What is HEDIS?

HEDIS® and Quality Compass®

HEDIS is a tool used by more than 90 percent of America's health plans to measure performance on important dimensions of care and service. Altogether, HEDIS consists of 71 measures across 8 domains of care. Because so many plans collect HEDIS data, and because the measures are so specifically defined, HEDIS makes it possible to compare the performance of health plans on an "apples-to-apples" basis. Health plans also use HEDIS results themselves to see where they need to focus their improvement efforts.

HEDIS measures address a broad range of important health issues. Among them are the following:

- Asthma Medication Use
- Persistence of Beta-Blocker Treatment after a Heart Attack
- Controlling High Blood Pressure
- Comprehensive Diabetes Care
- Breast Cancer Screening
- Antidepressant Medication Management
- Childhood and Adolescent Immunization Status
- Advising Smokers to Quit

Many health plans report HEDIS data to employers or use their results to make improvements in their quality of care and service. Employers, consultants, and consumers use HEDIS data, along with accreditation information, to help them select the best health plan for their needs. To ensure the validity of HEDIS results, all data are rigorously audited by certified auditors using a process designed by NCQA.

Consumers also benefit from HEDIS data through the State of Health Care Quality report, a comprehensive look at the performance of the nation's health care system. HEDIS data also are the centerpiece of most health plan "report cards" that appear in national magazines and local newspapers.

To ensure that HEDIS stays current, NCQA has established a process to evolve the measurement set each year. NCQA's Committee on Performance Measurement, a broad-based group representing employers, consumers, health plans and others, debates and decides collectively on the content of HEDIS. This group determines what HEDIS measures are included and field tests determine how it gets measured.

Included in HEDIS is the CAHPS® 4.0 survey, which measures...
members' satisfaction with their care in areas such as claims processing, customer service, and getting needed care quickly.

HEDIS is designed to provide purchasers and consumers with the information they need to reliably compare the performance of health care plans. HEDIS results are included in Quality Compass, an interactive, web-based comparison tool that allows users to view plan results and benchmark information. Quality Compass users benefit from the largest database of comparative health plan performance information to conduct competitor analysis, examine quality improvement and benchmark plan performance.
The Basics: Assessing Quality

Measuring and reporting on health care quality is extremely important; it gives core employers the ability to make informed choices and pursue the best available care. Quality assessment is about more than just informing buyers and consumers about products; it's also about giving feedback to health plans, medical groups and doctors that they can use to improve quality issues and improve over time. That's NCQA's mission — to improve health care.

There are many different approaches to assessing health care quality: on- and off-site surveys, satisfaction surveys, and clinical performance measurement. NCQA uses approaches in a range of accreditation, certification, recognition and performance measurement programs for different types of organizations, medical groups and even individual physicians. Through these programs that NCQA is able to gather the quality information we make available to consumers, employers, health plans and doctors. Without such information, quality would improve more slowly, if at all, and consumers would be forced to make important health care decisions on the basis of nothing but price.

The range of evaluative programs offered by NCQA is broad; we offer six accreditation programs and five physician recognition programs. These programs apply to and individuals ranging from health plans including health maintenance organizations (HMOs), preferred provider organizations (PPOs) to physician networks, medical groups, and even independent physicians. NCQA also offers programs designed for newer health plan options such as direct primary care practices. Information generated by these programs helps inform decisions and improve care.

**Accreditation Programs:**

- Disease Management (DM)
- Health Plan (HP)
- Managed Behavioral Healthcare Organization (MBHO)
- New Health Plan (NHP)
- Wellness & Health Promotion (WHP)

**Certification Programs:**

- Credentials Verification Organization (CVO)
- Disease Management (DM)
- Health Information Products (HIP)
- Physician Organization (PO)
- Utilization Management (UM) and Credentialing (CR)

**Physician Recognition Programs:**

- Back Pain Recognition Program (BPRP)
- Diabetes Physician Recognition Program (DPRP)
- Heart/Stroke Recognition Program (HSRP)
- Physician Practice Connections® (PPC®)
- Physician Practice Connection® -- Patient-Centered Medical Home™ (PPC®-PCMH)
In addition, NCQA offers several different licensing and certification programs for survey Healthcare Effectiveness Data Information Set (HEDIS) software vendors and auditing a programs help ensure the validity of data used in NCQA's various accreditation, certification recognition programs.

