



National Quality Strategy (NQS)



April 2023

Overview

To achieve optimal health and well-being for all Americans, it is essential to have a high-quality, safe, equitable, and resilient health care system.

As the nation's largest payer and a trusted partner of the health care system, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has been committed to ensuring the highest quality care and best health outcomes for all individuals. CMS has leveraged a number of approaches to achieve quality goals, including quality measurement; public reporting; value-based payment programs and models; establishing and enforcing health and safety standards; and providing quality improvement technical assistance.

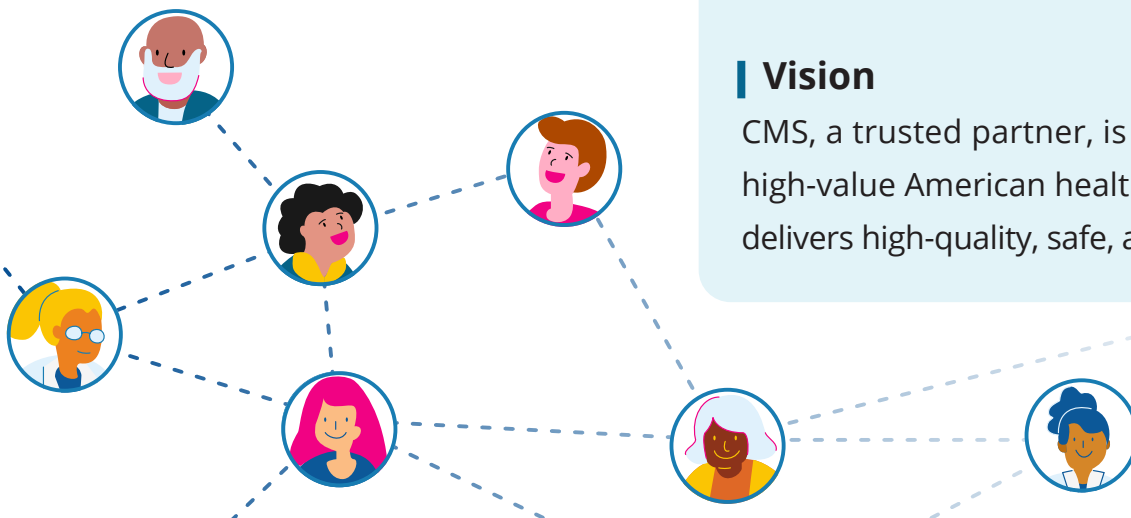
In 2022, the agency launched the CMS National Quality Strategy (NQS), an ambitious long-term initiative that aims to promote the highest quality outcomes and safest care for all individuals. The CMS National Quality Strategy focuses on a person-centric approach from birth to end of life as individuals journey across the continuum of care, from home or community-based settings to hospital to post-acute care, and across payer types, including Traditional Medicare, Medicare Advantage, Medicaid & Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage, and Marketplace plans. The CMS National Quality Strategy builds on previous efforts to improve quality across the health care system, incorporates lessons learned from the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), and addresses the urgent need for transformative action to advance towards a more equitable, safe, and outcomes-based health care system for all individuals.

