



**Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services**

# **Electronic Clinical Quality Measure (eCQM) Naming and Terminology Guide**

**Version 1.11**

**October 23, 2023**

## Record of Changes

| Version | Date              | Author / Owner | Description of Change  |
|---------|-------------------|----------------|--|
| 1.0     | March 16, 2018    | CMS            | Version 1.0 for publication  |
| 1.1     | May 23, 2018      | CMS            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addition of Meaningful Measures: eCQM Elements Published in Tables</li> <li>• Clarification on program-specific naming requirements for rulemaking:- Format for Listing eCQMs by Reporting / Performance Year</li> <li>• EP and EC</li> </ul> |
| 1.2     | July 18, 2018     | CMS            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Table 4, NQF number is now listed as a mandatory publication element</li> </ul>   |
| 1.3     | January 7, 2019   | CMS            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated Section 2.3 - Requirement of CMS eCQM ID in machine readable format</li> </ul>  |
| 1.4     | June 24, 2019     | CMS            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated File Formats 2.6 and file names in Tables 6 and 7</li> </ul>  |
| 1.5     | July 23, 2020     | CMS            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated to include Section 2.7 covering correct eCQM DERep</li> </ul>   |
| 1.6     | February 16, 2021 | CMS            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated CMS definition of eCQM</li> <li>• Updated year references in tables</li> </ul>  |
| 1.7     | October 26, 2021  | CMS            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated with file format versioning guidance</li> </ul>   |
| 1.8     | January 4, 2022   | CMS            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removed references to Eligible Professional and updated corresponding file naming convention for eCQM Annual Update</li> </ul>  |
| 1.9     | June 28, 2022     | CMS            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added formats for eCQM and supporting files published outside of eCQM Annual Update in Table 7</li> <li>• Added additional guidance for Measure-specific eCQM File Formats in Table 6</li> </ul>  |
| 1.10    | January 23, 2023  | CMS            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added guidance on the preferred use of 'health care' rather than 'healthcare'</li> </ul>  |

| Version | Date             | Author / Owner | Description of Change   |
|---------|------------------|----------------|---|
| 1.11    | October 23, 2023 | CMS            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Updated stakeholder to interested party</li><li>• Clarified date naming convention for eCQM Annual Update files</li><li>• Updated NQF to CBE</li><li>• Updated Pre-Rulemaking to Program Candidate</li><li>• Updated years and versions within examples and provided OQR examples</li></ul> |

## Table of Contents

|          |  |          |
|----------|--|----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Introduction – Dos and Don’ts for Referencing eCQMs</b> | <b>1</b> |
| <b>2</b> | <b>General eCQM Terminology</b>                            | <b>1</b> |
| 2.1      | Electronic Clinical Quality Measure                        | 1        |
| 2.2      | CMS eCQM Identifier  | 2        |
| 2.3      | Use of CMS eCQM Identifiers                                | 2        |
| 2.4      | eCQM Elements Published in Tables                          | 3        |
| 2.5      | Format for Listing eCQMs by Reporting/Performance Year     | 4        |
| 2.6      | eCQM File Formats and Versioning Guidance                  | 5        |
| 2.7      | eCQM Data Element Repository (DERep)                       | 8        |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Additional Publishing Information</b>                   | <b>8</b> |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Additional Information on eCQMs</b>                     | <b>8</b> |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Updates to This Guide</b>                               | <b>8</b> |
|          | <b>Acronyms</b>  | <b>9</b> |

## List of Tables

|          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| Table 1. | eCQM References                                 | 2 |
| Table 2. | eCQM ID References                              | 2 |
| Table 3. | Use of eCQM Identifiers                         | 2 |
| Table 4. | eCQM Publication Elements                       | 4 |
| Table 5. | eCQM Reporting/Performance Year References      | 4 |
| Table 6. | Measure-specific eCQM File Formats              | 5 |
| Table 7. | eCQM Materials File Formats                     | 6 |
| Table 8. | eCQM Data Element Repository (DERep) References | 8 |

# 1 Introduction – Dos and Don'ts for Referencing eCQMs

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) developed this terminology document to provide guidance for common words, phrases, technical terms, and file formats used in conjunction with electronic clinical quality measures (eCQMs).

eCQMs quantify and measure aspects of quality in our health care system by measuring the performance of hospitals, clinicians, and other measured entities who provide health care services.

Whenever possible, the guidance in this document should inform the publication of eCQMs and supporting materials by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) agencies and other federal health partners using eCQMs in their quality programs. eCQM publication vehicles include, but are not limited to:

- Proposed and final rules
- Public Comment webpages
- Websites
- eCQMs and supporting files
- Communications
- Education and outreach materials

Terminology alignment is important to advancing the CMS goal of reducing burden on interested parties implementing eCQMs. Use this terminology guide to promote clear and consistent publication of eCQM terms.

