



Digital Content Services Customer Handbook

Updated April 2025





Table of Contents

Eligibility Requirements	3
FHIR® Data Requirements.....	3
Readiness Assessment	3
Resources for Success	3
Acquiring Materials for Implementation.....	3
Cloud Resources Technical Requirements.....	4
Identity Management	5
Security	5
Staff Resources	5
Installation and Support.....	6
Installation	6
Support.....	6
Successful Implementation.....	6
Digital Content Implemented Using the Digital Content Services Application and Measures.....	7
Digital Content Implemented Using a Licensee Engine (FHIR CQL Engine Other Than Digital Content Services Application).	7
Digital Content Services Terms of Use.....	7
Notices and Disclaimers for Licensee’s Products That Include Output from NCQA’s Digital Content Services.....	8
Notice and Disclaimers.....	8
Measure Configuration and Implementation Notices	8
Unconfigured Successfully Implemented Measures.....	8
Configured Successfully Implemented Measures	9
Display of HEDIS Measures	9
Trademarks.....	9



Eligibility Requirements

NCQA's Digital Content Services is designed for forward-thinking, innovative organizations that want to use Digital Quality Measures to improve quality. To successfully implement these measures, organizations that license NCQA's Digital Content Services ("Licensee/s") must meet technical and resource requirements.

This handbook provides a high-level overview of requirements to guide resource needs and decision making. Remember that you can always contact your NCQA Account Executive with questions!

FHIR® Data Requirements

NCQA's Digital Content Services uses FHIR data only. Licensees of Digital Content Services must be able to produce FHIR data that map to the HEDIS® Core FHIR Implementation Guide (IG). NCQA will provide you access to the IG upon written request.

Licensees must be able to:

- Adhere to NCQA's HEDIS Core FHIR IG that uses FHIR v4.0.1, and to any updates, for data compliance.
- Source FHIR data resources in patient/member bundles.
- Store data in [cloud storage buckets](#).

Readiness Assessment

NCQA encourages demonstrating Licensees' ability to produce results in:

- Inferno for USCore/USCDI.
- Inferno for CarinBB.

HealthIT.gov offers an open-source tool for [running select FHIR conformance tests](#). Inferno is not for use with sensitive data or protected health information (PHI).

Resources for Success

Acquiring Materials for Implementation

- HEDIS digital measures can be acquired through the Download Center.
- DCS implementation documentation can be acquired through the Digital Community.
- Docker images and Helm charts can be acquired through the Azure Container Registry.
- Terraform, Docker Compose file, implementation scripts and other technical materials can be acquired with an NCQA Azure account.



Cloud Resources Technical Requirements

Licensees must be able to provide the following resources:

- DNS services to manage domains/subdomains.
- Private networking and security-related services.
- Object or local storage for FHIR bundles and measure content.
- PostgreSQL database (minimum version 15) for system configuration and execution caching.
- Docker Container Orchestration Services (for container service installations).
- Staff who have permission to administer these services.

Cloud-Specific Serverless Container Service Installation Option

NCQA will provide installation support for AWS and Azure, via infrastructure-as-code, that includes the following resources.

- AWS RDS with Postgres, Azure Postgres Services.
- Docker application images via NCQA container registries.
 - No other containerization services (e.g., Podman) are currently maintained.
- Container orchestration via AWS Elastic Container Service, Azure Container Apps or a similar service.
- The ability to provision cloud resources with write-level permissions to the resources above **is required** to install the product via Terraform scripts.

Virtual Machine Installation Option

Licensees have the option to install, via virtual machines in their cloud environments that include the following resources:

- A Postgres database (minimum version 15) installed in the same machine, or in different virtual machines, where containers are deployed.
- Docker application images via NCQA container registries.
 - No other containerization services (e.g., Podman) are currently maintained.
- The ability to provision and configure a single virtual machine using Docker Compose with Postgres installed **is required**.

Kubernetes Installation Option

NCQA will provide installation support, via Helm charts, that includes the following resources.