Mission

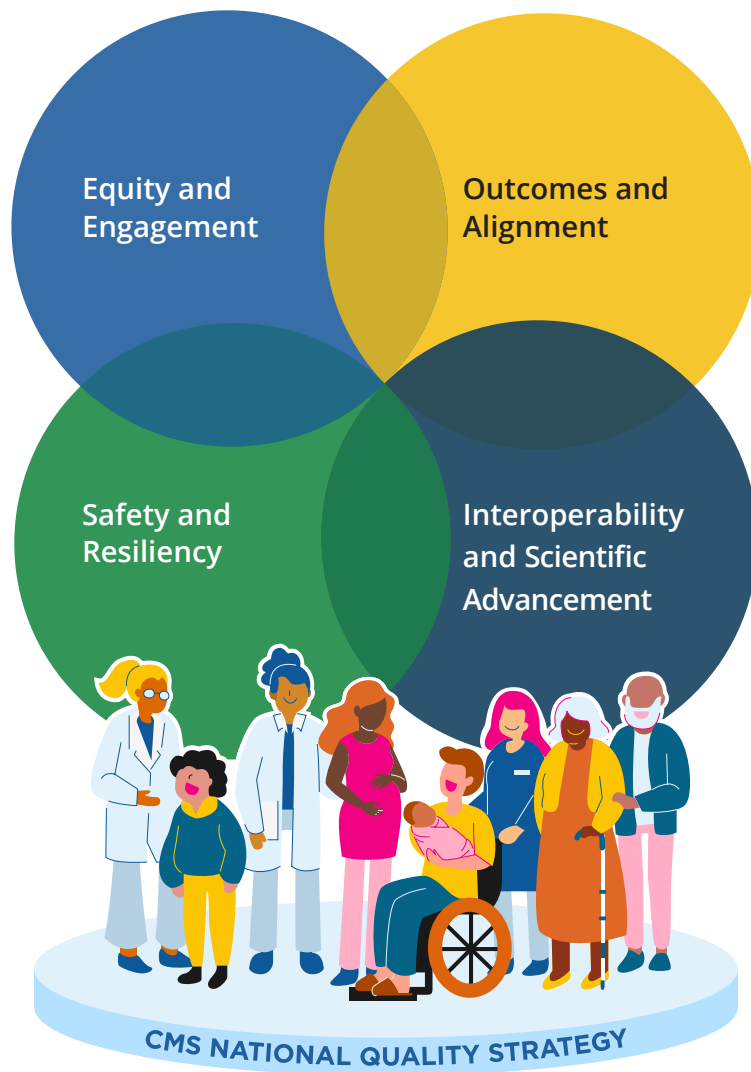
To achieve optimal health and well-being for all individuals.

Vision

CMS, a trusted partner, is shaping a resilient, high-value American health care system that delivers high-quality, safe, and equitable care for all.



This document provides an overview of the CMS National Quality Strategy goals and objectives, organized into four priority areas:



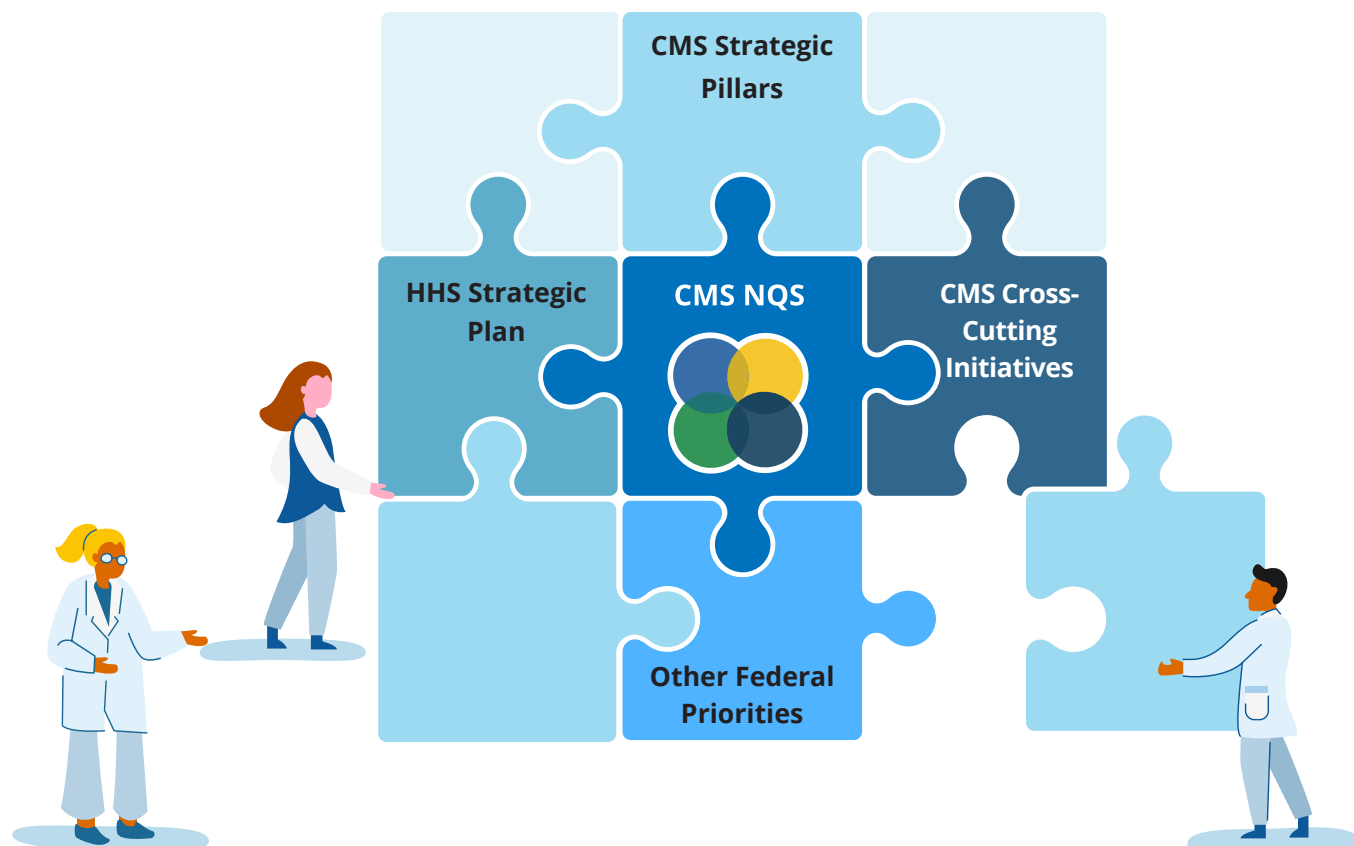
Each goal has associated objectives and targets to support successful implementation. Within each goal, we highlight actions in progress to demonstrate current and planned work.

