

2026 Health Equity Accreditation: Summary of Questions for Public Comment

Updates to 2026 Health Equity Accreditation

Updates Spanning Multiple Elements

1. Do you support changing “individuals served” to “members or patients” throughout the Health Equity and Health Equity Plus standards?
2. Do the revisions proposed for the following elements substantially change the value or relevance of the described activity or the Accreditation program: HE 1A, HE 1B, HE 5A, HE Plus 4A, HE Plus 4C?
3. Do the revisions proposed for titles, descriptions and intent statements in the following standard categories substantially change the value or relevance of the Accreditation program: HE 1–HE 7, HE Plus 4?

HE 1: Organizational Readiness

Standard description and intent.

4. Do you support the proposed revisions?

HE 1A: Developing and Maintaining a Responsive Workforce.

5. Do you support this element replacing former element HE 1A: Building a Diverse Staff?
6. Does the language proposed for the new element make it less feasible for your organization to demonstrate compliance by July 2026?
7. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 3–4 factors?

HE 1B: Trainings to Improve Care or Service Delivery.

8. Do you support this element replacing former element HE 1B: Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Among Staff?
9. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 2–5 factors?

HE 1C: Incentivizing Medical Education for Practitioners.

10. Do you support the inclusion of this new element?
11. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 1–4 factors?
12. Does your organization currently incentivize or sponsor practitioners (employed or contracted) to complete medical education on factors 1–4?

HE 2: Collection of Member- or Patient-Level Data

Standard title, description and intent.

13. Do you support the proposed revisions?

HE 2A–2F: Collection of Data on Race, Ethnicity, Language, Sexual Orientation, Disability Status, Disability Accommodations and Geographic Classification.

14. Does scoring evidence of data collection under a separate factor in elements HE 2A–2F reduce burden for large or national organizations with multiple Accredited entities?

HE 2A: Collection of Data on Race and Ethnicity.

15. Do you support updating factors 1, 2, and 5 to align with OMB 2024 categories?
16. Do you support all proposed revisions in the element stem and factors?

HE 2B: Collection of Data on Language.

17. Do you support all proposed revisions in the element stem and factors?

Former element HE 2D: Collection of Data on Gender Identity.

18. Do you support retirement of this element?

HE 2D: Collection of Data on Disability Status.

19. Do you support the inclusion of this new element?
20. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 4–8 factors?
21. Do you agree with the minimum list of response options for factor 4?
22. Do you agree with the inclusion of factor 6?
23. Does your organization use any of the estimated methods described in factor 6?

HE 2E: Collection of Data on Disability-Related Accommodations.

24. Do you support the inclusion of this new element?
25. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 3–5 factors?
26. What use cases (if any) would make collection of these data meaningful for health plans?
27. Are the supports described by the minimum response categories in factors 2 and 4 feasible for your organization to provide at the point of care (if applicable)?
28. Are there other physical accommodations not listed under factor 2 that your organization currently provides?
29. Does your organization collect information on sign language interpretation (factor 4) as a subset of language needs in HE 2B: Collection of Data on Language?

HE 2F: Classification of Geographic Data.

30. Do you support the inclusion of this new element?
31. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 2–4 factors?
32. Does your organization use RUCA codes to assign geographic categories for members/patients?

HE 2G: Systems for Member- or Patient-Level Data.

33. Do you support the retirement of former factor 3 (gender identity)?
34. Do you support the inclusion of factors 4–8?

- 35. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 4–8 factors?
- 36. Does your member- or patient-level system (e.g., EHR) currently allow you to report on factor 3 (sexual orientation) at the population level?

HE 2H: Privacy Protections for Demographic Data and HE 2G: Notification of Demographic Data Privacy Protections.

- 37. Do you support the proposed revisions to the stem and factors 1–3?
- 38. Do you support the inclusion of new factors 4–5?
- 39. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 4–5 factors?

