

C. difficile in the Community Quality Measures

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Clostridioides difficile (*C. diff*) is a preventable bacterial disease that causes diarrhea and inflammation of the colon and can have serious implications on health and quality of life. In 2017, there were 223,900 cases reported and 12,800 deaths. Community associated cases are on the rise, particularly in populations that have previously been considered as low risk for *C. diff* infection such as younger adults and those without serious illness. Preventing and identifying *C. diff* is crucial to reducing incidence and improving health outcomes and the quality of life of patients and families. Research shows that there are opportunities for measure development in diagnosis, treatment, provider and patient knowledge, prevention, and patient quality of life, yet no quality measures currently exist for community associated *C. diff*.

This NQF Measure Incubator® project is the first step toward facilitating the development of needed quality measures and guidance to prevent, diagnose, and treat *C. difficile* infection in the community.

STRATEGY SESSION

National Quality Forum (NQF) convened a Measure Incubator® strategy session with a multistakeholder Expert Panel in February 2020 consisting of patients and caregivers, clinicians, payers, researchers, and measure developers. Expert panelists discussed quality gaps that contribute to the increasing incidence of *C. diff* in the community and the importance of patient well-being as a fundamental driver in quality measurement and improvement initiatives. The Panel emphasized the need to address unique challenges that outpatient and other community-based settings pose for *C. diff* prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. Discussions highlighted the need for timely diagnosis and treatment; prevention through antibiotic stewardship; enhanced communication across care settings; increased education on the risk factors, signs, and symptoms of *C. diff*; and resources to assist providers in adhering to best practices.

The Expert Panel identified 13 measure concepts and prioritized four, based on impact and feasibility, that could be developed into quality measures for *C. diff* in the community. These four measure concepts focused on antibiotic stewardship, improving treatment, improving diagnosis and testing, and patient education/experience. Panelists recommended a multitude of solutions to overcome data and implementation challenges that may be encountered when developing and implementing these measures such as leveraging existing measures from inpatient settings and exploring incentives for public reporting.

WHAT IS THE ENVISIONED OUTCOME?

NQF seeks to facilitate the development of one or more measure concepts into fully specified and tested quality measures, as well as work to advance best practices for antibiotic stewardship in community-based settings through an implementation guide and patient education resources. Funding sources will be explored to support measure development and testing and an implementation guide beginning in fall 2020.

Measurement and implementing best practices will improve the quality of life and health outcomes of patients by ensuring appropriate prevention, diagnosis, and treatment for *C. difficile* in the community.

This Measure Incubator® project is supported by **Pfizer, Inc.** In accordance with the **NQF Measure Incubator Conflict of Interest Principles**, Pfizer, Inc. has not influenced the outcomes and activities associated with this project.