



The National Behavioral Health Quality Framework was developed in an effort to harmonize and prioritize health behavior measures that reflect the core principles of the Substance Abuse Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) as well as to support the National Quality Strategy. The National Behavioral Health Quality Framework provides a framework by which to examine quality prevention, treatment, and recovery elements at the payer/system/plan, provider/practitioner, and patient/population levels. The National Behavioral Health Quality Framework is aligned with the National Quality Strategy in that it supports the three broad aims of better care, healthy people/healthy communities, and affordable care. However, the Framework was broadened to include the *dissemination* of proven interventions and *accessible* care for diverse populations—SAMHSA offers the National Behavioral Health Quality Framework as a guiding document for the identification and implementation of key behavioral health quality measures for use in Agency or system funding decisions, monitoring behavioral health of the Nation, and the delivery of behavioral health care.

SAMHSA addresses behavioral health issues, which refer to a state of mental/emotional being and/or choices and actions that affect wellness. Behavioral health problems include substance abuse or misuse, alcohol and drug addiction, serious psychological distress, suicide, and mental and substance use disorders. These health behaviors may be associated with a range of problems from unhealthy stress to diagnosable and treatable diseases like serious mental illnesses and substance use disorders, which are often chronic in nature but that people can and do recover from. Behavioral health is also used to describe the service systems encompassing the promotion of emotional health, the prevention of mental and substance use disorders, substance use, and related problems, treatments and services for mental and substance use disorders, and recovery support.

The National Behavioral Health Quality Framework core measures intend to be used in a variety of settings, rules, and programs, as well as in evaluation and quality assurance efforts to indicate a consistent level of attention to quality. These measures are not intended to be the complete set of measures any particular payer, system, practitioner or program may want to use to monitor the quality of the system or of the care or activities provided. However, SAMHSA will encourage entities to utilize these basic measures, when appropriate, as a consistent set of indicators of quality in behavioral health prevention, promotion, treatment and recovery support efforts across the nation. Likewise, as measurement capacity and quality measures evolve, the National Behavioral Health Quality Framework will evolve, making it a living document playing a critical role in discussion and implementation of behavioral health quality assurance and monitoring efforts nationwide. To the extent possible, SAMHSA will incorporate these measures and this

framework into its own quality assurance tools such as program evaluations, technical assistance, training, product development, etc., with the end goal of continued alignment to the National Quality Strategy. The National Behavioral Health Quality Framework and its use will evolve as the field of behavioral health quality assurance changes and matures over time.

In addition, SAMHSA is working toward integration of core measures as espoused by both the National Quality Strategy and the National Behavioral Health Quality Framework into grant and contract activities.

In late 2012 (fiscal year 2013), the National Behavioral Health Quality Framework underwent two phases of review and input, involving the nomination and selection of key quality measures as endorsed by a panel of stakeholders internal to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and a second panel of external stakeholders composed of researchers, consumers, clinicians, and State agency personnel. In addition, the National Behavioral Health Quality Framework was released for public comment in September of 2013. The information gathered from the stakeholder involvement and public comments was used to publish the first version of the National Behavioral Health Quality Framework in the fall of 2013. A third round of public comment was held in late 2013, and the next version of the National Behavioral Health Quality Framework is expected to be posted in the fall of 2015.

A Rapid Measures Review Workgroup was convened to identify core and supplemental behavioral health measures to be used in SAMHSA programming. In addition, initial steps have been taken with States and territories to begin to collect client-level data.

The significant growth of behavioral health quality measures in recent years has positioned SAMHSA to better adopt quality measures that align with its mission in fiscal year 2014. SAMHSA will initiate the following tasks in fiscal year 2014 and expects to sustain and expand efforts during fiscal years 2015 and 2016:

- Develop and implement quality and performance metrics within SAMHSA's Leading Change 2.0 document
- Continue work with collaborating Agencies to broaden the range of National Quality Forum-endorsed behavioral health measures, which will further enhance the National Behavioral Health Quality Framework
- Expand collaboration with the Veterans Administration, Department of Defense, and National Institutes of Health in the development of common metrics for behavioral health conditions
- Revise and submit a streamlined package of Government Performance and Results Act measures consistent with overall quality goals
- Develop internal and contract skills in providing technical assistance in the use of quality measures to assess impact and inform decisions at the State, local, and community grantee level