Communication Education & Outreach Workgroup

Focus:

The Communication Education & Outreach Workgroup was comprised of Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) personnel, contractors, and stakeholders who develop and/or disseminate program and implementation materials for electronic clinical quality measures (eCQMs), their standards, development and testing tools, as well as CMS eCQM submission and reporting systems.

The Workgroup was established to improve the quality, timing, and communications of technical assistance materials for eCQM stakeholders such as health IT vendors, eligible professionals, and eligible hospitals.

History and Background:

The Communication Education & Outreach Workgroup came out of the December 8-12, 2014 eCQM Kaizen Event. The discussion at this meeting led to identification of challenges, 'aha' moments, and a desired future state. A summary of the Kaizen Event is provided at this link https://ecqi.healthit.gov/file/12536 on the eCQI Resource Center.

Goals and Objectives:

Challenges:

- Notable differences between eligible hospital (EH) and eligible professional (EP) needs, including messaging strategy, eCQMs are not just used for the EHR Incentive Programs as they touch multiple programs.
- Complete release notes with tracked changes are needed for the specifications and annual updates.
- There is listserv and email fatigue and no single source of truth (users bombarded with messages).
- There are differences in how organizations experience terminology uses/meaning, especially for educational "FAQs" (i.e., system vs. document/use).
- Need to document/communicate changes to the annual update specifications, tools, standards, etc. as soon as possible through release notes with tracked versions for comparison, or table listing revisions, etc. Associations/vendors are expected to produce/turn-around information within 24-48 hours of updates or release of rules.
- Multiple groups need help navigating the JIRA process (determined to be out of our scope); service level agreements (SLAs) needed with JIRA.
- Education and Outreach (E&O) development is in multiple places and not necessarily consolidated or portrayed as "one voice".
- Templates would help with CMS review and approval process, to highlight what for and how/who impacts, would also help project a coordinated look and feel/same voice.
- Repeated Mantra: Right message to right audience at the right time.
- Need to highlight non-alignment; perhaps programs are "coordinated" and not truly "aligned".
- Different programs have different processes and help desks/support.
- Struggling with the amount of wait time to get answers/information and approval.

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- Two agencies (CMS and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology [ONC]) are developing materials separately.

Desired Future State:
- One day eCQM branding will be a life of its own.
- E&O customers do not have to read the entire final rule (as it would be clearly communicated in E&O resources).
- One-stop shop for personalized information by stakeholder.
- Leverage workgroup to create pre-rule publication.
- Brand eCQMs as own eHealth section; include impacts to programs/audiences (checkboxes, icons, etc.).
- Badge/icon to help with program branding (i.e., HE icon on laundry detergent).
- Follow-up new federal information released with plain language listserv messages addressing "what's in it for me" (WIIFM) to drive to relevant source (Resource Center, Physician Quality Reporting System site, etc.).
- Complete 90% of materials from proposed to final rule timeframe, then vet with a small stakeholder group.
- Divide messaging between EP and EH, when appropriate.
- One stop shop for eCQMs makes sense, but providers still need their regular program info – all points of dissemination can still point back to program info on cms.gov.
- Metrics/feedback should be addressed.
- Increase linkage/communication with CMS internal workgroup and related contractors to ensure business owners are on the same page.

Results – December 2014 to November 2015:

The workgroup defined processes that would allow E&O materials to be published along with or as close to final rules as possible. Input from this workgroup will be reflected in upcoming Quality Payment Program (QPP) published materials. Additionally, the eCQI Resource Center was launched using plain language with the ability of end users to:

- Sort content by audience type, e.g., provider, health IT vendor, measure developer.
- Subscribe to specific topics of interest allowing for alerts when there are updates in their specific area of interest.
- View tool and standard versions used in the latest eCQM versions.
- Review release notes including detailed changes.

For information on current opportunities to engage with the eCQI Community visit the eCQI Resource Center at https://ecqi.healthit.gov/ecqi/engage-ecqi