HE 3: Access and Availability of Language Services

HE 3A: Written Documents.

- 40. Do you support the revisions proposed for the element stem and factors 4–6?
- 41. Do you support the inclusion of new factors 2, 3 and 5?
- 42. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 3–6 factors?
- 43. Is it feasible for care delivery organizations to operationalize the proposed minimum list for vital information (Explanation) for factors 1–6?

HE 3B: Spoken Language Services.

- 44. Do you support the proposed inclusion of factors 1–2?
- 45. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 3–6 factors?
- 46. Is it feasible for care delivery organizations to operationalize the proposed minimum list for organizational functions (Explanation) for factors 1–2?

HE 3D: Notification of Language Services.

- 47. Do you support the revisions proposed for the element stem?

HE X: Access and Availability of Disability Accommodations

HE XA: Availability of Disability Accommodations.

- 48. Do you support the inclusion of this new element?
- 49. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 1–2 factors?
- 50. Is it feasible for your organization to demonstrate implementation of these activities by July 2026? If not (“do not support”), when is feasible?
- 51. Is the minimum list of planned functions (Explanation) meaningful and feasible?

HE XB: Accessible Digital Content.

- 52. Do you support the inclusion of this new element?
- 53. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 3–6 factors?
- 54. Is the minimum list of digital content feasible and meaningful?

HE XC: Support for Disability Accommodations.

- 55. Do you support the inclusion of this new element?
- 56. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 3–6 factors?
- 57. Is the inclusion of factors 3 and 5 feasible and meaningful?

HE 4: Practitioner and Care Site Cultural Responsiveness

Standard title, description and intent.

- 58. Do you support the proposed revisions?

HE 4A: Practitioner and Site-Level Information.

- 59. Do you support moving factors 4–6 to a new element HE 4B: Availability of Information on Practitioners and Care Sites?
- 60. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 3–5 factors?
- 61. Do you support revisions proposed for the element stem and factor 4?
- 62. Do you support the inclusion of new factors 3 and 5?

HE 4B: Availability of Information on Practitioners and Care Sites.

- 63. Do you support the inclusion of this new element?
- 64. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 3–6 factors?
- 65. Do you support the inclusion of factors 4, 5 and 6?
- 66. Does your organization currently collect and publish directory data on physical accommodations or accessible site features (e.g., wheelchair accessible parking or ramps)?

HE 4C: Enhancing Network Responsiveness.

- 67. Do you support proposed updates to the language and scope of factors 1–2?

HE 4D: Information on Accessible Equipment.

- 68. Do you support the inclusion of this new element?
- 69. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 2–3 factors?
- 70. Is it feasible for your organization to demonstrate this activity by July 2026?

HE 4E: Enhancing Care Site Accessibility.

- 71. Do you support the inclusion of this new element?
- 72. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 3–5 factors?
- 73. Is it feasible for your organization to demonstrate this activity by July 2026?

HE 5: Program to Improve Service Appropriateness and Accessibility

Standard title, description and intent.

74. Do you support the proposed revisions?

HE 5A: Program Description.

75. Do you support the proposed revisions for the element stem?

76. Do you support the proposed revisions for factors 1 and 3?

77. Do you support the inclusion of factor 2?

78. Do you support the proposed revisions for factor 4?

HE 5B: Annual Evaluation.

79. Do you support the proposed revisions for the element stem and factors 1 and 4?

HE 6: Reducing Health Disparities

Standard description and intent.

80. Do you support the proposed revisions?

HE 6A: Reporting Stratified Measures.

81. Do you support the inclusion of 8 new measures as factors for this element?

82. Is the new Met threshold of 4 or more measures feasible for your organizations?

HE 6B: Stratifying Measures to Assess Disparities.

83. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 4–7 factors?

84. For factor 1, is it feasible for non-HEDIS-reporting entities (e.g., care delivery organizations) to demonstrate analysis of four or more measures, stratified by race and ethnicity?