- A Postgres database (minimum version 15).
- Docker application images via NCQA container registries.
 - No other containerization services (e.g., Podman) are currently maintained.



- Container orchestration via Kubernetes.
- The ability to provision cloud resources with write-level permissions to the resources above **is required** to install the product.

NOTE: Virtual machine performance will be different from container service-based software installations.

Identity Management

Licensees must have the ability to integrate identity management through OpenID (not SAML) connect. There are two parts to this requirement: 1.) Licensees must use a supported authentication provider and 2.) provide access to Digital Content Services through the provider's client application.

Supported OpenID Providers

- Cognito.
- Azure Active Directory.
- Google Authentication.
- Okta.

Security

Software will be deployed in the Licensee's cloud environment. Licensees are responsible for security of the implementation. NCQA takes the following security precautions:

- Container screening.
- Manual pen testing.
- Dynamic Application Security Tool (DAST).

Staff Resources

Effective software installation and implementation depends on appropriate resources. Licensees must staff an implementation team with:

- Cloud administration.
- FHIR data mapping.
- Measure expertise (preferably HEDIS measures).
- Downstream JSON results integration.



Installation and Support

Installation

NCQA provides installation support for Digital Content Services through:

- Infrastructure-as-code scripts.
- Technical documentation, including the Technical Installation Guide.
- One preinstallation implementation solutioning and training session.
- Up to three working sessions.
- One post-installation training session.

During project kick-off, Licensees receive the Technical Installation Guide, scripts and digital measures. NCQA's Customer Implementation Team will be available to support Licensees throughout the process, and will provide training on environment and application configuration during training sessions. Additional sessions may be provided by request at NCQA's sole discretion.

Support

<i>For Questions About...</i>	
HEDIS Core FHIR IG	For clarification and troubleshooting, submit questions to Simplifier: https://simplifier.net/NCQA-HEDIS-Core/~issues
Digital Content Services	For questions about digital measures and the Digital Content Services application, submit technical questions to My NCQA: https://my.ncqa.org/

Licensees will receive an initial response in 2 business days. NCQA will not provide mapping guidance beyond the IG and other resources.

Find step-by-step instructions on creating support tickets in the *Digital Content Services Application User Guide*. Email your NCQA Account Executive for a copy.

Successful Implementation

Licensees may promote their use of NCQA-Certified Digital HEDIS measures when they have completed all steps for a Successful Implementation. Successful Implementation requires users of Digital Content Services to meet criteria specific to their implementation type. (Capitalized terms are defined in the License Agreement for Digital Content Services.)



Digital Content Implemented Using the Digital Content Services Application and Measures

1. The Digital Content Services Application is deployed in the Licensee's environment of choice.
2. NCQA performs test executions of Digital Content Services in the Licensee's environment to ensure the Application executes without the application logs providing server errors. NCQA performs testing using patient test cases. Find more information in NCQA's Implementation Overview for Digital Content Services.
3. The installed Application achieves Successful Implementation when the test run is executed without server errors and patient test cases perform as expected.

Licensees who choose to deploy Digital Content Services in additional environments must perform additional test runs.

Digital Content Implemented Using a Licensee Engine (FHIR CQL Engine Other Than Digital Content Services Application).

1. Licensees deploy the Licensee Engine and Measures in an environment of their choice.
2. Licensees successfully complete NCQA's dQM Implementation Validation Program.
Find more information in NCQA's dQM Implementation Validation Handbook.
3. Licensees achieve Successful implementation when all Measures run through NCQA's dQM Implementation Validation Program receive a status of "Pass."

Implementation validation must be completed for every environment in which Licensee's Engine and Measures are implemented.

NOTE: Successful Implementation confirms that Licensee successfully installed the Digital Content Services Application or Licensee Engine, and the Measures. It does not confirm the Licensee's data mapping, data accuracy or implementation of the NCQA FHIR IG.

