

NCQA Corrections, Clarifications and Policy Changes to the 2022 HE Standards and Guidelines

March 28, 2022

This document includes the corrections, clarifications and policy changes to the 2022 Health Equity (HE) standards and guidelines. NCQA has identified the appropriate page number in the printed publication and the standard and head—subhead for each update. Updates have been incorporated into the Interactive Review Tool (IRT). NCQA operational definitions for correction, clarification and policy changes are as follows:

- A **correction (CO)** is a change made to rectify an error in the standards and guidelines.
- A **clarification (CL)** is additional information that explains an existing requirement.
- A **policy change (PC)** is a modification of an existing requirement.

An organization undergoing a survey under the 2022 HE Standards and guidelines must implement corrections and policy changes within 90 calendar days of the IRT release date, unless otherwise specified. The 90-calendar-day advance notice does not apply to clarifications or FAQs, because they are not changes to existing requirements.

Page	Standard/Element	Head/Subhead	Update	Type of Update	IRT Release Date
	Policies and Procedures		For updates to the Policies and Procedures, please refer to the separate “2022 HE Front Matter_3-28-2022” document posted at the following link: https://www.ncqa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2022-HE-Front-Matter_3-28-2022.docx	CL	3/28/2022
52	HE 2, Element A	Scope of review	Add the following as the last paragraph in the scope of review: For all surveys scheduled on or between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, the organization may submit a detailed implementation plan that includes a timeline as evidence for factors 3 and 4, instead of submitting reports or materials.	CL	3/28/22
53	HE 2, Element A	Explanation	Add as the sixth paragraph in the Explanation: For all surveys scheduled on or between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, if the organization completes an implementation plan in place of reports or materials for evidence of factors 3 and 4, the plan must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A detailed description of the actions the organization will take to update its electronic data systems to receive, store and retrieve gender identity and sexual orientation data, including an outline of each electronic data system that is required to be updated.	CL	3/28/22

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If the organization plans to use data from other sources, it lists the entities that will provide data and a description of the data exchange method. • A timeline for implementation of electronic data system functionality to receive, store and retrieve gender identity and sexual orientation data. 		
68	HE 2, Element G	Data Source	Add “Documented process” as a data source.	CL	3/28/22
68	HE 2, Element G	Scope of Review	<p>Add the following as the last paragraph in the scope of review:</p> <p>For all surveys scheduled on or between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, the organization may submit a detailed implementation plan that includes a timeline for notifying members of its policies and procedures for managing access to and use of gender identity and sexual orientation data, instead of submitting reports or materials.</p>	CL	3/28/22
68	HE 2, Element G	Explanation	<p>Add as the second paragraph in the Explanation:</p> <p>For all surveys scheduled on or between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, if the organization completes an implementation plan in place of materials for member notification of policies and procedures for managing access to and use of gender identity and sexual orientation data, the plan must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed description of the actions the organization will take to update its notifications for managing access to and use of gender identity and sexual orientation data. • Draft language of the notification. • A timeline for notifying members. 	CL	3/28/22
81	HE 4, Element B	Element stem	<p>Revise the critical factor language in the element stem to read:</p> <p>*Critical factors: These factors must be scored “yes” to score at least “Partially Met.”</p> <p><i>Note: This update is in the e-pub publication only. It is correct in IRT.</i></p>	CO	3/28/22

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62, 64	HE 2, Elements D and E	Scope of review	<p>Add the following as the last paragraph of the scope of review:</p> <p><i>For all surveys scheduled on or between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, the organization may submit a detailed implementation plan including a timeline and risk mitigation strategy in place of reports or materials.</i></p>	CL	11/22/21
62, 65	HE 2, Elements D and E	Explanation	<p>Add the following as the first sentence under the Explanation:</p> <p>Factor 1 is a critical factor and must be scored “yes” for the organization to score at least “Partially Met” on this element.</p>	PC	11/22/21
62, 65	HE 2, Elements D and E	Explanation	<p>Revise the third paragraph in the Explanation to read:</p> <p>The organization may receive, exchange or use data stored or collected by sources such as CMS, state or local agencies, community-based organizations, Federally Qualified Health Centers, health systems, hospitals, integrated delivery systems, provider networks, EHRs, HIEs and case management systems that have made a direct request for information regarding sex assigned at birth, gender identity, pronouns, and sexual orientation.</p>	CL	11/22/21
63	HE 2, Element D	Explanation	<p>Add the following as the fourth paragraph of the Explanation:</p> <p>For all surveys scheduled on or between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, if the organization completes an implementation plan in place of reports or materials, the plan must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed description of the actions the organization will take to directly collect gender identity data, as outlined in factors 1–4, or receive gender identity data from other sources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If the organization plans to use data from other sources, it lists the entities from which data will be received and a description of the data exchange method. • A timeline for implementation of data collection activities. • A documented strategy for mitigating risk that may result from using internal data that does not yet fully reflect the individual’s gender identity (e.g., the organization refers the individual to a community resource whose goals may be misaligned with the needs and identity of the individual). 	CL	11/22/21

Key = CO—Correction, CL—Clarification, PC—Policy Change

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63	HE 2, Element D	Explanation—Factor 1: Collecting data through methods that do not stigmatize individuals	<p>Add the following text as the second paragraph:</p> <p>At a minimum, the data collection method must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonbinary gender identity options. • An explanation to staff about offering members nonbinary options. 	CL	11/22/21
65	HE 2, Element E	Explanation	<p>Add the following text as the fourth paragraph of the Explanation:</p> <p>For all surveys scheduled on or between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, if the organization completes an implementation plan in place of reports or materials, the plan must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed description of the actions the organization will take to directly collect sexual orientation data, as outlined in factors 1 and 2, or receive sexual orientation data from other sources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — If the organization plans to use data from other sources, it lists the entities from which data will be received and a description of the data exchange method. • A timeline for implementation of data collection activities. • A documented strategy for mitigating risk that may result from using internal data that does not yet fully reflect the individual's sexual orientation (e.g., the organization refers the individual to a community resource whose goals may be misaligned with the needs and identity of the individual). 	CL	11/22/21
2-4	Appendix 2—Delegation and Automatic Credit Guidelines	Table 1: Automatic Credit by Evaluation Option for a Health Plan Delegating to an NCQA-Accredited Health Equity Organization	<p>Make the following changes to the table and footnotes, as shown in the screen shot below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove the footnote reference in the PHM 2, Element B row and in the NET 1, Element A row. • Remove the footnote reference in the ME 7, Element B row. • There should be only one footnote in the NET 5, Element A row that reads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — ¹Automatic credit for this factor applies only to the Medicaid product line for Renewal Surveys. It is scored NA for commercial, Medicare and Exchange Renewal Surveys. 	CL	11/22/21

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