

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

March 30, 2026

This document includes the corrections, clarifications and policy changes to the 2026 Physician and Hospital Quality (PHQ) 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
69	PQ 1, Element B	Scoring	Revise the “Not Met” scoring option to read: <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px 0;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Not Met</p> </div> The organization meets 0-1 factors	CL	3/30/26
69	PQ 1, Element B	Data source	Add “Materials” as a data source.	CO	3/30/26
88	PQ 2, Element C	Scope of review	Revise the Scope of review to read: Files included: NCQA reviews and scores this element once for the program, based on a random sample of files of physician requests for corrections or changes (open or closed requests) related to the most recent version or cycle of actions included in the scope of review and received by the organization before the start of the survey.	CL	3/30/26
88	PQ 2, Element C	Look-back period	Revise the look-back period to read: <i>For Initial Surveys and Renewal Surveys:</i> NCQA reviews a random sample of files of physician requests for corrections or changes (open or closed requests) related to the most recent version or cycle of actions included in the scope of review and received by the organization before the start of the survey.	CO	3/30/26