Partner feedback and engagement is essential to drive forward the mission and vision of the National Quality Strategy. You can help us to advance this important initiative by sending feedback to QualityStrategy@cms.hhs.gov.

More information can be found on the [CMS National Quality Strategy website](#).

The CMS NQS Is Part of a Larger Strategy to Improve Health Quality

The CMS National Quality Strategy is integrated with broader CMS and HHS strategic goals as well as several specific initiatives, including, but not limited to:



HHS Strategic Plan

- Health Equity
- Improve Health Outcomes
- Behavioral Health Integration
- Maternal Health

CMS Strategic Pillars

- Advance Equity
- Engage Partners

Other Federal Priorities

- Nursing Home Safety
- Equitable Long-Term Recovery and Resilience
- Patient Safety

CMS Cross-Cutting Initiatives

- Elevating Stakeholder Voices through Active Engagement
- Behavioral Health
- Maternity Care
- Rural Health
- Supporting Health Care Resiliency
- Safety and Quality of Care in Nursing Homes
- Data to Drive Decision-Making
- Integrating the 3Ms
(Medicare, Medicaid & CHIP, Marketplace)

To learn more on the initiatives, please visit [HHS Strategic Plan](#), [CMS Strategic Pillars](#), [CMS Cross-Cutting Initiatives](#).

CMS National Quality Strategy

The Eight Goals of the CMS National Quality Strategy
Are Organized into Four Priority Areas:



Outcomes and Alignment

Outcomes

Improve quality and health outcomes across the care journey



Alignment

Align and coordinate across programs and care settings



Equity and Engagement

Equity

Advance health equity and whole-person care



Engagement

Engage individuals and communities to become partners in their care



Safety and Resiliency

Safety

Achieve zero preventable harm



Resiliency

Enable a responsive and resilient health care system to improve quality



Interoperability and Scientific Advancement

Interoperability

Accelerate and support the transition to a digital and data-driven health care system



Scientific Advancement

Transform health care using science, analytics, and technology





OUTCOMES

Improve Quality and Health Outcomes Across the Care Journey



Objective

Improve quality in high-priority clinical areas and support services.

Success Target

Implement a Universal Foundation¹ of impactful adult and pediatric measures across all CMS quality and value-based programs and across the care journey by 2026, stratified for equity.

Highlighted Initial Actions

- Focus on high-impact areas: maternal health, behavioral health, equity, and safety.
- Deploy comprehensive quality improvement approaches, leveraging evidence-based interventions.
- Develop dashboards to inform quality improvement, quality performance, and policy decisions.

