Committee for your time and for all of your feedback thus far. I look forward to the further discussion on Thursday.

Eddie Machado: Likewise, great job to the staff also. This s a lot of good work put together.

Ashley Wilbon: Thanks Rose and Eddie. And thank you guys for your leadership and getting us through that really dense portion of the call. We appreciate it as always. And we will speak to everyone again on Thursday. Thank you.

Eddie Machado: Thank you.

Rose Baer: Thank you.

Several: Bye.

John Luke: Hey Eddie, it's John Luke with NQF. Actually, or Rose are you still on?

Eddie Machado: Doesn't look like it. So, I don't have anything other then you guys did a really good job on this.

John Luke: Well it's a great thing. I think we can plan to cancel the call for tomorrow. I agree, I don't think we have any substantive updates.

Eddie Machado: All right. Thanks a lot.

John Luke: Great thanks.

Eddie Machado: Bye.

John Luke: Bye.

END