Measures Management and You

Welcome!

This month's newsletter includes a discussion of Technical Expert Panels (TEPs) and their value to you, as well as a review of the Conceptualization Phase of the CMS Measures Management System (MMS). Every edition includes a link to the latest CMS Blueprint as well as a calendar of upcoming opportunities and events.

We hope you find this newsletter useful and we welcome any feedback or suggestions to make it even better.

Contents

Please send suggestions for future newsletters or questions about the MMS to MMSSupport@battelle.org.

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Technical Expert Panels

The Technical Expert Panel, also known as a TEP, is a part of every phase of the measure development process, from conceptualization to implementation. These panels are important to make sure that those affected by the measure have helped develop and will help maintain it, so the measure is effective for accountability, for quality improvement, and useful for patients and consumers.

The panel is made up of people who receive healthcare and/or their families and healthcare providers (such as physicians or registered nurses) as well as relevant experts with technical knowledge. What is meant by people with technical knowledge? These would be experts in how to: 1) develop a measure, 2) test a measure, and 3) make sure the data to track the measure can be gathered. This might include, clinicians, statisticians, quality improvement experts, methodologists, and other subject matter experts.

Measure developers can use a number of ways to recruit individuals to participate in a TEP, but

anyone can complete a 'nomination form' for a specific measure in which they are interested. Measure developers post TEPs for individuals to enroll, but then also recruit well-known experts on the subject and ask them to help. They might also contact organizations and associations such as the American Nurses Association, the American Board of Medical Specialties, Patients Like Me and AARP for suggestions of members.

So how are panel members selected? Much of it depends on the measure being considered, but it's important that people with a variety of expertise are included to represent a wide variety of perspectives. While panel members may be involved at any time during the development process, CMS does require the panel be asked for input at specific times including: when developing the business case (why this measure makes sense and is important), reviewing testing results, and deciding which measures should be recommended to CMS.

Technical Expert Panels are critically important to the measure development process, and your involvement in a TEP could improve the outcome of a measure development effort. You can see the current list of TEPs being formed here. If, after reading about a TEP, you are interested in being a part of it, just follow the directions on the page—you will need to fill out a form and send it in. The contractor will make sure that the panel has a wide area of expertise when reviewing the forms and deciding who should be invited.

For more information on TEPs, see the latest version of the MMS Blueprint.

Measures Management Up Close

Each month, we will bring you an introspective look at a measures management topic.

Conceptualization Phase of the Measures Management System Process

The purpose of this phase of the process is to develop ideas for measures that are meaningful and important to those who receive care and those who provide it. The ideas should meet the goals of CMS: effective, safe, efficient, patient-centered, equitable, and timely care. It is also important that each measure is realistic and scientifically sound.

The first step, after CMS has determined where the focus should be, is to contract with a measure developer to explore the possibilities. The contractor then does several things: 1) they look at quality goals in the area of this measure; 2) they check to see if there are already similar measures in place; 3) they examine clinical guidelines; 4) they scan related studies; and 5) they conduct empirical data analysis. This information is used to create an information gathering report. They may also ask anyone who is interested in the topic area to submit an idea or exiting measure currently not used by CMS through a "Call for Measures".

At the same time as the contractor is researching, they also form a Technical Expert Panel, or TEP. The panel helps the contractor review all of the material on the draft measure being considered, makes recommendations on changes, and decides when it is ready to submit to CMS for consideration. For more information on TEPs, see the previous section of this newsletter, Measures Management & You.

At the end of this phase, draft measures will be given to CMS to consider. For detailed information on conceptualization, see Section 2, Chapter 1 of the latest version of the MMS Blueprint.

Upcoming Events

- Webinar titled "IMPACT Act: Data Element Library Call" on April 14, 2016 at 2:00-3:00 p.m. EST.
  - Register for the webinar at the following link:
    http://www.eventsvc.com/blhtechnologies/register/7da00f27-4f77-4c7d-8501-34b10f28d2f7

- Medicare Shared Savings Program webinar titled "Medicare Shared Savings Program ACO Application Process Call" on April 19, 2016 at 1:30-3:00 p.m. EST
  - Register for the webinar at the following link:
    http://www.eventsvc.com/blhtechnologies/register/1e5fffee-60c3-4f5f-a265-20b03cfca053

Now Available:
Updated Electronic Clinical Quality Measures (eCQMs) for 2017

On April 6, 2016 the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) posted the 2016 annual update for electronic clinical quality measures (eCQMs) for eligible hospitals and eligible professionals. Providers will use these updated measures to electronically report 2017 quality data for CMS quality reporting programs.

CMS updates the specifications annually to improve their alignment with current clinical guidelines and code systems so that they remain relevant and actionable within the clinical care setting.

Where to Find the Updated EP and EH Measures

The updated measure specifications are available on the CMS website eCQM Library and the Electronic Clinical Quality Improvement (eCQI) Resource Center.

Upcoming Opportunities

Opportunities for Public Comment on quality measures

Maintenance of Health and Well-Being Measures - NQF #0680: Percent of Residents Assessed and Appropriately Given the Seasonal Influenza Vaccine (Short Stay)
- Public comment period opens April 18 and will close May 6.

Maintenance of Health and Well-Being Measures - NQF #0681: Percent of Residents Assessed and Appropriately Given the Seasonal Influenza Vaccine (Long Stay)
- Public comment period opens April 18 and will close May 6.

Please check the CMS Quality Measures Public Comment Web Page for current Public Comment announcements and summary reports.

Opportunities to participate in a Technical Expert Panel (TEP)

Currently there are no open TEP nominations. Please check the CMS Quality Measures Call for TEP Web Page for current TEP membership lists and meeting summaries.

Opportunities to participate in electronic clinical quality measure (eCQM) testing

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is working with Mathematica Policy Research (Mathematica) and its partners to develop new electronic clinical quality measures and retool existing chart-abstracted measures for five CMS hospital quality reporting programs. As part of the measure development process, Mathematica recruits hospitals to participate in testing. There are two phases of testing, as follows:

Phase I: In the early stages of testing, we interview hospital staff and examine hospital workflows and current EHR capacity. The goal of this phase of testing is to determine if the measure is feasible to implement in the current health care environment.

Phase II: In the latter stages of testing, we work closely with hospitals to access electronically and manually abstracted EHR data that are required for the measure calculation. The goal of this phase of testing is to assess the reliability and validity of the measure.

Testing is critical to successful measure development and directly informs CMS efforts to obtain endorsement of measures through the National Quality Forum. **Mathematica is currently recruiting hospitals to participate in testing, particularly Phase II activities**. If you are interested in learning more about the testing process and potentially participating as a test site, please contact the Mathematica team at Hospital-MDM@mathematica-mpr.com or reach out directly to Kirsten Barrett at 202-554-7564 or kbarrett@mathematica-mpr.com.

MMS Support is upgrading its services!

All requests sent to the MMS Support Inbox (MMSSupport@battelle.org) will now be serviced through a new ticketing system CIT Service Desk. This new ticketing system will help MMS Support by sorting cases into appropriate task categories and then alerting appropriate MMS Support staff.

What does this mean for you?

> Continue to send *new* submissions and questions to MMSSupport@battelle.org.
> When you receive replies from MMS Support, it will come from a new email address from Battelle, so please add "battelle.org" to your safe sender list!
> When responding to an email from MMS Support, you should ***reply to that email*** and keep the body of the previous email in your response. The new ticketing system incorporates an ID code that it uses to automatically track responses to a case and keep all correspondence sorted together.
> > o If you ever need a revision or want to reply to an older request, please make sure you respond to the last correspondence from Battelle related to that case.