ALIGNMENT

Align and Coordinate Across Programs and Care Settings



Objective

Increase alignment by focusing provider and health care system attention on a universal set of quality measures that address high-priority clinical areas and support services.

Success Target

Promote standardized approaches to quality metrics, quality improvement initiatives, and quality and value-based programs across CMS through use of universal measure sets and aligned quality policies.

Highlighted Initial Actions

- Implement relevant measures from the Universal Foundation in applicable CMS quality programs across the care journey by 2026.
- Pursue greater program alignment across Medicare, Medicaid & CHIP, Marketplace, and Innovation Center models through standardization of data collection and reporting and stratification by sociodemographic data elements.
- Collaborate with other federal agencies and external partners (e.g., VA, AHRQ, CDC, CQMC) to promote alignment in quality measurement.

¹ The Universal Foundation is a building-block approach to streamline quality measures across CMS quality programs for the adult and pediatric populations. More information is highlighted on [the Universal Foundation Spotlight](#).

I EQUITY

Advance Health Equity and Whole-Person Care

Objective



Reduce health disparities and promote equitable care for all by using standardized methods for collecting, reporting, and analyzing health equity data across CMS quality and value-based programs.

Success Target

Incorporate equity into the measurement strategy of every CMS quality and value-based program in order to reward high-quality care for underserved populations, beginning in 2022 with full implementation to follow in subsequent years.

Highlighted Initial Actions

- Collect social drivers/determinants of health (SDOH) data across programs and health care settings.
- Implement and utilize health equity scores and equity-specific measures, such as the proportions of adults screened for SDOH and a commitment to equity attestation measure.
- Support health equity through regulations, standards, oversight, Conditions of Participation, and quality improvement assistance.

I ENGAGEMENT

Engage Individuals and Communities to Become Partners in Their Care

Objective



Ensure individuals and caregivers have the information needed to make the best choices for their health, as well as a direct, significant, and equitable contribution to how CMS evaluates quality and safety.

Success Target

Improve individual and caregiver access to information relevant to health care decision-making and amplify the voice of individuals and communities through expanded outreach and increased use of person-reported measures (comprising a minimum of 25% of the overall measure set or 25% of the overall score calculation weighting).

Highlighted Initial Actions

- Expand individual and community outreach efforts to obtain meaningful, bi-directional engagement and include diverse perspectives in CMS strategy and policy.
- Promote interoperability of health care data to ensure all individuals have access to their personal health information through patient portals.
- Increase access to and utilization of public reporting websites (e.g., Care Compare) to promote informed and collaborative decision-making.
- Integrate feedback from individuals and communities through person-reported quality metrics.



SAFETY

Achieve Zero Preventable Harm

Objective



Improve performance on key patient safety metrics through the application of CMS levers such as quality measurement, payment, health and safety standards, and quality improvement support.

Success Target

Improve safety metrics with a goal to return to pre-pandemic levels by 2025 and reduce harm by an additional 25% by 2030 through expanded safety metrics, targeted quality improvement, patient engagement, and Conditions of Participation.

Highlighted Initial Actions

- Implement tracking to show progress towards reducing harm (e.g., healthcare-associated infections) to pre-pandemic levels and beyond.
- Expand the collection and use of safety indicator data across programs, including data on key areas such as maternal health, behavioral health, adverse events, and workforce issues.
- Align across HHS to implement actions from the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) to further enhance patient safety.

RESILIENCY

Enable a Responsive and Resilient Health Care System to Improve Quality

Objective



Foster a more resilient health care system that is better prepared to respond to future emergencies.

Success Target

Safeguard vital health care needs by ensuring support for health care workers and systems and addressing workforce issues to reduce burnout and staff shortages.

Highlighted Initial Actions

- Implement quality-focused components of the CMS Supporting Health Care Resiliency Cross-Cutting Initiative by 2025.
- Implement one or more CMS-specific quality actions consistent with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Health (OASH) work on the Federal Plan for Equitable Long-Term Recovery and Resilience by 2030.



I INTEROPERABILITY

Accelerate and Support the Transition to a Digital and Data-Driven Health Care System

Objective



Support data standardization and interoperability by developing and expanding requirements for sharing, receipt, and use of digital data, including digital quality measures, across CMS quality and value-based programs.

