Assessing a Plan’s Efforts to Address Health Inequities: The Role of NCQA’s Multicultural Healthcare Distinction Program

2 p.m.-3 p.m. (EST)
March 18, 2021
Race, Health & Equity: Initial Framework

**Understand Impact of Differences**
- Engage diverse communities
- Obtain data at Community and Organizational Level
- Analyze "variation" not "averages"
- Examine business case to address

**Integrate Equity into Strategy**
- Break down silos (eg D&I, HR, Benefits, Wellbeing)
- Establish Equity Metrics for Programs
- Improve program responsiveness
- Extend cultural focus (eg culture of health, safety & equity)

**Evaluate & Engage Supply Chain**
- Include equity & inclusion in accountabilities
- Focus on direct (health plans, vendors) and indirect (providers) influence
- Create transparency on performance
- Align incentives with expectations

**Sustain Culture of Inclusion**
- Makeup of governance & key advisors
- Inclusion in balanced scorecard
- Organization values & objectives
- Investment consistent with needs & strategy
Speakers

Raena Akin-Deko  
NCQA

David Kelley, MD  
Pennsylvania Department of Human Services

Michael Thompson  
National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions
NCQA: What we are and what we do

**OUR MISSION**

To improve the quality of health care

Independent nonprofit founded in 1990 to assess how healthcare was being delivered.

**OUR APPROACH**

- **Study**
  We study the best way to provide healthcare based on science.

- **Evaluate**
  We evaluate how well plans and doctors provide scientifically recommended care.

- **Identify**
  We identify organizations that are run in ways that make care better.
Accreditation programs

The Role of Accreditation

ACREDITED
NCQA
HEALTH PLAN

ACREDITED
NCQA
MANAGED BEHAVIORAL
HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATION

RECOGNIZED
NCQA
PATIENT-CENTERED
MEDICAL HOME

RECOGNIZED
NCQA
PATIENT-CENTERED
SPECIALTY PRACTICE

RECOGNIZED
NCQA
DIABETES

RECOGNIZED
NCQA
HEART/STROKE

DISTINCTION
MULTICULTURAL
HEALTH CARE

National Alliance
of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions
Driving Health, Equity and Value
Equity is in our mission

HOW NCQA can help

• Measurement: Track performance to know who and what reduces disparities.
• Transparency: Identify inequities by race, ethnicity, SES.
• Accountability: Highlight strong performers using benchmarks, performance scoring, accreditation standards.

WHAT NCQA is doing

• Evaluation Products: Assess equity in more areas, in new ways.
• Measures: Create and adapt measures of equity and outcomes.
• Research: Develop evidence-based best practices.
Multicultural Health Care Distinction
Commitment to reducing disparities

• Identifies organizations that excel in providing culturally and linguistically sensitive services, and work to reduce health care disparities.

• Standards & Guidelines are based on the Office of Minority Health’s culturally and linguistically appropriate services standards, or CLAS standards.

• Established in collaboration with OMH, NQF and the Institute of Medicine
Multicultural Health Care Distinction
A blueprint to address disparities

An Organization with MHC Distinction:

- Collects data on race, ethnicity and language on individuals and network practitioners
- Has programs for improving culturally and linguistically appropriate services
- Assesses and improves those programs
- Actively assesses disparities and addresses them
- Adjusts its network to meet the cultural profile of membership
- Provides language support to individuals and PCPs
- Helps individuals identify practitioners that meet their language and cultural needs
Current state of affairs

**Commercial Health Plans with Multicultural Health Care Distinction**


Kaiser of Southern California

Kaiser of Mid-Atlantic

ReportCards.ncqa.org
Current state of affairs

Availability of race and ethnicity data

A basic necessity for plans to address health inequities is to be able to define the problem. Yet....

Only **11% of commercial plans have race/ethnicity data** for 95% of their population or more.

- The majority (75%) have it for less than half of their member base.
Public sector leading

Medicaid plans with multicultural health care distinction

reportcards.ncqa.org
Using NCQA’s Distinction in Multicultural Health Care to Close Gaps in Health Equity

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s Office of Medical Assistance Programs
HealthChoices Medicaid Managed Care Program
David K Kelley, MD MPA
c-dakelley@pa.gov
Overview of Pennsylvania Medicaid

Use of Multicultural Health Care Distinction to drive quality improvement and close equity gaps

Align equity incentive programs between physical health managed care organizations (PH-MCOs) and providers

Focus on Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) to help close equity gaps

Align equity strategy to Value-Based Purchasing

Conclusions
Overview of Pennsylvania Medicaid

• Pennsylvania Medical Assistance serves over 2.9 million individuals-1.1 million children, over 50,000 deliveries per year
• HealthChoices- mandatory managed care for children under 21 and adults under 65 meeting Medical Assistance eligibility requirements
• Medicaid expansion started in 2015 now over 900,000 adults
• Community HealthChoices- mandatory managed care for those 21 or older who have both Medicare and Medicaid, or receive long-term supports services (LTSS) through Medicaid
• Five behavioral health Manage Care Organizations (BH-MCOs) carved out from eight physical health Manage Care Organizations (PH-MCOs)
Pennsylvania HealthChoices Map
History of Implementing NCQA’s Distinction in Multicultural Health Care:

• Member Level HEDIS® Data – captured for over a decade to evaluate MCO performance by region and race/ethnicity
• Started with 12 measures and expanded to 22 measures
• Working with University of Pittsburgh analyses and publications identified disparities with:
  • Prenatal and post-partum care, well child visits in the first 15 months
  • Controlling high blood pressure and diabetes
• Two PH-MCOs that early on achieved NCQA’s Distinction in Multicultural Health Care performed better at closing defined equity gaps
2019 requirements added to the Physical Health HealthChoices Agreement:

