

The CMS Meaningful Measures Initiative: What It Means to Patients, Families, Clinicians and Providers

Launched in 2017, CMS's new comprehensive "[Meaningful Measures](#)" initiative identifies high priority areas for quality measurement and improvement to improve outcomes for patients, their families, and providers while also reducing burden on clinicians and providers.

Measures that Matter - What You Need to Know

What Does This Initiative Mean for People Receiving Care, Families, and Caregivers?

Meaningful Measures focus health care quality efforts on what is really important to patients, families and caregivers including making informed decisions about their care, aligning care with the patient's goals and preferences and improving quality of life and patient outcomes. It is intended to highlight that the patient—the patient's needs, values, preferences and health outcomes—is fundamental to the Meaningful Measures areas and quality domains. For example, in addition to identifying distinct Meaningful Measure areas including Patient's Experience of Care and Patient Functional Status to focus on the quality domain of Strengthening Person and Family Engagement as Partners in Their Care, all other Meaningful Measure areas have central goals surrounding the patient as well. It is also intended to promote understanding by individuals and caregivers of the importance of health care quality measurement to improve patient outcomes. With everyone's efforts focusing on the same high impact quality areas, there will be less burden of reporting for clinicians and providers and in turn, an even better ability to focus on patients and provide appropriate care that is meaningful to them.

How Will the Meaningful Measures Initiative Reduce Burden for Clinicians and Providers?

The Meaningful Measures Framework applies a series of cross-cutting criteria that will apply to every quality measure and help guide the removal of lower value quality measures across CMS programs while keeping measures that have less burden and are most meaningful with the greatest impact on patient outcomes. This will allow clinicians and providers to focus on patients and improve quality of care in ways that are meaningful to them—instead of focusing on reporting and paperwork. CMS is prioritizing the use of outcome measures though high priority process measures will continue to be considered in cases where outcome measures might not be possible.

What Does This Initiative Mean for Clinicians Including Specialists?

The Meaningful Measures initiative is intended to capture the most impactful and highest priority quality improvement areas for all clinicians, including specialists. For example, functional outcomes and health care associated infections are cross-cutting areas for measurement across all settings of care.

Taking orthopedic surgeons as an example, we have heard from patients and surgeons that the patient's functional outcomes after surgery are important to them. Measuring patient-reported functional outcomes data can help illuminate whether the surgery has been effective in improving or maintaining patients' quality of life. In addition, for specialists such as surgeons and clinicians performing procedures, we know that prevention of complications such as infections is an important outcome. It is applicable from birth to death throughout the lifespan of a patient across care settings.

How the Meaningful Measure Areas Affect Existing CMS Programs

Meaningful Measures will help programs identify and select individual measures. Meaningful Measure areas are intended to increase measure alignment across CMS programs and other public and private initiatives. Additionally, it will point to high priority areas where there may be gaps in available quality measures while helping guide CMS's effort to develop and implement quality measures to fill those gaps.



MEANINGFUL MEASURES | Initiative

Next Steps

There are three dimensions to the implementation of Meaningful Measure areas:

1. Conduct thorough review of existing measures and remove ones that don't meet criteria;
2. Analyze measure sets to identify gaps based on the Meaningful Measures Framework; focus any new measures on filling these gaps and moving from lower value process measures towards higher value measures such as outcome measures; and
3. Work with clinicians, providers, registries, EHR vendors and other federal stakeholders to advance measurement systems to lower burden particularly around the area of reporting.

Additionally, there will be ongoing efforts to receive stakeholder input to further improve the Meaningful Measures Framework, work across CMS components to implement the Framework, and evaluate current measure sets to inform measure development.

We want to hear from you on how this initiative can help improve health care outcomes for patients and reduce burden. We welcome additional feedback from patients, caregivers, clinicians, health care professionals and others on how to better achieve these goals. Please send your feedback to: MeaningfulMeasuresQA@cms.hhs.gov

For More Information

Visit the CMS Website: <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/QualityInitiativesGenInfo/CMS-Quality-Strategy.html>