NCQA also offers a wide array of educational programs and publications outlining require providers and organizations committed to improving quality. These tools become a valuable those developing services focused on delivering improved care each year.

NCQA’s oversight programs are developed using a collaborative model. Input is sought f interested parties about each of our programs, and a representative advisory committee development from start to finish. The industry and the public are always invited to commit programs as well. These comments often lead to important changes and improvements.

While the specific standards and performance measures for each assessment program NCQA’s seal of approval, participating organizations and individuals must demonstrate the certain quality practices (thoroughly reviewing physicians' credentials and using qualified appeals, for example) and meet certain clinical and member satisfaction thresholds (e.g. screening and controlling members' blood pressure, encouraging diabetics to have annual and customer service). NCQA reviews all data carefully to validate that applicants meet c

NCQA’s programs are voluntary; yet the majority of health plans participate. This is beca organizations find value in the programs, both in terms of how they facilitate improvement the NCQA seal is a widely recognized symbol of quality among consumers, employers a

Many of the nation’s largest companies will not offer their employees a health plan that h NCQA Accreditation. And in more than 30 states, health plans that hold NCQA Accredita exempted from many or all elements of the annual state audit. Regulators realize that in Accredited plans, their quality requirements have already been met or exceeded.

Organizations and individuals that participate in NCQA’s programs and earn the right to u of our quality seals display them with pride, and rightly so. These seals are an indication met the toughest test in the industry. NCQA works to highlight these organizations as we detaile results available for free on our Web site. This drives improvement even among achievers.

Making decisions about which health plan or which doctor you want to do business with! NCQA-supplied information emphasizes to the market that quality matters. Some organi not to participate in our programs. On average, these organizations offer substantially low and service than their accountable counterparts.

If an organization chooses not to be reviewed by NCQA, there’s a simple question to ask
The Basics: Performance Measurement

NCQA did not create the field of health care performance measurement, but we have refocused and led the development of objective measures since the mid-1990s when our measurement tool, the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS), was adopted by the industry.

Since then, NCQA has constantly improved upon earlier efforts, expanding the scope of measurable from a narrow list of preventive process measures (e.g., what percentage of immunized?) to a broad range of overuse, underuse, value, process and outcome measures address public health issues ranging from smoking cessation to overuse of antibiotics to disease, diabetes and asthma. NCQA has also introduced measurement at different levels of the care system. Physician-level measures, in particular, are being introduced and adopted at an accelerating pace.

A performance measure is a set of technical specifications that define how to calculate an important indicator of quality. For instance, one HEDIS measure defines very precisely how to calculate the percentage of members who should have received beta blockers that actually get a prescription. Using these measures, plans can determine what their rate is and how they compare to other plans.

The ability to draw apples-to-apples comparisons among plans is extremely important — every health plan calculated the rate using a different methodology. A plan with an 80% methodology might actually be doing better than a plan reporting a 95% rate using another methodology, the latter plan only measured a small sample of patients from its best clinic). HEDIS standardization, standardized reporting and accurate, objective side-by-side comparisons are essential.

NCQA takes the responsibility of managing the evolution of HEDIS very seriously, insisting that measures meet three key criteria: relevance, soundness and feasibility. We work to make sure measures address important issues, are scientifically sound and are not overly burdensome to implement. As with our oversight programs, HEDIS is developed with the input and support of different constituencies.

HEDIS includes performance measures related to dozens of important health care issues: measures include, but are not limited to:
- Advising smokers to quit
- Antidepressant medication management
- Breast cancer screening
- Cervical cancer screening
- Children and adolescent access to primary care physician
- Children and adolescent immunization status
- Comprehensive diabetes care
- Controlling high blood pressure
- Prenatal and postpartum care

Since 1997, NCQA has produced The State of Health Care Quality, an overall assessment of the American health care system. The report is issued just before the annual “enrollment” season, when most Americans choose their health plan for the following year.
the report generates an enormous amount of media attention, and has been covered ev
your local newspaper.

