



Risk Adjustment and Socioeconomic Status Expert Panel Call to Review Public Comments

May 9, 2014, 11:00-3:00 pm ET

Call Summary

Purpose

The purpose of the call was to:

- Review comments, particularly those with different perspectives or suggestions;
- Attempt to resolve objections, fairly consider all comments, decide on a disposition, and explain the reasons; and
- Discuss potential options for responses to comments including clarifications or potential modifications.

The discussion was based on the [briefing memo](#) sent to the Expert Panel in advance of the call and posted on the project web page.

The recording of the call is available on the [NQF Website](#).

Attendance

NQF staff: Karen Pace, Helen Burstin, Erin O'Rourke, Zehra Shahab, Angela Franklin, Karen Johnson, Patricia Green, Suzanne Theberge, Taroon Amin

Panel members: Kevin Fiscella (co-chair), David Nerenz (co-chair), Alyce Adams, Mary Barger, Susannah Bernheim, Monica Bharel, Mary Beth Callahan, Larry Casalino, Alynna Chien, Marshall Chin, Mark, Cohen, Norbert Goldfield, Nancy Garrett, David Hopkins, Dionne Jimenez, Steven Lipstein, Eugene Nuccio, Sean O'Brien, Pam Owens, Ninez Ponce, Thu Quach, Tia Sawhney, Nancy Sugg, Rachel Werner

Other attendees: Alan Zaslavsky, Alex Brown, Alison Shippy, Alyssa Keefe, Amena Keshawarz, Anthony Del Vicario, Ashley Ferguson, Beth Gualtieri, Betsy Imholz, Bill Wyatt, Brooke Hunter, Carol Moretti, Charles Baschnagel, Chinwe Nwosu, Chloe Stier, Christie Teigland, Colin Goldfinch, Corette Byrd, Craig Lisk, Danielle Horne, Deborah Dorsch, Deborah Happ, Deborah Maruska, Debra Clasen, Dolores Yanagihara, Emily Reilly, Evan Marks, Gary Kitching, Girma Alemu, Heather Snyder, Hope Glassberg, Jacqueline Grady, Jason Kunzman, Jaymie Potteiger, Jeanne Lowe, Jennifer Mathieu, John Shaw, John Hood, John Richardson, Jorie Coll, Joyce Chan, Joyce Dubow, Kara Webb, Kate Goodrich, Kathryn Meehan, Katie Blaska, Kiersten Adams, Kim Ritten, Krista Stewart, Lauren McKown, Lisa Potetz, Lori Schroeder, Lynn Nonnemaker, Maggie Helms, Marian Blankenship, Mary Wheatley, Megan Keenan, Melba Hinojosa, Michael Araas, Michelle Jester, Michelle Stewart, Nancy Foster, Nancy Wilson, Pamela Parker, Peggy Camerino, Peter Hendee, Pierre Yong, Rachel Podoski, Rana Searfoss, Rebecca Hancock, Rita Carreon, Robert Berringer, Robert Pear, Sam Stalley, Sandra Bonet, Sarah Deacon, Scott Wetzell, Serine Haugsness, Sheryl Davies, Stephanie Coe, Stephen Cox, Susan Roughton, Suzanne Maddux, Tami Swenson, Thomas James, Tom Joseph, Trang Pham, Valerie Wilbur, Woody Eisenberg, Yao Yao, Zulkarnain Pulungan

Overview of the Comments Received



667 comments were received from 158 organizations or individuals. 143 comments were in support of the recommendations. Seven commenters were opposed to the recommendations. Seven commenters provided mixed comments (supportive and not supportive) or reservations about the recommendations. Five commenters were supportive of most recommendations but opposed to Recommendation Seven-NQF having a role in guidance on implementation.

The number of comments in support of or opposed to the recommendations alone does not necessarily dictate the outcome of the NQF process. The number of organizations representing the various stakeholder groups varies substantially, so the pattern of comments across the various stakeholder groups is an important element of the Consensus Standards Approval Committee (CSAC) and Board decisions. NQF was founded on the principle that patients are central to the mission of quality of healthcare so consumer and purchaser representatives comprise the majority of the CSAC and Board seats. It is notable that most commenters representing consumers and purchasers did not support the recommendations; however there were two consumer groups that did support the recommendations.

Expert Panel Discussion Key Points

- Panel members were given the opportunity to make some brief comments about their general impressions of the comments or any specific issue they identified as important to discuss. In general, the Expert Panel members expressed their willingness to explore ways to mitigate the concerns raised in the comments and accomplish greater transparency.
- The Panel spent the majority of their time discussing the possibility of greater transparency IF a performance measure is adjusted for sociodemographic factors. Greater transparency might mitigate the fear that presentation of only the sociodemographic-adjusted score would create some combination of masking disparities, setting a lower performance standard for plans or providers serving disadvantaged patients, or reducing incentives for improvement and disparity reduction. The Panel discussed the potential presentation or availability of both the sociodemographic-adjusted score and either a clinical-adjusted score or a raw score. Suggestion and discussion ranged from endorsing two versions of the same measure to making raw scores or stratified scores available if a performance measure included adjustment for sociodemographic factors.
- Discussion also included that risk adjustment methods, if applied appropriately, do not mask disparities. In statistical terms, this relates to how within-unit differences and between-unit differences are handled in statistical adjustment.
- The Panel discussed potentially strengthening the disparities recommendations as presented in the appendix to the briefing memo.

Public Comment

Three members of the audience made comments. The commenters expressed support for the Panel's draft recommendations.

Next Steps

The call concluded with a plan that NQF staff would follow up with additional details and a process for moving forward in regards to options for increasing transparency and response regarding the statistical



methods. Ultimately the Panel's final recommendations and responses will go to the CSAC and NQF Board of Directors for approval.