NQF Measure Incubator™

THE NEED:
FILLING GAPS WITH MEASURES THAT MATTER

Critical areas of health and healthcare do not have enough or the right kinds of quality measures to drive improvement. Examples of measurement gap areas include palliative and end-of-life care, diagnostic accuracy, behavioral health, and care of people with Alzheimer's disease or multiple chronic conditions.

Additionally, measures that address what matters most to patients and their families—truly patient-centered measures—are not widely available. It is essential to capture the voice of the patient in healthcare measurement to ensure that the preferences, goals, needs, and values of patients, and their families, are being addressed. Such patient-centered measurement drives patient-centered healthcare.

In particular, there are too few measures of patient-reported outcomes (PROs), which are self-reported accounts of a person's health condition. These areas and others need measures that will provide better data to benchmark performance and help ensure that patients receive high-quality care.

Measure gaps occur for many reasons, including the measure development process itself. The design, testing, and dissemination of quality measures can be burdensome, costly, and time-consuming, taking as much as two to three years to develop a new measure and put it into use.

THE RESPONSE:
NQF'S MEASURE INCUBATOR™

The NQF Measure Incubator is an innovative effort that facilitates efficient measure development and testing through collaboration. It addresses important aspects of care for which quality measures are underdeveloped or nonexistent. In leading the Measure Incubator, NQF's role is to facilitate the work of others. NQF itself does not develop measures.

Similar to incubators that nurture entrepreneurs in technology environments, 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 its facilitator role, NQF also is exploring innovative and agile approaches to incubate and test measures more efficiently, such as early and continuous access to data along with incorporating the patient voice and provider input from the start to ensure measures are meaningful to both.

NQF'S LEADERSHIP
OF THE MEASURE INCUBATOR

Through the Measure Incubator, NQF is:

- convening patients, clinicians, data experts, and developers in Strategy Session meetings to explore, refine, and improve measure concepts so that they can evolve into effective, evidence-based and needed measures;

- helping prioritize measure gaps and measures that matter, based on NQF's substantial work to vet measures and to advance the science of quality measurement;

Measure Incubator Strategy Session
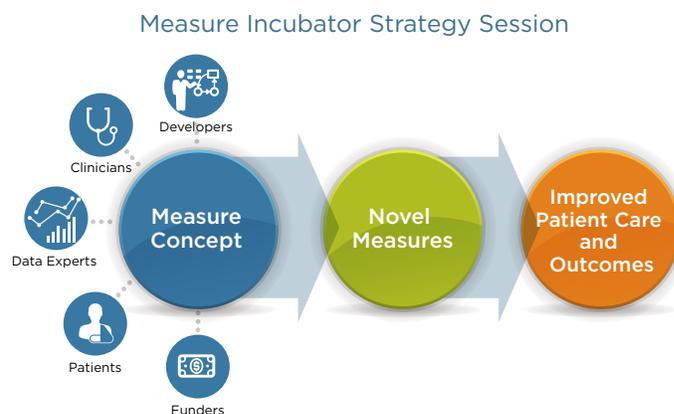
- providing a pathway to development of PRO performance measures (PRO-PMs), based on its seminal work in this area in 2013;

- exploring the best possible data assets that are available throughout the measure development and testing lifecycle; and

- leveraging its experience to expand and refine electronic quality measures.

GOALS OF
NQF'S MEASURE INCUBATOR

- Drive outcome-based healthcare measurement that better reflects the voices of patients and caregivers.

- Facilitate the incubation of more meaningful measures through collaboration and partnership.
- Advance measurement science and accelerate the process to close measurement gaps by seeking to make tools and test beds more accessible.

CURRENT AND COMPLETED WORK
TO INCUBATE NEEDED MEASURES

NQF is working with an array of stakeholders, data sources, and measure developers to incubate and test needed measures. A key focus is the incubation of PRO-PMs. These measures aim to capture data on what is most important to patients and to amplify the patient voice in healthcare performance measurement. The majority of measures in the Measure Incubator are PRO-PMs.

Through the Measure Incubator™, in 2017 NQF completed work with PatientsLikeMe®, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to test a novel approach using online patient panels to gather broad patient input in developing PRO-PMs. The resulting white paper garnered widespread attention across the quality and measurement communities and advanced understanding of how to incorporate the patient voice in quality measurement.

Current projects in the Measure Incubator include:

- A chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) PRO-PM developed by MN Community Measurement, with GSK collaborating with the Measure Incubator as the sponsor of the project
- A multiple sclerosis (MS) performance measure focused on PROs in the clinical setting in development, with funding from Biogen
- Outcome measures for rheumatoid arthritis, including a measure focused on treat-to-target approaches and a PRO-PM, made possible with support from Bristol-Myers Squibb
- Outcome measures to assess survival rates for individuals with lung cancer and melanoma, made possible with support from Bristol-Myers Squibb
- Work with AARP and OptumLabs to select novel measure development and/or testing proposals for AARP's 2017 Quality Measures Innovation Grant program
- A lung cancer PRO-PM, made possible with support from Bristol-Myers Squibb
- Performance measures of serial body mass index and shared decision-making, with funding from NovoNordisk
- A partnership with Integrated Healthcare Association to develop a benchmarking framework for California ACOs that could serve as a national model

Completed Strategy Sessions include:

- Tools and measure concepts focused on surgical pain management, with support from Heron Therapeutics, Inc. (February/March 2018)
- Hospice and palliative care person-centered measurement, funded by Compassus, where an Expert Panel identified a roadmap for developing PRO-PMs for hospice and palliative care (June 2017)
- Managing pain in the acute care setting, funded by Mallinckrodt, where an Expert Panel identified measure concepts for pain management in the perioperative setting, including concepts focused on opioid use (February 2017)

ENGAGE WITH
NQF'S MEASURE INCUBATOR

Engage with the Measure Incubator through NQF's Learning Collaborative, Innovation Challenges, or by incubating measures that are meaningful to patients and providers.

The NQF Learning Collaborative was formed in 2016, with nearly 200 volunteers from across the healthcare spectrum, including measure developers, researchers, data entities, purchasers, patient organizations, and clinician groups that are committed to innovation and ideation to improve quality measurement. Participants in the Learning Collaborative propose innovative and agile solutions to leading measurement challenges, identify important gap areas where needed measures are few or non-existent, and share best practices in measure development.

Through Innovation Challenges, NQF members and others in the measure development community are invited to propose innovative and agile solutions to leading measurement challenges. Challenge winners receive a modest cash prize and a national platform to share their ideas through the Learning Collaborative. In the 2016-2017 Learning Collaborative Inaugural Webinar Series, NQF Innovation Challenge winners shared practical approaches to measurement challenge areas and gaps, such as data access and care coordination, identified by Learning Collaborative working groups. In the 2017-2018 Learning Collaborative Patient-Centered Measurement Webinar Series, NQF promoted formal principles and highlighted real-world experiences from Innovation Challenge winners working to accelerate progress toward patient-centered measurement. In 2018, NQF will begin featuring Innovation Challenge entries as permanent content for its Learning Collaborative.

To learn more about the NQF Learning Collaborative or the work of the Measure Incubator, or to discuss incubating a measure, please contact NQF at **incubator@qualityforum.org**.