• Attain NCQA Multicultural Health Care Distinction by meeting the requirement guidelines set forth by NCQA for multicultural health care

• Submit a workplan and timeline to the Department depicting their progress in achieving NCQA Multicultural Distinction at least annually
Distinction in Multicultural Healthcare

• Pennsylvania HealthChoices had the first MCO in the nation to obtain NCQA’s Distinction in Multicultural Health Care in 2010

• To date:
  • Eight PH-MCOs attained NCQA’s Multicultural Healthcare Distinction
  • One PH-MCO anticipating completion in Spring 2021
Improvements in quality of care with those plans who have obtained NCQA’s MHC Distinction

• Controlling High Blood Pressure – 5.65 percentage point improvement for the African American population vs 2.15 percentage point improvement for the white population

• Postpartum Care- a 0.83 percentage point improvement for the African American population vs a - 0.81 percentage point decrease for the white population

• HbA1c Poorly Controlled (>9.0) and Well Child Visits – MCOs with Distinction earlier have greater improvements than those with recent Distinction
Focus on reducing gaps

• Partner with large volume African American practice sites to better understand potential gaps and partnership opportunities

• Review measure results by race/ethnicity to identify equity gaps monthly

• Prioritize the African American population and other impacted populations in program design for various targeted initiatives such as provider/MCO outreach calls, community events, face-to-face home visits
Focus on reducing gaps

- Partner with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to assist with ‘whole person/family care’

- Community baby showers are hosted in areas with a high number of African American pregnant moms

- Working with the faith-based community to provide education and screening events

- Mobile care managers aligned with practices with high numbers of African American members
Focus on reducing gaps

• Discuss health equity quality data and initiatives during Quarterly Quality Review Meetings with MCOs

• Requirement to obtain Distinction in Multicultural Health Care has being added to Community HealthChoices LTSS program

• Discussion about hospital/health systems attaining Distinction
Focus on reducing gaps

• Implement health equity component of current MCO Pay-for-Performance program
  • WCV15 and Timely Prenatal Care Measurement Year (MY) 2020
  • Adding Postpartum Care, Controlling Blood Pressure, and Diabetes Poor Control in MY 2021

• For 2021 MCOs required to implement a provider maternity care bundle that includes provider incentives for closing equity gaps in seven measures
Focus on reducing gaps

- Early 2021 established Regional Accountable Health Councils focused on closing regional disparities
  - Identification of health equity zones (HEZs) in each region using the Department’s Health Equity Analysis Tool
  - Develop milestones for improvement of equity in each HEZ
  - Partnering with Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

- Linking Social Determinates of Health (SDoH)
  - Pa. Rising Program- MCOs, providers, and CBOs will have access to Aunt Bertha for resource and referral tool
  - Maternity bundle requires and incentivizes providers to screen for SDoH.
  - MCOs required in 2021 to have CBOs included in Value Based Purchasing (VBP) program
## VBP model strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MCO Contract Year</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VBP Requirement</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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**Value Based Purchasing Models**

1. **Pay for Performance**: 7.5% may be from any combination of models 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5
2. **Patient Centered Medical Home**: At least 50% of the 15% must be from any combination of models 2, 3, 4 or 5
3. **Shared Savings**: At least 50% of the 30% must be from any combination of models 3, 4 or 5
4. **Bundled Payments**: At least 50% of the 50% must be from any combination of models 3, 4 or 5
5. **Full Risk / Accountable Care Organizations**
VBP model strategy

NCQA’s Distinction in Multicultural Health Care program established the foundation for our MCOs to:

• Measure and report quality measures to define health inequities
• Understand the cultures and communities they serve to more effectively design interventions for participants to close equity gaps
• Understand the cultural competency and language capabilities of their provider networks
• Understand the importance of Community Based Organizations in identifying and closing gaps in social determinates of health
• Develop value-based arrangements with CBOs and providers to meet the needs of members in a culturally sensitive fashion
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Immediate employer opportunities</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Require Multicultural Distinction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Provide confirmation that the Proposer has or will obtain NCQA Multicultural Distinction on or before [START DATE] and maintain it thereafter.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Contractor shall achieve NCQA Multicultural Distinction within three (3) years after the [START DATE].”</td>
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<td><strong>2. Require Plan to Detail Efforts to Improve Data Collection</strong></td>
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<td>“Contractor must describe strategies to increase the percentage of member for whom they have access race, ethnicity and language data.”</td>
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<td><strong>3. Require Plan to Detail Strategies to Improve Disparities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Contractor must describe how the plan is addressing health disparities as part of its quality assurance performance improvement.”</td>
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Roadmap for the future

Continued Expansion of Health Equity Standards and Measures

- Evolving Multicultural Health Care Distinction to include SDOH
- Updating Health Plan Accreditation with New Standards to Address Health Equity
- Adding Race and Ethnicity Stratification Into Select HEDIS Measures
- Assessing Development of Future Measures

National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions
Driving Health, Equity and Value
Health equity: How employers can drive improvements

www.ncqa.org/healthequityguide

We are here to help! Together, we can improve health equity.

Contact us if we can provide information or guidance.

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Questions?

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Upcoming Events

Mental Health Index
March 19, 2021, noon-12:30 p.m. (EST)

The Role of Business in Advancing Mental Health in the Time of COVID
March 26, 2021, noon-1:30 p.m. (EST)

Hospital Price Transparency: CMS Rule
March 30, 2021, 1 p.m.-2 p.m. (EST)

Deadline to participate in the RAND 4.0 Hospital Price Transparency Project
March 30, 2021, 5 p.m. (EST)

Addressing Communities at High Risk: The Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health
April 1, 2021, 1 p.m.-2 p.m. (EST)