

## NCQA Corrections, Clarifications and Policy Changes to the 2026 BHA Standards and Guidelines

*March 30, 2026*

This document includes the corrections, clarifications and policy changes to the 2026 Behavioral Health Accreditation standards and guidelines. NCQA has identified the appropriate page number in the publication and the standard/element head and 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.
- A **regulatory change (RC)** is a new requirement or a modification of an existing requirement to align with federal regulations.

An organization undergoing a survey under the 2026 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
111	PHM 1, Element A	Explanation—Factor 3: Activities offered in the PHM strategy	Revise the subhead and Explanation for factor 3 to read: <b>Factor 3: Activities that support practitioners, providers, or community-based organizations</b> The organization's strategy includes a description of at least one activity aimed at supporting practitioners, providers, or community-based organizations, including those that deliver clinical, behavioral, or non-clinical care and services.	CL	3/30/26
228	UM 2, Element A	Summary of Changes	Remove the summary of change that reads: Retired factors 1 and 2, and added the requirement to make UM criteria electronically available to practitioners.	CL	3/30/26
355	CR 5, Element A	Explanation-Factor 3	Add the following as the first paragraph under the "Factor 3: Sources for licensure sanction, limitations and expiration information" subhead: The organization monitors sanctions and licensure limitation information for all states in which the practitioner practices, even if those states are outside the organization's service area or are not states where the practitioner provides care to the organization's members.	PC	3/30/26
440	LTSS 1, Element D	Explanation—Factor 1	Revise the second, third and fourth paragraphs in the Explanation for factor 1 to read: <i>OMB categories.</i> The federal government uses the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting for record keeping, collection and presentation of data on race and Hispanic origin, and they form the basis for race and ethnicity data collection for many health care organizations. In 2024, the OMB released updates to the terminology, question format, reporting categories and response options for collecting data on race/ethnicity, including response options much more granular than its 1997 framework. Although the OMB now recommends that data be collected in a	CL	3/30/26

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			<p>single-question format, with a consolidated list of detailed response options for race and ethnicity, collection in a two-question format aligns with the 1997 OMB recommendations and current electronic data standards.</p> <p>The organization may use either 1997 or 2024 OMB categories to roll-up race and ethnicity data, and may use another method to ask these questions if responses can be systematically aggregated to OMB categories.</p> <p><i>Two-question format with 1997 OMB categories</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnicity               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hispanic or Latino.</li> <li>○ Not Hispanic or Latino.</li> <li>○ (Declined).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Race (select one or more):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Black or African American.</li> <li>○ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.</li> <li>○ White.</li> <li>○ Asian.</li> <li>○ American Indian or Alaska Native.</li> <li>○ Some other race.</li> <li>○ (Declined).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Combined format with 1997 OMB categories (check all that apply):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American Indian or Alaska Native.</li> <li>• Asian.</li> <li>• Black or African American.</li> <li>• Hispanic or Latino.</li> <li>• Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.</li> <li>• White.</li> <li>• Other, please specify: _____.</li> <li>• (Declined).</li> </ul> <p><i>Two-question format with 2024 OMB categories</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race categories (Select all that apply)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ American Indian or Alaska Native (write-in field).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="margin-left: 40px;">– Enter, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe of the Black Indian Reservation of Montana, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, Aztec, Maya, etc.: _____.</li> <li style="margin-left: 20px;">○ Asian.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Chinese.</li> <li>– Asian Indian.</li> <li>– Filipino.</li> <li>– Vietnamese.</li> <li>– Korean.</li> <li>– Japanese.</li> <li>– Another group (for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, Afghan, Thai, Bengali, Mien, etc.): _____.</li> </ul> </li> <li style="margin-left: 20px;">○ Black or African American.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– African American.</li> <li>– Jamaican.</li> <li>– Haitian.</li> <li>– Nigerian.</li> <li>– Ethiopian.</li> <li>– Somali.</li> <li>– Another group (for example, South African, Barbadian, Kenyan, Liberian, Bahamian, Trinidadian and Tobagonian, Ghanaian, Congolese, etc.): _____.</li> </ul> </li> <li style="margin-left: 20px;">○ Middle Eastern or North African.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lebanese.</li> <li>– Iranian.</li> <li>– Egyptian.</li> <li>– Syrian.</li> <li>– Iraqi.</li> <li>– Israeli.</li> <li>– Another group (for example, Moroccan, Yemeni, Kurdish, etc.): _____.</li> </ul> </li> <li style="margin-left: 20px;">○ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.</li> </ul>		

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="margin-left: 40px;">– Native Hawaiian.</li> <li style="margin-left: 40px;">– Samoan.</li> <li style="margin-left: 20px;">○ Chamorro.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Tongan.</li> <li>– Fijian.</li> <li>– Marshallese.</li> <li>– Another group (for example, Chuukese, Palauan, Tahitian, Pohnpeian, Saipanese, Yapese, etc.): _____.</li> </ul> </li> <li style="margin-left: 20px;">○ White.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– English.</li> <li>– German.</li> <li>– Irish.</li> <li>– Italian.</li> <li>– Polish.</li> <li>– Scottish.</li> <li>– Another group (for example, French, Swedish, Norwegian, Slavic, Cajun, etc.): _____.</li> </ul> </li> <li style="margin-left: 20px;">○ (Other, please specify: _____).</li> <li style="margin-left: 20px;">○ (Decline to answer).</li> </ul> <p><i>Ethnicity categories (Select all that apply)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hispanic or Latino.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mexican or Mexican American.</li> <li>○ Puerto Rican.</li> <li>○ Salvadoran.</li> <li>○ Cuban.</li> <li>○ Dominican.</li> <li>○ Guatemalan.</li> <li>○ Another group (for example, Colombian, Honduran, Spaniard, etc.): _____.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Not Hispanic or Latino.</p>		