85. Do you support the proposed revisions to the element stem and factors 1–2?

86. Do you support the proposed revisions to factor 3?

87. Do you support the inclusion of factors 4 and 5?

88. Is it meaningful to include stratification by an additional characteristic of the organization's choice (factor 6)?

89. Do you support the proposed revisions to the scope and number of measures for factor 7?

HE 6C: Using Multi-Factor Analysis to Assess Disparities.

90. Do you support the inclusion of this new element for Renewal surveys, only?

91. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 3–5 factors?

HE 6D: Assessing Language Services, Auxiliary Aids/Services and Accommodations.

92. Do you support the inclusion of new factors 4, 5, and 7?

93. Is it feasible for care delivery organizations to operationalize the proposed minimum list for organizational functions (Explanation) for factors 1–3?

HE 6E: Evaluating Effectiveness of Interventions.

- 94. Do you support the proposed revisions to the element stem?
- 95. Do you support the proposed revisions to factors 1–6?
- 96. Do the revisions proposed for factors 1, 3, and 5 substantially change the value, effectiveness or relevance of this element or the Accreditation program?

HE 7: Delegation of Program Activities

Standard title, description and intent.

- 97. Do you support the proposed revisions?

HE 7A: Delegation Agreement and HE 7D: Opportunities for Improvement.

- 98. Do you support the proposed revisions to scoring?

Updates to 2026 Health Equity Accreditation Plus

HE Plus 1: Collection and Analysis of Community and Member- or Patient-Level Data

HE Plus 1B: Acquiring Communities' Social Risk Data.

- 99. Do you support the proposed revisions to factor 1?
- 100. Is it feasible to demonstrate demographic stratification of at least one data source for each community?
- 101. Is it feasible to demonstrate partner endorsement of at least one data source for each community?

HE Plus 1C: Process for Collecting Social Needs Data.

- 102. Does scoring evidence of data collection under a separate element HE Plus 1D: Evidence of Collecting Social Needs Data reduce burden for large or national organizations with multiple Accredited entities?

HE Plus 1E: Reporting Social Needs Screening and Intervention.

- 103. Do you support the inclusion of this new element?
- 104. Is it feasible for your organization to report this measure by HEDIS MY 2026?

HE Plus 1F: Assessing Community Social Risks and Social Needs.

- 105. Do you support combining former elements HE Plus 1D (Identifying Social Risks) and 1E (Identifying Social Needs) into a single element, as proposed?

HE Plus 1G: Identifying Subpopulations.

- 106. Do you support the proposed revisions to factors 1–2?
- 107. Do you support inclusion of new factor 3?
- 108. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 2–3 factors?

HE Plus 2: Cross-Sector Partnerships and Engagement

HE Plus 2A: Social Resource Gap Assessment.

- 109. Do you support combining former elements HE Plus 2A (*Social Risk Resource Assessment*) and 2B (*Social Need Resource Assessment*) into a single element, as proposed?
- 110. Do you support the proposed revisions to the stem and factor-level language?
- 111. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 4–6 factors?

HE Plus 2B: Selecting Community-Based or Cross-Sector Initiatives.

- 112. Do you support the proposed revisions to the stem and factors 1–2?

HE Plus 2C: Selecting Appropriate Partners to Deliver Resources/Interventions.

- 113. Do you support the proposed revisions to the stem and factors 1–3?

HE Plus 2D: Agreements with Partners to Deliver Resources/Interventions.

- 114. Do you support the proposed revisions to the stem and factor 4?
- 115. Do you support the designation of factor 1 as a critical factor?
- 116. Do you support the inclusion of new factors 2 and 3?
- 117. Do you support the proposed revisions to the scope of factor 5?
- 118. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 2–5 factors?

HE Plus 2E: Engaging with Community Based or Cross-Sector Initiatives.

