

The Quality Community, Summer 2015

Strengthening the NQF Community

Welcome to the first edition of *The Quality Community*! NQF developed this bimonthly, Members-only newsletter to keep you informed about NQF initiatives, Member news, and upcoming opportunities for engagement. We'll also be launching a new Member web portal with tools to make it easier than ever to access Member-only resources and to learn about new ways to get involved at NQF. We greatly value your time, expertise, and contributions and are committed to ensuring that every Member gets the most value possible from participating in NQF.

Today, NQF Membership is more than 430 organizations strong. This year, we have welcomed 24 new Members, representing hospitals, healthcare systems, patients, families, insurers, and employers, and we look forward to welcoming more Members in the months to come. At NQF, you join as an organization, which means that all our Member benefits, opportunities, and activities are open and available to everyone in your organization. So, please encourage your staff to take advantage of all that we offer.

Thank you for being an NQF Member. Please [contact me](#) to share your thoughts on how we can enhance your Membership experience.

Neal Comstock, Vice President, Member Relations



Save the Date: NQF's Annual Conference, April 7-8, 2016

NQF's Annual Conference, "Re-engineering Quality Data for Value," April 7-8, 2016, in Washington, DC, will delve into the challenges of utilizing health information to engineer better health outcomes and value. This topic is the current focus of [NQF's homepage](#), which highlights our significant work to date in this continually evolving area. We hope you will join us for this important discussion. And, we would welcome you as a conference sponsor. Please reach out to [Jonathan Grau](#) to learn more about conference sponsorship opportunities.



Member Networks

NQF Member Networks provide a convenient, centralized way to get the latest information and announcements on topics that matter to you, connect with other Members who share your interests, and get involved early in NQF's work.

The [Member Network – HIT](#), launched in July, focuses on health information and communications technology. More than 100 individuals from over 80 Member organizations are part of discussions about how to tackle complex, real-time questions around patient safety, interoperability, and more. [Join today](#) and learn more about upcoming events on this topic.

In June, Member Network – Renal participants joined us for updates on NQF's work on standardized readmission ratios for dialysis facilities. The discussion focused on gaining a deeper understanding of the measure review process and the important role that NQF has played to help build consensus among multiple stakeholders.



Welcome to Our Newest Members!

This month, we are delighted to welcome [MaineGeneral](#), [Piedmont Clinic](#), and [Momentum Health Strategies](#) as NQF Members.

MaineGeneral Health, a health system located in central Maine, serves more than 200,000 people and provides a range of services, including prevention, primary care, specialty care, acute and post-acute care, and hospice care.

Piedmont Clinic, located in Atlanta, represents more than 1,200 independent and employed primary care physicians and specialists from across the Piedmont Healthcare System, which is clinically integrated and shares information to achieve better clinical outcomes.

Momentum Health Strategies is a consulting firm based in Alexandria, VA, that focuses on quality improvement, patient engagement, healthcare reform, integrated care and medical home, and antimicrobial stewardship.



Profiles in Quality

In July, NQF spoke with [David M. Lang, MD](#), about the Cleveland Clinic's use of EHRs to enhance collaboration among providers for more than six million patients. As a board member of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (AAAAI), David also discussed the organization's Qualified Clinical Data Registry. The Cleveland Clinic and AAAAI are both long-time Members of NQF.

To share your stories of quality innovation with the NQF community, please [contact the NQF communications team](#).



2015 Eisenberg Awards

Applications for the 2015 John M. Eisenberg Patient Safety and Quality Awards, presented by NQF and The Joint Commission, open September 8 and continue until October 30. This prestigious award recognizes national organizations, local organizations, and individuals for exceptional achievements in patient safety and quality. The 2014 Eisenberg winners include:

- **Individual Achievement:** [Mark L. Graber, MD, FACP](#), senior fellow, Health Care Quality and Outcomes Program, RTI International, for his leadership in bringing the role of diagnostic error to the forefront of the patient safety movement.
- **Innovation in Patient Safety and Quality at the National Level:** The [American College of Surgeons](#) for the National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP), a nationally validated, risk-adjusted, outcomes-based program to measure and improve the quality of surgical care in participating hospitals.
- **Innovation in Patient Safety and Quality at the Local Level:** [North Shore-LIJ Health System](#) for results in reducing sepsis system-wide.