Success Target

Transition to all digital quality measures and digital data collection by 2030 to reduce burden and enable timely availability of quality data.

Highlighted Initial Actions

- Annually increase the percentage of digital quality measures used in CMS quality programs.
- Build one or more CMS quality data receiving systems that can receive data using the FHIR standard with API delivery by 2030.
- Collaborate with ONC to promote interoperability and ensure standardized digital data elements for quality measures through USCDI and USCDI+.

I SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT

Transform Health Care Using Science, Analytics, and Technology

Objective



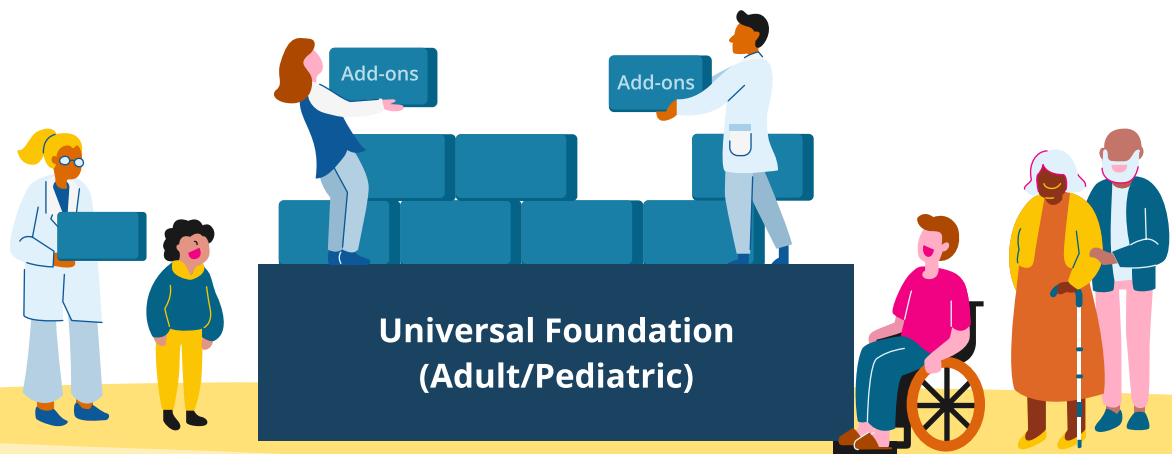
Support and drive innovation and access through advanced data analytics and streamlined evidence-based reviews of novel technologies and devices for coverage decisions.

Success Target

Utilize advanced data analytic models to support data-driven policy decisions for quality care.

Highlighted Initial Actions

- Develop policy options to create an accelerated approval pathway for evidence-based review of novel medical devices relevant to the Medicare population.
- Ensure equity in data collection and algorithms by identifying and addressing bias in health care data and applications.



SPOTLIGHT

Aligning Quality Measures Across CMS — The Universal Foundation

To further the goals of the CMS National Quality Strategy, CMS leaders from across the agency have come together to streamline quality measures across CMS quality programs for the adult and pediatric populations.

This “Universal Foundation” of quality measures will focus provider attention, reduce burden, identify disparities in care, prioritize development of interoperable, digital quality measures, allow for cross-comparisons across programs, and help identify measurement gaps.

The development and implementation of the Preliminary Adult and Pediatric Universal Foundation Measures will promote the best, safest, and most equitable care for individuals as we all work together on these critical quality areas. As CMS moves forward with the Universal Foundation, we will be working to identify foundational measures in other specific settings and populations to support further measure alignment across CMS programs as applicable.

For more information on the development and impacts of the Universal Foundation, see [Aligning Quality Measures across CMS — The Universal Foundation | NEJM](#).

Visit [the Universal Foundation website](#) for more information

Putting the National Quality Strategy into Action

A unified approach brings us all closer to the high-quality, safe, equitable, and resilient health care system envisioned for all individuals. CMS needs the collaboration and concentrated efforts of partners like you to continue to advance the goals of the National Quality Strategy. Your input is critical to help us forge a high-quality health care system that is impactful to all individuals, families, providers, and payers.

Partner with us to advance a shared vision of achieving optimal health and well-being for all individuals through the CMS National Quality Strategy.

Send feedback to

QualityStrategy@cms.hhs.gov

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