- 119. Do you support the proposed revisions to the stem and factors 1–2?

HE Plus 2F: Engaging with Partners to Deliver Resources/Interventions.

- 120. Do you support the proposed revisions to the stem and factors 1–2?

HE Plus X: Integration of Community Health Workers

Overall Questions.

- 121. Do you support the inclusion of these elements as required for all Health Equity Accreditation Plus customers (who do not meet the stated exception)? Or should these requirements be offered as an optional Distinction for customers of either Health Equity Accreditation or Plus?
- 122. Would your organization meet the terms of the exception outlined in Elements A–D?

Element A: Community Health Worker Program.

- 123. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 2–3 factors?
- 124. Do you support the designation of factor 6 as a critical factor?

Element B: Community Health Worker Recruitment and Hiring.

- 125. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 3–6 factors?

Element C: Community Health Worker Training and Supports.

126. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 4–9 factors?

127. Do you support the designation of factor 1 as a critical factor?

Element D: Community Health Worker Supervision.

128. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 3–6 factors?

129. Do you support the designation of factor 1 as a critical factor?

HE Plus 4: Program to Mitigate Social Risks and Address Social Needs

Standard description and intent.

130. Do you support the proposed revisions?

HE Plus 4A: Program Description.

131. Do you support the proposed revisions to the stem?

132. Do you support the proposed revisions to factor 3?

133. Do the revisions proposed for factor 3 substantially change the way your organization would demonstrate compliance for this activity compared to the current requirements?

HE Plus 4B: Annual Work Plan.

134. Do you support the proposed Partially Met scoring threshold of 4–5 factors?

HE Plus 4C: Process for Meaningful Stakeholder Involvement.

135. Do you support proposed revisions to the stem and factors 2–3?

136. Do the revisions proposed for factors 1–2 substantially change the way your organization would demonstrate compliance for these activities compared to the current requirements?

HE Plus 4E: Program Evaluation.

137. Do you support the proposed revisions to factor 6 (formerly factor 7)?

HE Plus 5: Referrals, Outcomes and Impact

HE Plus 5A: Identifying Resources to Address Social Needs.

138. Do you support proposed revisions to the stem?

Former element HE Plus 5D: Assessing Referral Status for Disparities.

139. Do you support retiring this element?

HE Plus 5D: Assessing Disparities in Screening, Referrals and Interventions.

140. Do you support the inclusion of this new element?

141. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 2–6 factors?

142. Which characteristics would your organization choose to demonstrate the activities in factors 2, 4 and 6?

HE Plus 5E: Evaluating Bidirectional Partnership.

- 143. Do you support proposed updates to the element stem and factors 3–4?
- 144. Do you support proposed updates to factor 2?

HE Plus 5F: Assessing Effectiveness of Social Needs Referrals and Interventions.

- 145. Do you support the inclusion of this new element?
- 146. Do you support the proposed Met scoring threshold of 3–6 factors?
- 147. Does your organization currently perform the activities described in factors 1–6?

Global Questions

- 148. Will the proposed updates help your organization meet its objectives or sustain its investments? If so (“support”), how? If not (“do not support”), why not?
- 149. Are the expectations and scope of requirements feasible?
- 150. Are the specified frequencies (e.g., annual) of requirements feasible?
- 151. Are the requirements clearly written and framed in a manner representative of the organizations that perform the activities?
- 152. Do proposed new elements or factors improve the value or relevance of the program for your organization?
- 153. Do proposed updates to existing requirements make the program less valuable or relevant to your organization?
- 154. Do proposed updates to existing requirements substantially change the value, effectiveness, relevance of the required activity?
- 155. Do proposed updates to existing requirements reflect the way your organization operationalizes the requirement and/or submits survey evidence?
- 156. Do proposed updates to existing requirements make it less feasible for your organization to earn Accredited status?
- 157. What else should NCQA know or consider as it makes decisions about the final standards?