

Conflict of Interest (COI) Policy For NQF Measure Incubator® Projects

The National Quality Forum's (NQF) Measure Incubator® is an innovative effort that facilitates efficient measure development and testing through collaboration and partnership. It addresses important aspects of care for which quality measures are underdeveloped or non-existent.

NQF has designed a Conflict of Interest (COI) Policy (the "Policy") and process to minimize the possibility of an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest for NQF and participants in NQF Measure Incubator projects.

NQF

The NQF Measure Incubator brings together the necessary resources—such as measure development experts, clinicians, patients, data sources, and funding—to spur development of needed measures.

In order to encourage more widespread development of needed measures, NQF will publicly share descriptions and results (e.g., measure concepts) from Measure Incubator Strategy Sessions. In its role as project convener, the Measure Incubator may also facilitate measure development and testing by others. NQF does not develop measures and will not be involved in day-to-day measure development and testing activities. While NQF is acting in a facilitator role on a measure development and testing project, NQF may engage an independent consultant or outside committee to obtain feedback on potential COI issues.

Further, any incubated measures that are later submitted for review for NQF endorsement are not conferred any advantage in the endorsement process. Pursuant to NQF's existing COI policy for committee member review of measures, standing committee members who have participated in a Measure Incubator project are recused from evaluation, discussion, and voting on the measure before the committee. This recusal also applies to competing measures. NQF's COI policy also applies to NQF staff who have participated in a Measure Incubator project. Staff will be prohibited from the evaluation of the measure before the committee. This recusal also applies to competing measures.

Funders

NQF will accept funds to support the Measure Incubator generally or for a specific project or activity. NQF will not accept funds from a funder who has an exclusive interest in a product or activity that will be directly affected by the funded work. Further, NQF will not accept funds to support the development of a measure that names such a product.

To minimize the possibility of an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest, a funder will not specify the outcome of a project or activity that it funds or influence discussions and activities directly related to the outcome. NQF will be independently responsible for the design and content of the Measure Incubator activities, publications, and related events, including webinars and forums. Further, funders will not attend meetings where such discussions and activities occur, e.g., Strategy Sessions.

Expert Panelists

A critical aspect of Measure Incubator work is assembling groups of relevant experts and stakeholders to identify and prioritize measure concepts to develop into performance measures that fill high priority gaps where quality measures are needed to improve health outcomes, e.g., via a Strategy Session.

In order to conduct a meaningful analysis and minimize the possibility of a conflict of interest, NQF asks each Expert Panel member to complete a Disclosure of Interest Form when being seated on an Expert Panel. For purposes of this Policy, the term “conflict of interest” means any relevant financial or other interest that a panelist or a family member have which could actually, or be perceived to (1) impede their objectivity, or (2) create an unfair competitive advantage for the panelist or an organization associated with them. The Disclosure of Interest Form will also include disclosures of family members, which will be defined as the panelist’s spouse or domestic partner and dependent children within the panelist’s household.

If NQF determines that a panelist has a conflict of interest, they may not be seated on the Expert Panel, or they may be required to recuse themselves from the discussion of a particular matter. In addition, Expert Panel members must orally disclose relevant interests at an Expert Panel meeting, e.g., a Strategy Session. This general disclosure typically occurs at the Expert Panel’s first meeting, and again, if there are changes at subsequent meetings.

Experts who have participated in a Measure Incubator project must recuse themselves from evaluation, discussion, and voting on the measure(s) if the measure(s) are brought forward for NQF endorsement or selection review. This recusal also applies to competing measures.