

Measure Registry Needs Assessment

Webinar Summary: Project Findings

The Measure Registry Needs Assessment project (www.qualityforum.org/RNA), funded by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), is intended to gather perspectives and ideas from a wide range of stakeholders regarding needs and key considerations for a standardized approach to gathering, storing, and accessing healthcare quality measure information. HHS contracted with the National Quality Forum (NQF) to engage stakeholders in various information-gathering activities between May and September 2012 (Appendix) and produce a report summarizing the key findings from these activities.

In preparation for the draft report's public commenting period, NQF hosted a public webinar on October 26, 2012, to:

- Provide an overview of the Measure Registry Needs Assessment project;
- Share the project's major findings; and
- Encourage stakeholders to submit feedback on the draft report.

This document provides an overview of the webinar proceedings.

Overview of Project

Mary Nix (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality [AHRQ]) began the webinar by discussing the impetus for the Measure Registry Needs Assessment project. She described the difficulty many stakeholders face in maintaining and/or accessing measure information, and spoke of HHS' and others' interest in being able to consistently identify and track measures and their versions over time. Ms. Nix then offered that HHS plans to use the input gathered through this project to inform near-term decisions on where and how to invest in managing measure information, and determine the role for the federal government to help meet measure information needs.

Anisha Dharshi (NQF) provided an overview of the project's various information-gathering activities, detailing the organizations and agencies that participated in each activity. To provide webinar participants a general sense of how measure information is currently accessed or stored, Diane Stollenwerk (NQF) reviewed two diagrams: the first showing where measure information is sent, submitted, and/or stored; and the second showing where measure users seek out measure information.

Project Findings

The major findings of the project were the focus of the webinar's content. A full discussion of these findings is offered in the [Measure Registry Needs Assessment Draft Report](#).

Current Landscape for Measure Information Management

The webinar began with a discussion of how measure information is currently gathered, stored, and accessed.

- No single system exists today to meet all the needs of the diverse stakeholders involved in quality measurement and improvement.

- Organizations rely on a wide range of approaches for managing measure information, ranging from Excel spreadsheets to custom databases.
- When seeking measure information, most organizations must access multiple sources, including AHRQ, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, NQF, and measure developers. Internet searches are also often used to meet stakeholders’ measure information needs.
- Stakeholders encounter major challenges in managing measure information, including the lack of standardized measure information and inconsistent approaches to measure versioning.

Primary Measure Information Needs

Ms. Stollenwerk shared a summary of stakeholders’ highest priority measure information needs identified throughout the project and prioritized by participants at the project’s September workshop (Table 1).

Table 1. Stakeholders’ Primary Measure Information Needs

Priority	Measure Information Needs
1	Complete, up-to-date measure specifications , including eMeasures and related information
2	Consistent approaches to definitions for elements of measure information, or metadata , as well as measure identification and versioning processes to help stakeholders track a measure and changes to it throughout the development and use pipeline (including measure concepts and measures no longer maintained by the measure developer)
3	Measure use information (including use in national reporting and incentive programs and use at the local, state, and regional levels) with systematic, structured feedback loops between measure developers and measure end-users to support collaboration and implementation
4	Measure results and benchmark data , including information that can support comparisons across settings and regions over time, and that can inform action to close performance gaps
5	Other information to support use of a measure including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Measure abstracts (concise summaries of the most essential information about a measure, including the context for why the measure is important and/or the intent of the measure) ➤ Harmonization among and relationships between measures ➤ Measure gaps ➤ Reliability and validity testing information

Potential Approaches for Measure Information Management

The next portion of the webinar focused on several measure information management approaches that were presented at the workshop to help frame participants’ input. The benefits, challenges, and trade-offs for each of the following approaches were shared:

- Alignment of information in existing systems;
- Independent systems and information repositories accessible via one access point;
- Multiple systems connected into one system; and
- One registry for measures.

