Overview of the CMS Meaningful Measures Initiative

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.

The Meaningful Measures initiative draws on prior measure work performed by the Health Care Payment Learning and Action Network, National Quality Forum, and National Academies of Medicine. It includes perspectives from patient representatives and additional experts such as the Core Quality Measures Collaborative, and many other external stakeholders.

Principles for Identifying Meaningful Measures

Meaningful Measures will move payment toward value by focusing everyone's efforts on the same quality areas and advancing specificity by identifying measures that:

- Are patient-centered and meaningful to patients, clinicians, and providers
- Address high-impact measure areas that safeguard public health
- Are outcome-based where possible
- Minimize level of burden for providers
- Create significant opportunity for improvement
- Address measure needs for population based payment through alternative payment models
- Align across programs

Rethinking Our Approach to Meaningful Outcomes

The Meaningful Measures Framework builds upon multiple concepts that defined **high impact areas** for quality measurement and quality improvement. We refer to these high impact areas as "Meaningful Measure Areas" (see Meaningful Measures graphic below). These Meaningful Measure areas:

- Offer more granular details in terms of what measurement areas to focus on
- Use a new approach to development and implementation of meaningful quality measures while reducing the burden of quality reporting on all clinicians and providers

Mapping It Out—The Framework

The following Meaningful Measures Framework shows how at CMS the **patient is always at the center of everything we do. Our strategic goals surround the patient:**

1. Improve the CMS customer experience
2. Usher in an era of state flexibility and local leadership
3. Support innovative approaches to improve quality, accessibility, and affordability
4. Empower patients and doctors to make decisions about their health care

Meaningful Measures Framework

The **four CMS strategic goals** are encircled by **six cross-cutting criteria** that are applied to any Meaningful Measure area:
1.   Eliminating disparities
2.   Tracking to measurable outcomes and impact
3.   Safeguarding public health
4.   Achieving cost savings
5.   Improving access for rural communities
6.   Reducing burden

The Meaningful Measures Framework aligns CMS measure work with the **six overarching quality categories**, which also serve to organize the **19 Meaningful Measure areas** into specific quality domains. These six quality categories are:

1.   Promote Effective Communication and Coordination of Care
2.   Strengthen Person and Family Engagement as Partners in their Care
3.   Promote Effective Prevention & Treatment of Chronic Disease
4.   Work with Communities to Promote Best Practices of Healthy Living
5.   Make Care Affordable
6.   Make Care Safer by Reducing Harm Caused in the Delivery of Care

Meaningful Measures Framework Example

The following is an illustrative example of how the overarching domains, goals, criteria, and measures are interrelated in the Meaningful Measures Framework. The quality category of "Promote Effective Prevention and Treatment of Chronic Disease" includes five Meaningful Measure areas as listed in the above Framework including the Prevention and Treatment of Opioid and Substance Use Disorders. The opioid crisis has been declared a public health emergency and therefore it has been recognized as a high priority focus area for measurement.

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.

For More Information

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