

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 19, 2013

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**Public Is Invited to Comment on Proposed Changes
to Patient-Centered Medical Home Standards**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) seeks the public's input on proposed new standards and changes to its Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Recognition program, the nation's largest medical home program, during a public comment period that begins at 9 a.m. ET on June 17 and ends at 5 p.m. ET on July 22, 2013.

The PCMH is a model of health care delivery that aims to improve the quality and efficiency of care. Payers, purchasers and policymakers see it as a vehicle for improving quality and moderating costs. NCQA's standards and scoring approach are the most widely used tools in PCMH programs across the country.

"As the proven model in high-quality primary care, the PCMH program is ever evolving to make sure that patients come first," said Patricia Barrett, Vice President of Product Development, NCQA. "Public comment is an important part of making our PCMH program as strong as possible."

Proposed Changes and New Standards

NCQA is updating the PCMH standards and guidelines to reflect the current trends in the health care field, to place greater emphasis on outcome measures and to meet the tenets of the triple aim: improved outcomes, enhanced patient experience and reduced cost of care.

Details on the draft-revised standards are available at the public comment Web site at www.ncqa.org/publiccomment.aspx.

The proposed fifth iteration of the PCMH recognition program emphasizes outcome measures, resource stewardship (e.g., avoiding unnecessary/duplicate testing and services) and a focused approach to targeting resources to patients based on need.

Revisions also:

- Include a streamlined file review.
- Increase applicability of the standards to pediatric practices.
- Promote integration of behavioral healthcare with primary care.
- Continue alignment with Meaningful Use, reflecting Stage 2 requirements.

The revised version has five draft standards:

1. Enhance Access and Continuity.
2. Identify and Manage Patient Populations.
3. Plan and Manage Care (includes self-management support).
4. Track and Coordinate Care.
5. Performance Measurement and Quality Improvement.

The PCMH Advisory Committee—a 19-member expert panel chaired by Randy Curnow, MD, of Summit Medical Group—has been instrumental in guiding the PCMH development process.

How to Participate in Public Comment

As part of its standards development process, NCQA solicits comments directly from a broad range of stakeholders, who have an opportunity to help shape standards for one of the most promising concepts in primary care.

To read and comment on proposed changes, visit www.ncqa.org/publiccomment.aspx. NCQA will review input from public comment and expects to launch this program update in March 2014.

About Patient-Centered Medical Homes

Medical homes are the fastest-growing delivery system innovation in recent years; more than 5,700 practices and 26,000 clinicians have earned the NCQA designation as medical homes. Studies show patient-centered medical homes improve the quality of primary care, as well as patient and provider satisfaction with care. Many studies also show reductions in emergency room and hospital use.

More practices have transformed into patient-centered medical homes by earning NCQA PCMH Recognition than by following any other medical home model, making it the most widely adopted PCMH program in the country.

About NCQA

NCQA is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to improving health care quality. NCQA accredits and certifies a wide range of health care organizations. It also recognizes clinicians and practices in key areas of performance. NCQA is committed to providing health care quality information for consumers, purchasers, health care providers and researchers.

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