

CMS Measures Management System

QUALITY MEASURES DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

Background

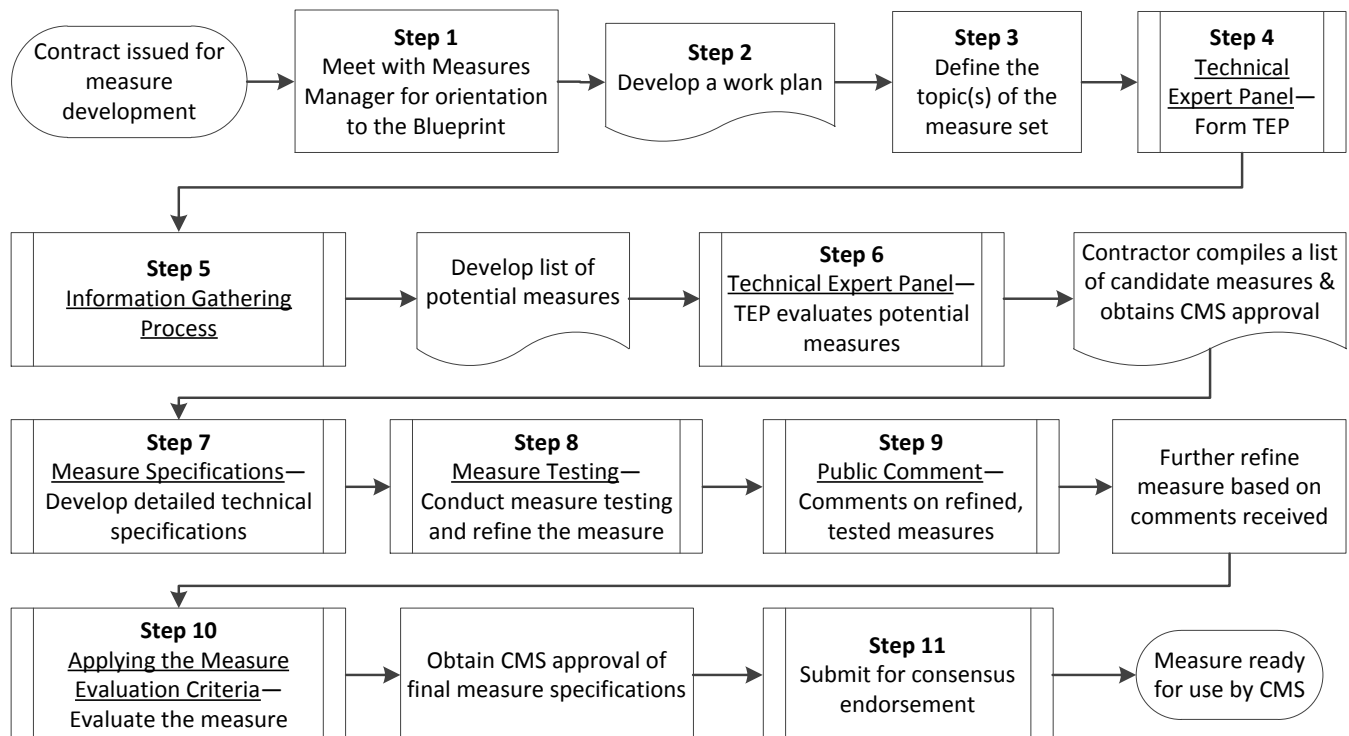
The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) developed a standardized approach for the development and maintenance of the quality measures it uses in its various quality initiatives and programs. Known as the Measures Management System (MMS), this system is composed of a set of business processes and decision criteria that CMS-funded measure developers (or contractors) follow to develop, implement, and maintain quality measures. Measures developed following the MMS meet the high standards required by the National Quality Forum (NQF) for consensus endorsement. The Measures Management System helps CMS manage the ever-increasing demand for quality measures to use in its various public reporting, quality programs, and value based purchasing initiatives.

The full set of Measures Management System business processes and decision criteria are documented in the Measures Management System Blueprint (“Blueprint”).

Measure Development Process—Summary of Steps

The following figure depicts the processes used by CMS measure contractors when developing measures. The illustration is followed by a summary of the steps in the process. Refer to the most current version of the Blueprint for complete details.