Opportunities and Next Steps

Ms. Stollenwerk shared stakeholders’ ideas and considerations for how HHS could support a standardized approach to gathering, storing, and accessing measure information. Despite the current

obstacles, stakeholders recognize existing opportunities for improving measure information management:

- Alignment of measure information elements would benefit all stakeholders, regardless of the approach put in place.
- The technical elements of all approaches are feasible.
- Greater collaboration among measure developers could spur measure uptake while still protecting competition.
- Supporting access to measure results could drive increased understanding and improvement of performance within and across regions.

Ms. Stollenwerk shared stakeholders' suggested actions for HHS and others to consider in the short- and long-term:

- **Build the foundation** – Define a measure's development and use lifecycle, key information about a measure that is important to capture, and a consistent approach to measure identification and versioning.
- **Define the vision and create a road map** – Clarify the primary audiences for the ideal approach to measure information management and the value of each audience's participation. Determine the impact the approach may have on stakeholders' resources and workflow.
- **Take an incremental approach** – Evaluate current systems for their potential to contribute to the solution. Create a development plan that targets an initial set of stakeholders' needs. Seek multi-stakeholder input throughout the process.
- **Support competition and collaboration** – Examine opportunities to share measure specifications widely while respecting measure developers' business models. Develop approaches that will encourage alignment with defined measure metadata fields. Enable a feedback loop between measure developers and implementers.
- **Coordinate on the plan** – Align activities across HHS agencies to support tracking measures used in HHS programs. Capitalize on opportunities for the public and private sectors to collaborate. Allocate resources to the development and maintenance of the standardized approach. Create incentives to motivate participation and use.

Participants were able to ask questions throughout the webinar. One participant asked if a "Measures Registry Partnership" was being considered by NQF to address stakeholders' measure information needs. Webinar speakers clarified that this assessment was conducted on HHS' behalf, and that HHS would consider the suggested next steps in its path forward. Another participant asked when decisions would be made and work would begin on a potential approach. While specific next steps are yet to be determined, webinar speakers clarified that to help set realistic time frames around actions, suggested recommendations fell into two major categories: short-term (to be completed by the end of 2013) and long-term (to be completed within the next five years).

Closing Remarks

The webinar concluded with Mary Nix reiterating the importance of submitting public comments on the draft report and thanking all who contributed to the project's activities.

The public commenting period will be open through November 28, 2012. The final report will be submitted to HHS and posted on the NQF website by the end of 2012. More information on this project is available at www.qualityforum.org/RNA. Questions should be directed to Anisha Dharshi at rna@qualityforum.org.□

Appendix—Activities and Corresponding Reports of the HHS-Sponsored Measure Registry Needs Assessment Project

Activity	Brief Description	Date(s)	Corresponding Report(s)
Open Call	An open call for information about current systems and approaches to measure information management.	May 16 – June 6, 2012	Summary of Responses
Stakeholder Discussions	Targeted discussions with public- and private-sector organizations involved in measure development and implementation.	June 11 – July 11, 2012	Summary of Stakeholder Discussions
Webinar: Current Systems	A public webinar to share information about selected measure information management systems.	July 26, 2012	Webinar Summary Webinar Recording Slide Presentations
Workshop	A multi-stakeholder workshop to explore measure information needs, requirements, and potential approaches to measure information management.	Sept. 5, 2012	Workshop Summary: Part I , Part II Meeting Recordings: Morning , Afternoon Slide Presentations
Webinar: Major Findings	A public webinar to share major findings from the above information-gathering activities.	Oct. 26, 2012	Note: Webinar Recording and Summary to be posted online by Nov. 19, 2012, at www.qualityforum.org/RNA
Public Comment Period	A 4-week period for members of the public to review and provide feedback on the Draft Report summarizing major findings.	Oct. 26 – Nov. 28, 2012	Submit Feedback on the Draft Report
Final Report	The final report to HHS on the major findings on the project, including edits based on public feedback.	Late Dec. 2012	Note: Final report to be posted online at www.qualityforum.org/RNA