

ENGAGING CONSUMERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY METRICS

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A coalition of consumer advocates created this paper to support inclusion of consumer-centric objectives in state and local health systems transformation efforts that change how we deliver and pay for health care.

Quality in health care generally refers to getting the health care services you need, at the right time, using the appropriate test or procedure, to achieve the best possible results.¹ Quality metrics, the tools that help assess quality and value in health care, are essential to transforming the health care system because they drive performance and accountability within payment structure. Although the health care system was created to serve consumers, they are often not involved in identifying the care, health outcomes, and quality measures that are the most meaningful to them.²

Currently, much of what consumers value in health care is informed by their interactions during their primary care visits. Many assume expertise is high and fairly uniform, unaware of large differences in provider quality.³ While it is important to understand consumer satisfaction, these metrics do not capture the entire patient experience, including health outcomes. In order to make payment reform efforts more patient-centered, consumers need to be engaged and have a voice in creating quality metrics.

Consumer engagement largely depends on the willingness of payment reform leaders to engage consumers intentionally throughout the development process.

¹ TriStar Horizon Medical Center. (2010). What does quality in health care mean?

² Concannon, T.W., Friedberg, M.W., Hwang, A., & Wiitala, K. (2017). Engaging consumers in the quality measurement enterprise. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

³ Consumers Union. (2014). Consumer attitudes toward health care costs, value, and system reforms: A review of the literature. Consumers Union Policy & Action From Consumer Reports.

HOW TO ENGAGE CONSUMERS²



INVOLVE CONSUMERS EARLY AND CLARIFY GOALS

Often, consumers are brought into quality metrics conversations after priorities have been established, which limits their input. Consumers' concerns are relevant in early stages, and including consumers early helps them see the big picture at work.



SUPPORT ONGOING INPUT AND LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE

Collaborate with consumers to make engagement more effective. By continuously assessing and learning from experience, payment reform leaders improve meaningful engagement.



EMPHASIZE DIVERSE CONSUMER REPRESENTATION AND VIEWS

Affirm the importance of both consumer-centered and new ideas for quality metrics work. Consumers are experts in their own preferences. It is also critical to include diversity in perspectives, especially from the most vulnerable communities.



TRAIN CONSUMERS AND OFFER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Language of quality metrics tends to be technical and consumers often have a steep learning curve. Use plain language to describe the development process and connect it back to real experiences.



OFFER FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ENGAGEMENT

Consumer engagement is easier to sustain when consumers are compensated for their time, transportation, and other expenses. Furthermore, advocates should be compensated for their work in recruiting and training community representatives.