Figure 1 Flow of Measure Development Processes



Step 1: Meet with the Measures Manager for orientation to the Blueprint

A kick off meeting between the measure contractor, the Measures Manager, and the Contracting Officer Representative/Government Task Leader will ensure that the measure contractor understands the Measures Management System Blueprint before starting measure development. In addition, this is the Measures Manager's opportunity to explain the types of technical assistance we can provide.

Step 2: Develop a work plan

The work plan articulates the various steps or tasks to be completed and the assigned due dates and resources associated with each step or tasks in the measure development process.

Step 3: Define the topic(s) of the measure set

The specific measurement topic(s) may be defined by CMS or the measure contractor may identify potential topics within the measurement area of interest by conducted various analyses to determine priority areas or gaps where quality measures are needed.

Step 4: Convene a Technical Expert Panel (TEP)

The TEP is composed of individuals with expertise in various topics that provide input/assistance to the measure contractor during the measure development process.

Step 5: Information gathering process

Determine the appropriate basis for measures

Based on the material gathered in the Information Gathering process—including clinical guidelines—and in consultation with the TEP, determine the appropriate basis for measures. The appropriate basis will vary by type of measure.

Develop a framework for measures

Based on the material gathered during the Information Gathering process—including clinical guidelines—and in consultation with the TEP, develop a framework for measures. The framework may be based on a typology of measures, with an indication of the types of measures already developed and used extensively (both by CMS and by others). The framework may also organize the existing measures by settings, the National Quality Strategy aims and priorities, by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) aims, by the goals set by CMS, National Priorities Partners (NPP), the Measure Applications Partnership (MAP), or others. The goal of the framework is to identify gaps in existing measures that may require development of new measures.

Develop a business case

Based on the material gathered during the information gathering process, develop a business case for each of the candidate measures.

Search for initial measures

Initial measures should correspond to the draft framework. The search for initial measures includes a search for:

- ◆ Relevant clinical guidelines.
- ◆ Existing measures that can be adopted (used without change) or adapted (used after some changes have been made).
- ◆ Related measures that can serve as models for new measures.
- ◆ Studies that can be used as the evidence for new measures.
- ◆ Results from a “Call for Candidate Measures,” if one has been directed by the COR/GTL.

The initial measures are assessed informally against the measure evaluation criteria, focusing primarily on the importance criterion. Existing similar measures should be assessed for possible adoption or adaptation.

Compile a list of potential measures

Document any candidate measures found using high-level statements. The high-level statements should include tentative descriptions of the proposed denominator and numerator, as well as material justifying the selection of the measure (if needed).

During this step, also identify measures that present opportunities for harmonization. Harmonization may relate to numerator, denominator, exceptions/exclusions, definitions, and methodology.

Step 6: The TEP evaluates the potential measures

A meeting with the TEP is convened to review and to provide input on the measures proposed by the measure contractor and to discuss any other measures that a TEP member may recommend. A measure evaluation criteria worksheet is prepared on each candidate measure that documents various aspects of the candidate measure. At this stage in the measure development process, the measure contractor will prepare a proposed list of candidate measures to submit to CMS for approval. CMS determines which candidate measures will go forward for completion.

Step 7: Develop detailed technical specifications

The measures contractor develops the technical specifications for data collection and calculation of the proposed measures. CMS approves the specifications for the proposed measures.

Step 8: Conduct beta (or field) testing

In order to receive endorsement from the NQF, the measures must be tested. Beta testing occurs at this stage to ensure that the measure is feasible, reliable, and valid.

Step 9: Solicit public comment

Public input is solicited on the tested measures to receive comments primarily on the measure’s feasibility and usability. If the public comments indicate a need to refine the measure(s), the measure contractor will review the comments with the TEP and revise the measure(s) as needed.

Step 10: Reapply the measure evaluation criteria and evaluate the measures

Once the measures have been fully tested and refined based on both testing and public comment, the contractor updates the Measure Evaluation Report and Measure Justification form. The final measure

specifications, including testing results and public comments which have been addressed, are submitted to CMS for review and final approval.

Step 11: Submit the measure for NQF consensus endorsement

CMS will determine readiness for submission to NQF for endorsement. Possible outcomes of NQF's evaluation include:

- ◆ Endorsement.
- ◆ Time-limited endorsement—measures meeting NQF requirements except field testing.
- ◆ Deferred endorsement—pending further information from the measure contractor.
- ◆ Declined endorsement.