



Renal Standing Committee – Post-Comment Web Meeting

The National Quality Forum (NQF) convened a public web meeting for the Renal Standing Committee on September 22, 2020.

Welcome and Attendance

Samuel Stolpe, PharmD, MPH, NQF senior director, welcomed the Standing Committee and participants to the web meeting. Dr. Stolpe provided an overview of the meeting objectives. Janaki Panchal, MSPH, NQF manager, conducted the Committee roll call. The Committee co-chairs, Constance Anderson, BSN, MBA, and Lorien Dalrymple, MD, MPH, welcomed the Committee to the call. NQF staff acknowledged the contribution of the seven committee members with expiring terms.

During the meeting, quorum required for voting on the consensus not reached (CNR) measure was not achieved. Therefore, the Committee discussed all relevant criteria and voted after the meeting using an online voting tool.

Discussion and Revote on Consensus Not Reached (CNR) Measures

Rating Scale: M – Medium; L – Low; I – Insufficient; NA – Not Applicable

2977: Hemodialysis Vascular Access: Standardized Fistula Rate (University of Michigan Kidney Epidemiology and Cost Center)

Standing Committee Votes

- Evidence: M-3; L-1; I-14
- Insufficient Evidence With Exception: Yes-7; No-10

Standing Committee Recommendation for Endorsement: Yes-7; No-11

The Standing Committee did not recommend the measure for continued endorsement. This decision was based on the downgrading of evidence from the Kidney Disease Outcomes Quality Initiative (KDOKI) guidelines to expert opinion.

Dr. Stolpe briefly reviewed the spring 2020 measure, NQF# 2977 *Hemodialysis Vascular Access: Standardized Fistula Rate*. This measure did not reach consensus on evidence, a must-pass criterion, during the spring 2020 cycle measure evaluation meetings held on June 16 and 18, 2020. Dr. Stolpe provided a summary of the Committee discussion on this measure and recapped the concerns highlighted by the committee on the evidence criteria during the spring 2020 measure evaluation web meeting. The Committee had expressed concern that the developer provided evidence based on updated guidelines from the National Kidney Foundation's (NKF) KDOQI, which included a downgrading of the evidence to support the measure to expert opinion. Concerns were also expressed during the measure evaluation meeting that the current fistula rate of 64% may be indicative that the remaining opportunities for improvement may include many patients for whom fistula may not be the best route, such as those in hospice care, end-stage liver disease, or cancer. Since this measure did not reach consensus for the evidence criterion, commenters encouraged NQF to consider the "Insufficient

Evidence with Exception” pathway towards endorsement. Renal Standing Committee co-chairs, Constance Anderson and Lorien Dalrymple, facilitated the Standing Committee discussion to reevaluate the measure on the evidence criteria. The Standing Committee considered whether measure NQF #2977 qualified for the “Insufficient Evidence with Exception” pathway. The committee expressed concerns similar to those expressed during the measure evaluation meeting emphasizing that maintenance measure should have stronger evidence to support measure endorsement. The measure developer agreed to revisit evidence in future reviews of the measure.

Review and Discuss Public Comments Received

NQF staff reported that NQF received nine comments for all three measures from four member organizations during the 30-day commenting period. The comments outlined the following concerns:

- Commenters expressed several concerns related to the denominator used, stating that certain populations such as patients not eligible for arteriovenous fistula (AVF), persons on hospice, and pediatric populations be excluded.
- Commenters called for more measures applicable to pediatric patients.
- Commenters recommended refining measures to address non-infectious complications.

NQF Member and Public Comment

No public or NQF member comments were provided during the post-comment meeting.

Next Steps

Teja Vemuganti, MPH, NQF analyst, reviewed next steps. The Committee will meet again in January 2021 for the Fall 2020 orientation web meeting. Mrs. Vemuganti also informed the Committee that the Consensus Standards Approval Committee (CSAC) would consider the Committee’s recommendations during its November 17-18, 2020 meeting. Following the CSAC meeting, the 30-day Appeals Period will be from November 23-December 22, 2020.