

Building Bridges among the National Quality Forum, Medicaid, and Other State Stakeholders

Prepared for the National Quality Forum by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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For more than a decade, the National Quality Forum (NQF) has engaged patients, clinicians, health care purchasers, providers, communities, health plans, and others to reach consensus on performance standards for safe, high-quality health care. NQF also convenes the National Priorities Partnership (NPP) to offer consultative support to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on setting national priorities and goals for the National Quality Strategy. The NPP, made up of 48 member organizations, plays a key role in identifying strategies and actions to achieve the aims of better care, more affordable care, and healthier people and communities.

As NQF adapts to the environment shaped by the evolving needs of the health care community, the growing influence of state-based innovations, and rapid cycle policy, clinical, and health information technology developments, the organization is interested in directly engaging and supporting the priority-setting, measurement, and reporting needs of state Medicaid programs, state departments of insurance and public health. To set the groundwork for this activity, NQF commissioned the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) to assess the ways in which NQF could better incorporate state perspectives into its measurement endorsement and priority-setting efforts. The resulting summary outlines themes culled from interviews with 23 key informants, including state Medicaid officials, insurance commissioners, administrators of public health, and national health policy experts.

In addition to presenting insights regarding the unique priorities, populations, and infrastructure issues germane to state-level quality measurement, the interviewees provided useful suggestions for NQF related to programmatic scope, organizational culture, and communication.

Following are the resulting key recommendations for NQF:

Recommendations for the National Quality Forum
1. Endorse measures that include both populations and services that are more reflective of state-based programs.
2. Develop a state-level strategic quality measurement dashboard that reflects the health care system in total as opposed to individual components of the health care system.
3. Bridge the health care system and public health by identifying population-based measures for which the health care system can be held accountable.
4. Convene a focused, strategic working group of states to help build the quality measurement dashboard.
5. Function as a national voice to advance a value-driven purchasing agenda for state purchasers and encourage states to use a common dashboard for greater accountability.
6. Work with measure stewards to determine how to ensure that measure specifications are easily available or “spin off” an organization responsible for developing and maintaining

Recommendations for the National Quality Forum
measure specifications.
7. Build an organization in tune with state needs, which may necessitate new models of funding and adjustments in staffing and organizational culture.
8. Develop targeted information for states about NQF's mission, its functions and programs; how it differentiates itself from other measurement bodies such as NCQA; and how it coordinates with agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services, specifically AHRQ and CMS.
9. Don't wait for states to join NQF. Cultivate an aggressive outreach campaign to Medicaid, public health, and insurance department officials.

While there is much to do, it is clear that the commitment of NQF to better meet the needs of state leaders is both timely and essential. Medicaid is the nation's largest health coverage program, spending more than \$360 billion annually in purchasing care for 60 million individuals in the U.S. With the recent passage of health reform, Medicaid will cover an additional 16 to 18 million Americans, starting in 2014. With that expansion, Medicaid will provide health insurance to a quarter of the nation's population. Given its sheer size and its continuing transformation from a bill payer to an active health care purchaser, Medicaid – and the emerging state exchanges that will cover an additional 16 million Americans – can play a key role in supporting nationally endorsed performance measures. Public health entities should also serve as crucial measurement partners to ensure that access to quality health care translates to improved health outcomes, particularly for vulnerable populations.

The authors appreciate the valuable insights from the interviewees and thank them for their commitment to improving health care quality and outcomes for Americans enrolled in publicly-financed care.

List of Key Informants

Interviews conducted by Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS)
 Interview Period: November 1, 2010 – January 15, 2011

Type	No.	Key Informants
Medicaid Director	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susan Besio, Vermont (spoke with Medical Director, Michael Farber and Director of Managed Care, Vickie Loner) • Judy Mohr-Peterson, Oregon • Sandeep Wadhwa, 3M Corporation (former Medicaid director, Colorado)
Medicaid Medical Director	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster Gesten, New York • David Kelley, Pennsylvania • Jeff Schiff, Minnesota • Bill Golden, Arkansas • Doris Lotz, New Hampshire
Executives / Chief Medical Officers of Medicaid Health Plans	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Labby, Care Oregon • Colleen Kivlahan, Schaller Anderson of Aetna • Lewis Sandy, United Healthcare
Health Department Officials	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lynn Mitchell, Oklahoma (former Medicaid Director) • Heather Howard, New Jersey (former Health Commissioner) • Maxine Hayes, Washington • Paul Jarris, Association for State and Territorial Health Officials
Health Insurance Commissioners/Officials	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris Koller, Rhode Island • Sandy Praeger, Kansas
Provider and Public Health Perspective	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Stevens, National Association of Community Health Centers • Bruce Siegel, National Association of Public Hospitals
Others	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kyu Rhee, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) • Lee Partridge, National Partnership for Women and Families • Joel Weissman, Assoc. Professor at Mongan Institute for Health Policy, Mass. Gen. Hospital/Harvard Med School • Trish Riley, Director of Governor’s Office of Health Policy and Finance, Maine