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NQF Board of Directors Upholds Endorsement of All-Cause Readmissions Measure

MAP to Develop Guidance on Use of the Measure

Washington, DC – The NQF Board of Directors voted on June 25 to uphold its initial decision to endorse a new all-cause hospital-wide readmissions measure developed by Yale University and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The Board’s decision to endorse this measure was challenged through NQF’s official appeal process by seven hospital systems.

During its deliberations, the Board reaffirmed the important differences between the measure endorsement process, which thoroughly vets the properties of a measure, and that of the [Measure Applications Partnership](#) (MAP) whose role is to advise both public and private sectors on best use of measures in payment and public reporting programs. The Board explicitly requested MAP to convene a special session over the summer to consider the complex issue of how to use this new measure as part of a broader set of care coordination measures applicable to all types of providers.

CMS agreed to defer use of this particular readmission measure in the new CMS Readmissions Reduction Program until MAP had deliberated and recommended back to CMS its advice on the measure’s optimal use. CMS also reaffirmed its previous commitment to provide findings of the dry run back to NQF’s expert steering committee that reviewed and voted to endorse this measure within one year.

The Board also weighed concerns raised about how to approach the issue of achieving consensus, as part of NQF’s Consensus Development Process, when there appears to be a split in NQF’s membership. Membership voting is one step of the consensus development process. The Board proposed seating a task force to explore any potential modifications to NQF’s consensus process, and the task force was approved. Dr. Frank Opelka, MD, FACS, vice chancellor for clinical affairs at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, has agreed to chair this new initiative.

“NQF greatly appreciates and takes to heart the comments and concerns raised throughout this project, both about the potential use of this new measure and how consensus was achieved,” said Janet Corrigan, CEO and President of NQF. “We put great faith in our members and multistakeholder, expert committees to help us make decisions that are in the best interests of achieving a higher-value, safer healthcare system. This current project shows that reaching consensus is difficult, but any process that balances multistakeholder interests yields important results.”

Readmissions Project page:

http://www.qualityforum.org/Projects/Readmissions_Endorsement_Maintenance.aspx

NQF Statement:

http://www.qualityforum.org/Projects/NQF_All-Cause_Readmissions_Project.aspx

NQF operates under a three-part mission to improve the quality of American healthcare by:

- *building consensus on national priorities and goals for performance improvement and working in partnership to achieve them;*
- *endorsing national consensus standards for measuring and publicly reporting on performance; and*
- *promoting the attainment of national goals through education and outreach programs.*