



Call for Nominations to the Value Set Harmonization Committee

BACKGROUND

The national shift toward interoperable electronic health records (EHRs) enables the calculation and reporting of innovative performance measures that address critical performance and measurement gaps. The electronic ability to clearly and consistently identify patients with specific conditions or interventions, in a given population or setting, is especially important for patient-centered, longitudinal and meaningful healthcare improvement. However, to meet this promise, measure development needs electronic clinical data standards and reusable “building blocks” of code vocabularies to ensure measures can be consistently and accurately implemented across disparate systems. These coded vocabulary groups, known as “value sets,” provide definitions of the data elements necessary to calculate Clinical Quality Measures (eQMs). A value set consists of unique codes and descriptions, drawn from standard vocabularies such as SNOMED CT® and ICD-10-CM, which are used to define clinical concepts (e.g., patients with diabetes, clinical visit). In current programs using EHR data, concepts such as medications, diagnoses, and procedures are addressed, in part, as Data Elements (DE) – the pieces of information to be collected as part of a measure. A Common Data Element (CDE) is a data element that is found in multiple data sets across different measures. Value Sets are the list of possible values for a DE or CDE.

In 2012, the National Library of Medicine (NLM), in collaboration with the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), launched the Value Set Authority Center (VSAC). Through the VSAC, the NLM is charged with value set “curation,” which includes ensuring that value set codes are not incorrect or malformed, do not contain code system or code mismatches, and do not contain code and description mismatches. The VSAC also updates value sets based on the current, valid transition and standard vocabularies approved by ONC’s Health Information Technology Standards Committee (HITSC). The VSAC provides downloadable access to all official versions of vocabulary value sets contained in the Meaningful Use Stage 2 (MU2) eMeasure specifications, also called the 2014 Clinical Quality Measures (eQMs). The value sets in the VSAC describe the specific populations and clinical actions included and excluded in order to properly calculate each of the 64 eQMs for eligible professionals (EPs) and the 29 eQMs for eligible hospitals (EHs) for the 2014 MU2 eQMs.

Many stakeholders in the health information technology (HIT) community have recognized the need for such a repository of value sets, and the VSAC is a remarkable achievement. But to enable value sets to be used efficiently to build and maintain effective eQMs, curation alone is not enough. There is also a need to validate the clinical meaning of codes given the intent of the measures and to assess multiple competing value sets addressing the same intended purpose in order to harmonize them. NQF will develop and pilot test a value set harmonization and approval process to promote consistency and accuracy in eQM value sets. NQF defines value set harmonization as the process by which unnecessary or unjustifiable variance will be eliminated from common value sets in eQMs by the reconciliation and integration of competing and/or overlapping value sets, and to provide basis of gap analysis and for examination of face validity of value sets. This project will also offer guidance on how approved value sets should be integrated into the eQM endorsement process.

Nominations Due By February 20, 2015, 6:00 PM ET

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COMMITTEE CHARGE

A multi-stakeholder Value Set Committee and subject-specific technical expert panels will be established to ensure that design of the technical evaluation, harmonization and approval processes incorporates an appropriately broad range of viewpoints and expertise, while still allowing the harmonization of value sets to be conducted with efficiency by small and specialized groups of experts. The Value Set Committee will to determine the overall approach to the harmonization and approval of value sets, including development of evaluation criteria; evaluating the results of the harmonization process; and provide broad recommendations on how harmonized and approved value sets should be integrated into the measurement endorsement process. The technical expert panels will then use the process developed by the Value Set Committee to conduct the actual technical analysis and harmonization of the value-sets related to each measure, with a special emphasis on consistently adjudicating the most complicated and judgment-dependent variance

In addition to providing recommendations for a value set harmonization and approval process, the Value Set Committee will also address the following issues for integrating harmonization and approval of value sets into the measure endorsement process:

- What are the harmonization criteria for value sets used in eCQM development, and when is value set harmonization applicable?
- Will measure developers be mandated to demonstrate they have actively utilized VSAC harmonized value sets in eCQM development?
- What components of the harmonization process apply to the review and approval of newly submitted value sets, and how should that process be structured?
- What is the role of value set authors and stewards in responding to recommendations for changes or additions to value sets? Will value set harmonization be mandated if the author or steward is unable or unwilling to make suggested changes?
- How are recommendations for additions or changes in value set content integrated into the existing VSAC catalog?
- How does value set harmonization and approval integrate with or impact the measure endorsement process?
- How should developers anticipate the impact on measure development if value set approval and harmonization is an expected pre-condition for eCQM endorsement?

Committee

The Value Set Committee will be comprised of 15-18 multi-stakeholder experts with broad expertise in health information policy, measure development, clinical informaticists, clinical terminology, and eCQM users. A portion of this committee may be drawn from the NQF's Health Information Technology Advisory Committee (HITAC), enabling a consistency of purpose with other NQF measure endorsement and eCQM work. Additional experts will be added to the committee to ensure coverage in critical expertise domains and viewpoints, including EHR vendors, clinical experts, terminology experts, researchers, and representatives from health information exchanges.

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Committee participation includes:

- Participate in the orientation and training call (2 hours)
- Participate in two pre in-person meeting calls (2 hours each)
- Review materials prior to each meeting (2 hours)
- Attendance at two, one-day in-person meetings (2 full days in Washington, DC)
- Participate in calls reviewing and evaluating the harmonization and approval process (4 hours)
- Co-chairs participate in Consensus Advisory Approval Committee meeting to review final recommendations (1 hour)

Table of scheduled meeting dates

Meeting	Date
Orientation Call	March 26, 2015
In-person meeting in Washington DC	April 21, 2015
Post meeting webinar	May 19, 2015
Value set harmonization test results webinar	May 27, 2015
Value set harmonization test results webinar	June 24, 2015
Value set harmonization test results webinar	July, 2015 - TBD
In-person meeting in Washington DC	November, 2015 -TBD

Preferred Expertise & Composition

Committee members are selected to ensure representation from a variety of stakeholders, including consumers, industry groups, purchasers, professionals, health insurers or plans, healthcare providers and practitioners, research entities, measure developers, and HIT experts. Because NQF attempts to represent a diversity of stakeholder perspectives on panels, a limited number of individuals from each of these stakeholder groups can be seated onto a panel.

Please review the NQF [Conflict of interest policy](#) to learn about how NQF identifies potential conflicts of interest. All potential Committee members must disclose any current and past activities prior to and during the nomination process in order to be considered.

CONSIDERATION AND SUBSTITUTION

Priority will be given to nominations from NQF Members when nominee expertise is comparable. Please note that nominations are for individual, not organizations, so “substitutions” of other individuals from an organization at conference calls or meetings is not permitted. However, Committee members are encouraged to engage colleagues and solicit input from colleagues throughout the process.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Self-nominations are welcome. Third-party nominations must indicate that the individual has been contacted and is willing to serve. To be considered for appointment to the Committee, please submit the following information:

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- a completed [online nomination form](#), including:
 - a brief statement of interest
 - a brief description of nominee expertise highlighting experience relevant to the panel
 - a short biography (maximum 750 characters), highlighting experience/knowledge relevant to the expertise described above and involvement in candidate measure development;
 - curriculum vitae or list of relevant experience (e.g., publications) *up to 20 pages*
- a completed disclosure of interest form. This will be requested upon your submission of the nominations form for Committees actively seeking nominees.
- confirmation of availability to participate in currently scheduled calls and meeting dates. Committees or projects actively seeking nominees will solicit this information upon submission of the online nomination form.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

All nominations *MUST* be submitted by **February 20, 2015 at 6pm EST**.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, please contact Kathryn Streeter at 202-783-1300 or via email at valueset@qualityforum.org Thank you for your interest.