[Sign up](#) to receive information about applying for the 2015 Eisenberg Awards.



Save the Date: Members-Only Events

We have a great series of NQF Member events planned in the weeks ahead. The events are offered at no cost to NQF Member organizations. Please join us and encourage your staff to participate.

- **National Quality Partners: The Role of Providers and Payers in Antibiotic Stewardship, Thursday, August 13, 11:00 am–12:30 pm ET.** As a follow-up to the National Quality Partners' launch of the Antibiotic Stewardship Initiative, join us for the second in a series of virtual forums to galvanize partnership, collaboration, and collective action among NQF's Member organizations on this urgent issue. [Register now](#).
- **Who Uses Measures and Why? Tuesday, August 18, 3:00 pm–4:00 pm ET.** Which stakeholder groups use measures, and why? What are the challenges everyone is facing in quality measurement? Join us for an educational webinar with NQF staff to answer these questions and more. [Sign up](#).

- **National Quality Partners: Advanced Illness Care webinar, Thursday, September 24, 12:00 pm–1:30 pm ET.** Join us for the launch of the advanced illness care action team, which will focus on best practices for providing palliative and end-of-life care that addresses patient and family preferences. [Sign up.](#)
- **Orientation for New Members, Tuesday, September 29, 1:00 pm–2:00 pm ET.** Find out how to get the most out of your NQF Membership by taking advantage of Meet-Ups, educational events, Networks, and other resources designed exclusively for NQF Members. Learn more about NQF’s endorsement and measurement science work and meet the Membership team. [Sign up.](#)



Policy Highlights: Connecting You to Capitol Hill

Recent Congressional focus on improving healthcare quality, reducing costs, and increasing efficiencies has culminated in a flurry of legislative activity. Over the past month, both the U.S. House and Senate have taken up issues related to quality measurement, meaningful use of electronic health records (EHRs), the use and expansion of telemedicine, and linking quality and cost. CMS is equally active, with several proposed rules released recently calling for comment. Here are just a few examples:

Care Planning Act of 2015 (S. 1549). On June 10, Senator Mark Warner (D-VA), introduced the bipartisan [Care Planning Act \(S. 1549\)](#), directed towards the coordination of care services for Medicare and other beneficiaries living with advanced illnesses. S. 1549 funds and prioritizes the development of quality measures focused on individual goals, preferences, and values of patients and their families. The bill also funds efforts to support and train individuals, families, and healthcare providers through the development of online training modules, decision support tools, and instructional materials.

Medicare to Bundle Payments for Surgeries. Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Burwell announced in early July a plan to bundle payments for hip and knee replacement under Medicare, some of the most common surgeries received by the program’s beneficiaries. Hospitals performing these surgeries will be eligible for a bonus payment or will be penalized based on the quality and efficiency of the surgery and the patient follow-up care post-discharge. The [proposed rule](#) is open for comment through September 8, 2015. This provision is included in the larger Medicare fee schedule proposed rule.

CMS Proposes Rule to Change 2016 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule. On July 8, CMS released the first [proposed rule](#) to update the physician payment schedule since the repeal of the sustainable growth rate through the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA). The rule

includes provisions focused on person-centered care, efforts to shift the Medicare program toward a system that rewards physicians for providing high-quality care, and updates to payment policies. CMS also calls for comments on how to implement the [Merit-based Incentive Program](#) and the new alternative payments models called for in MACRA. The proposed rule is open for comment through September 8.

Initial Star Ratings of Home Health Agencies Released. CMS published for the first time its star ratings on [Home Health Compare](#). The results are intended to help consumers compare and choose among home health agencies. More than 9,000 agencies were rated, with most receiving an average score, according to [Kaiser Health News](#).

Contact [NQF's public affairs team](#) with questions about legislative policies.

Contact Us!

If you have questions about your Membership or would like more information about NQF programs, please [contact the Membership team](#).

