



**For Public Comment**

August 4, 2025

Comments due 11:59 p.m. ET

September 1, 2025

# Overview of Proposed Updates to 2026 Standards:

## *Physician and Hospital Quality*

**Note:** *This publication is protected by U.S. and international copyright laws. You may reproduce this document for the sole purpose of facilitating public comment.*

©2025 by the National Committee for Quality Assurance  
1100 13th Street NW, Third Floor  
Washington, DC 20005

All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

NCQA Customer Support: 888-275-7585

[www.ncqa.org](http://www.ncqa.org)

## Table of Contents

<b>2026 Physician and Hospital Quality Certification: Overview of Proposed Updates .....</b>	<b>1</b>
NCQA's Mission: Improve the Quality of Health Care .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
The NCQA Advantage .....	1
Stakeholders Participating in Public Comment.....	1
A Guide to the Updates.....	1
Summary of Product Design Updates .....	1
Summary of Standards Updates .....	1
<b>Public Comment Instructions .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Public Comment Questions .....	2
Documents .....	2
How to Submit Comments .....	2
Next Steps.....	3

[Refer to the Physician and Hospital Quality standards here.](#)

## 2026 Physician and Hospital Quality Certification: Overview of Proposed Updates

### About NCQA

NCQA believes that everyone deserves access to and opportunities for better health care, better choices and better health.

NCQA is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving health care quality. For 35 years, we have driven improvement throughout the health care system, helping to advance the issue of health care quality to the top of the national agenda. NCQA's accreditations, standards and performance measurement tools reflect a straightforward formula for improvement: measurement, transparency, accountability.

This approach works, as evidenced by the dramatic improvements in clinical quality demonstrated by NCQA-Accredited health plans. Today, over 192 million Americans are enrolled in an NCQA-Accredited health plan, and 235 million Americans are enrolled in a health plan that reports measures from NCQA's Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®), the most widely used performance measurement tool in health care.

### Stakeholders Participating in Public Comment

NCQA shares these updates for public comment to generate thoughtful commentary and constructive suggestions from interested parties. Many comments lead to changes in our standards and policies, and the review process makes our standards stronger for all stakeholders. NCQA asks respondents to consider whether the requirements are feasible as written and are clearly articulated, and to highlight areas that might need clarification.

### A Guide to the Proposed Updates

#### Summary of Product Design Updates

- **Update Scoring.** NCQA proposes to convert the scoring for each element to Met, Partially Met and Not Met options, to align with the scoring in Health Plan Accreditation and other recently updated products.
- **Retire Program Change Reviews.** Some organizations are subject to a Program Change Review to assess program changes between Certification survey cycles. The scope of the review is specific to program areas that have changed—most often, types of physicians or measures. NCQA proposes retiring these reviews to alleviate the burden of submitting documentation between survey cycles for minor program changes.

#### Summary of Standards Updates

- **PQ 1, Element A.** NCQA proposes to expand the list of acceptable standardized measures and revise outdated references and sources throughout the element.
- **PQ 1, Element A.** NCQA proposes to update the list of Performance-Based Designation Programs. Refer to the draft Appendix 4 document for details.
- **PQ 3, Element D:** NCQA proposes to retire this element. Organizations do not often receive consumer complaints about PQ programs, and therefore do not have files available for this file review element.

## Public Comment Instructions

### Public Comment Questions

Public comment is integral to the development of all NCQA standards and measures. NCQA considers all suggestions. NCQA encourages reviewers to provide insights on issues related to the proposed updates including:

1. Do you support the proposal to retire Program Change Reviews?
2. Do you support the proposal for the expanded list of standardized measures for PQ 1, Element A? Are there other measure sets NCQA should consider?
3. Do you support the revisions to the Performance-Based Designation Programs for PQ 1, Element A?
4. Do you support the retirement of PQ 3, Element D?
5. Are there any additional changes you want NCQA to consider for 2026 Physician and Hospital Quality Certification?

### Documents

Refer to the following files for updates:

- [2026 Physician and Hospital Quality Certification: Standards Proposed for Public Comment.](#)
- [2024 Physician and Hospital Quality Certification: Draft Appendix 4 Updates: Performance-Based Designation Programs.](#)

### How to Submit Comments

Respond to topic and element-specific questions for each product on NCQA's public comment website. NCQA does not accept comments by mail, email or fax.

1. Go to <http://my.ncqa.org> and enter your email address and password.
2. Once logged in, scroll down and click **Public Comments**.
3. Click **Add Comment** to open the comment box.
4. Select one or more of the following from the drop-down box:
  - **Updates to 2026 Physician and Hospital Quality Certification.**
5. Click to select the **Topic** (category) and **Element** (question) on which you would like to comment.
6. Click to select your support option (**Support**, **Do not support**, **Support with modifications**).
  - a. If you choose **Do not support**, include your rationale in the text box.
  - b. If you choose **Support with modifications**, enter the suggested modification in the text box.
7. Enter your comments in the **Comments** box.

***Note:** There is a 2,500-character limit for each comment. We suggest you develop your comments in Word to check your character limit; use the "cut and paste" function to copy your comment into the Comments box.*
8. Use the **Submit** button to submit more than one comment. Use the **Close** button to finish leaving comments; you can view all submitted comments in the **Public Comments** module.

**All comments must be entered by 11:59 ET on Tuesday, September 1**

## **Next Steps**

The final 2026 Physician and Hospital Quality Certification Standards and Guidelines will be released in November 2025, following approval by the NCQA Standards Committee and the Board of Directors.

Requirements for all programs will take effect for surveys starting July 1, 2026.