For more than five straight years, these reports have shown that participating commercia
recorded meaningful improvements across a wide range of clinical quality measures. For
NCQA began measuring beta-blocker treatment rates, performance in this critical area h
about 60% to well over 90%. Consequently, thousands of Americans every year will avoi
fatal or debilitating second heart attack.

Performance measurement isn’t just for health plans. Physicians are increasingly partic
performance measurement activities, especially in the context of pay-for-performance ini
taking shape across the country. Measurement at all levels of the system is fast becomin
health care.
People generally select their doctor based on very little information — the recomm
friend, location or even office hours. For such an important decision, shouldn't yo objective way of finding excellent physicians?

In partnership with two of the nation’s leading advocacy organizations, the American Dia Association and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, NCQA ha two physician recognition programs to help identify doctors who deliver excellent care to diabetes or cardiac-related illnesses. A third program, Physician Practice Connections®, doctors who have adopted practice systems — typically technology based systems such medical records — to help them deliver the best care consistently.

In 2007, NCQA took the same expertise towards back pain, identifying those who provide patients with back pain that medical evidence has shown to be most effective and efficie n year, NCQA launched a new Physician Practice Connections program that recognizes pi practices functioning as a patient-centered medical home. The medical home is a promis that seeks to strengthen the patient-physician relationship by replacing episodic care with care and a long-term healing relationship.

Helping people identify high-quality doctors is important: some doctors are simply more others in treating particular illnesses. And the health care you get from one physician for may be very different from the care you get from a different physician for the same illness: Recognition programs help people find those doctors that consistently treat patients accc best available scientific evidence.

Doctors who participate in Physician Recognition programs tend to improve the quality o provide quite rapidly. Professional ethics is a strong motivator throughout the field, and d identify opportunities for improvement typically change practice patterns and make impr quickly. Among doctors who participate in the Diabetes Physician Recognition Program, nephropathy screening, lipid screening and control and blood pressure control (<140 mg between 50% and 100% within five years, a much faster rate of improvement than amon

Employers and others have taken note of the value of physician-level recognition and pe measurement programs. Many large employers and coalitions such as the Bridges to Ex coalition are experimenting with physician-level pay-for-performance programs to help er doctors to participate in such programs. And as employers know, when their employees they will be happier, more motivated and more productive.

NCQA's Physician Recognition Programs

**Back Pain Recognition Program (BPRP)**
Recognizes physicians who take a patient-centered approach and deliver care in accord widely accepted, evidence-based guidelines.

**Diabetes Physician Recognition Program (DPRP)**
Recognizes physicians who demonstrate that they provide high-quality care to patients v

**Heart/Stroke Recognition Program (HSRP)**
Recognizes physicians who demonstrate that they provide high-quality care to patients v
conditions or who have had a stroke.

**Physician Practice Connections® (PPC®)**
Recognizes physician practices that use up-to-date information and systems to enhance

**PPC®- Patient-Centered Medical Home™ (PPC®-PCMH™)**
Recognizes physician practices functioning as medical homes by using systematic, patient coordinated care management processes.

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Learn more about NCQA Physician Recognition

For more information about Physician Recognition, please view the [2008 Physician Recognition Programs brochure](#).

**Program Training**
These free programs will help you complete the application and the submission process.

**Program Video Tutorial**
A short information video about NCQA and the Recognition Programs will walk you through for applying and the value of being recognized.

**Purchase Survey Materials**
For more information on purchasing Standards and Guidelines, and Workbooks, please view the Publications section of this site.

**Health Plans Using Recognition**
See how health plans are using NCQA Recognition Programs to improve quality.

**Data License**
Learn how to license the Recognized Physician data to use in your own provider directory.
The Basics: Public Reporting

One of the most powerful forces driving improvement in health care is the educate
Consumers who make informed choices and are engaged in their own care not only exp
health outcomes, they also help reward doctors, hospitals and health plans that deliver b
service. To that end, NCQA makes most of the information it collects available free of ch
media and directly to consumers via the Web.

NCQA leverages a broad array of products and partnerships to communicate with consu
the most notable is a partnership with U.S. News & World Report to bring more than 10 r
listing of "America's Best Health Plans."

NCQA has also developed a number of Web tools to give consumers information they ne infor...