

The National Quality Strategy is a national effort to align public- and private-sector stakeholders to achieve better health and health care for all Americans.

About the National Quality Strategy

The National Quality Strategy (NQS) was first published in March 2011, and is led by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in coordination with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). Established as part of the Affordable Care Act, the NQS serves as a catalyst and compass for a nationwide focus on quality improvement efforts and a national approach to measuring quality.

Improving health and health care quality can only occur if all sectors of the health care community make it a priority. Knowing this, the NQS seeks to unite providers; payers; academic institutions; nonprofit organizations; local, State, and Federal governments; and others in committing to this shared strategy.

How the National Quality Strategy Works

The NQS concurrently pursues three aims to provide better, more affordable care for the individual and the community:

- **Better Care:** Improve the overall quality of care, by making health care more patient-centered, reliable, accessible, and safe.
- **Healthy People/Healthy Communities:** Improve the health of the U.S. population by supporting proven interventions to address behavioral, social, and environmental determinants of health, in addition to delivering higher quality care.
- **Affordable Care:** Reduce the cost of quality health care for individuals, families, employers, and governments.

To advance these aims, the NQS focuses on six priorities for health and health care quality that have an impact on most Americans:

- Making care safer by reducing harm caused in the delivery of care.
- Ensuring that each person and family members are engaged as partners in their care.
- Promoting effective communication and coordination of care.
- Promoting the most effective prevention and treatment practices for the leading causes of mortality, starting with cardiovascular disease.
- Working with communities to promote wide use of best practices to enable healthy living.
- Making quality care more affordable for individuals, families, employers, and governments by developing and spreading new health care delivery models.



What You Can Do

The NQS supports the sharing of best practices in health and health care quality improvement at the national, State, and local level, and will provide opportunities for the entire Nation to benefit from such collaboration. Share your programs with us by visiting www.ahrq.gov/workingforquality or submitting comments to NQStrategy@ees.hhs.gov.

Federal Focus

The NQS is a national, not a Federal, initiative. However, HHS and other Federal agencies play a key role in helping to achieve better health and health care for all Americans.

The **HHS Quality Work Group** exists to achieve alignment and support of the NQS. The Quality Work Group meets regularly to ensure that HHS programs and initiatives align to the NQS aims and priorities, advise on NQS implementation activities, and contribute to the development of an NQS core measure set. Representatives from 20 HHS agencies and operating divisions comprise the Quality Work Group.

The **Interagency Working Group on Health Care Quality**, also established by the Affordable Care Act, intends to foster collaboration, cooperation, and consultation on quality-related efforts between Federal departments and agencies, and with the private sector. This group meets quarterly to discuss ongoing initiatives and best practices to prevent inefficient duplication of quality efforts and resources. Senior-level representatives from 24 Federal agencies with quality-related missions and programs make up the Interagency Working Group.