Digital Content Services Terms of Use

These terms of use apply to Licensee's use of Digital Content Services and the Measures in NCQA's Digital Content Services offerings. (All capitalized terms are defined in the License Agreement for Digital Content Services.)

1. Licensees may use Digital Content Services for health care operations, including quality improvement, quality gap identification and quality gap closure, of Licensee and Licensee's Customers.
2. Licensees may not use Digital Content Services to publish or publicly report individual-level or aggregate data generated by the Product to reporting programs, including, but not limited to, regulatory authorities, states and value-based quality programs, unless Licensee completes Successful Implementation and at least 1 year of parallel testing



through HEDIS health plan reporting. In addition to a regular HEDIS submission to NCQA, parallel testing requires submitting digital HEDIS measure output through an IDSS-like environment NCQA provides. This allows comparison of submissions and sign-off, by certified HEDIS auditors and NCQA, that valid results are achieved.

3. Licensees may not use the Measures available through Digital Content Services offerings with an application other than the Digital Content Services Application until they complete Successful Implementation of Measures in the third-party application. Licensees may use the Measures to test a third-party application prior to Successful Implementation.

Notices and Disclaimers for Licensee's Products That Include Output From NCQA's Digital Content Services

Licensees of NCQA's Digital Content Services must adhere to the following instructions when displaying output from the Digital Content Services Application or Measures in their products and providing such output to anyone outside Licensee.

Notice and Disclaimers

These notices and disclaimers must be displayed once on a "Copyright Notices & Disclaimers," or similar page/tab, in each version (e.g., year, platform) of Licensee's products, or output provided to Licensee's Customers, that include results calculated using the Digital Content Services Application or Measures.

Disclaimer

Measure results were calculated using the National Committee for Quality Assurance's (NCQA's) digital quality measures. The application allows a user to calculate a result based on Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) measures. HEDIS is a registered trademark of NCQA.

Measure Configuration and Implementation Notices

Unconfigured Successfully Implemented Measures

A calculated measure result from a HEDIS measure that has achieved Successful Implementation, and is based on unconfigured HEDIS specifications, may not be called a **"Health Plan HEDIS rate"** until it has undergone at least 1 year of parallel testing, is audited and is designated reportable by an NCQA-Certified HEDIS Compliance Auditor. Until such time, applicable measure rates shall be designated or referred to as **"Unaudited Health Plan HEDIS Rates."**



Configured Successfully Implemented Measures

A calculated measure result from a HEDIS measure that has achieved Successful Implementation, and is based on configured HEDIS specifications, may not be called an **“Configured HEDIS rate”** until it is audited and designated reportable by an NCQA-Certified HEDIS Compliance Auditor. Until such time, applicable measure rates shall be designated or referred to as **“Configured, Unaudited HEDIS Rates.”**

Display of HEDIS Measures

To ensure Customers can easily and accurately identify the HEDIS measures used in Licensee’s product, Licensees must:

- Clearly and conspicuously display the HEDIS measure name or abbreviation and HEDIS Measurement Year (e.g., HEDIS MY [Year] Breast Cancer Screening, HEDIS MY [Year] BCS) next to the Measure or measure result on the page where the result is displayed, and any exports/reports generated by Licensee’s product(s). If configurations were applied to generate a result, the measure title must be noted by the word “Configured” (e.g., HEDIS MY [Year] Breast Cancer Screening, Configured).
 - If using the measure abbreviation, include:
 - Pop-up or hover-over text that displays the full measure name, **or**
 - A “measure list” on the “Copyright Notices & Disclaimers” or other product page in each version (e.g., year, platform) of Licensee’s product(s) that contains a table of full measure names tied to the measure abbreviations.
 - The full measure result name must be used once on each list of Digital Content Services results and in each measure table; for example, in each export/report containing calculated results.

Trademarks

The registered trademark symbol should be applied to the first reference to “HEDIS.” At the bottom of the page where the registered trademark first appears, include a footnote with the following language, or, if in electronic format, where legal notices are displayed, as applicable:

HEDIS®

The Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) is a registered trademark of NCQA.