**Note:** National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has an extensive [Document Drafting Handbook](#) addressing publication requirements for all U.S. government agencies. If there are any differences between this terminology document and the Document Drafting Handbook, the NARA document overrules. Additionally, CMS requests the use of 'health care' rather than 'healthcare' in CMS communications.

## 2 General eCQM Terminology

### 2.1 Electronic Clinical Quality Measure

An electronic clinical quality measure (eCQM) is a measure specified in a standard electronic format that uses data electronically extracted from electronic health records (EHR) and/or health information technology (IT) systems to measure the quality of health care provided. eCQMs include data elements, logic, and definitions in a Health Level Seven International® (HL7®) standard, which represent a clinical quality measure in an electronic document that can be captured, stored, shared, and read electronically.

Table 1 presents correct and incorrect references for eCQMs.

**Table 1. eCQM References**

| Correct eCQM Reference | Incorrect eCQM Reference        | Notes                                  |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| eCQM                   | eMeasure                        | Term is no longer in use               |
| eCQM                   | CQM or Clinical Quality Measure | Should not be used to describe an eCQM |
| eCQM                   | Electronic Health Data          | Should not be used to describe an eCQM |

## 2.2 CMS eCQM Identifier

The CMS eCQM identifier is a unique number with a version number to indicate the published version of the eCQM. The correct terminology for the unique identifier is **CMS eCQM ID**. Table 2 shows the correct and incorrect eCQM ID references.

**Table 2. eCQM ID References**

| Correct eCQM ID Reference | Incorrect eCQM ID Reference | Notes  |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| CMS eCQM ID               | CMS ID                      | Information on eCQM naming conventions is found on the <a href="#">eCQM page</a> of the electronic Clinical Quality Improvement (eCQI) Resource Center |
| CMS eCQM ID               | eCQM ID                     | N/A  |
| CMS eCQM ID               | CMS eMeasure ID             | N/A  |
| CMS eCQM ID               | CMS Measure ID              | N/A  |

## 2.3 Use of CMS eCQM Identifiers

There are multiple private and public references identifiers for eCQMs, such as the Consensus-Based Entity (CBE) ID, the CMIT Measure ID, the Measure Set (MS) ID, and the Program ID. The CMS eCQM ID should always be published when referring to eCQMs used in federal quality reporting programs. Whenever possible, refrain from creating new eCQM reference identifiers and use the CMS eCQM ID. Table 3 presents the correct and incorrect eCQM identifiers.

**Table 3. Use of eCQM Identifiers**

| Correct Use   | Incorrect Use   | Notes                   |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| Language or a table consisting of: CMS eCQM ID, CMIT Measure ID, Measure Set ID, Program ID | Language or a table consisting only of: CMIT Measure ID, Measure Set ID, Program ID | Do not omit CMS eCQM ID |

Note: The CMS eCQM ID is required to be present in a machine-readable format when sending CMS eCQM ID information to any CMS website, e.g., eCQI Resource Center, for posting.

## 2.4 eCQM Elements Published in Tables

There are many publication elements that may be published in conjunction with eCQMs. These elements include, but are not limited to:

- Full eCQM Title
- Short eCQM Title
- CMS eCQM ID
- Program/Quality ID
- CMIT Measure ID
- CBE ID
- Cascade of Meaningful Measures Priority and/or Goal
- Measure Set ID
- Measure Type
- Steward
- Description
- Initial Population
- Numerator
- Denominator

Rules and/or educational materials may require, recommend, or make optional the elements noted in Table 4 when publishing tables with eCQMs. CMS recommends the first column contain the CMS eCQM ID and the second column include the full eCQM title.

**Table 4. eCQM Publication Elements**

| Required Elements   | Recommended Elements                                | Optional Elements  |
|---|---|--------------------|
| CMS eCQM ID   | Quality Domain                                      | Program/Quality ID |
| Full eCQM Title   | Cascade of Meaningful Measures<br>Priority and Goal | Short eCQM Title   |
| CBE ID, when endorsed and Not<br>Applicable if not endorsed |   | CMIT Measure ID    |
|   |   | Measure Set ID     |
|   |   | Measure Type       |
|   |   | Steward            |
|   |   | Description        |
|   |   | Initial Population |
|   |   | Numerator          |
|   |   | Denominator        |

## 2.5 Format for Listing eCQMs by Reporting/Performance Year

The format for listing the eCQMs for quality reporting for eligible hospitals (EHs), Outpatient Quality Reporting (OQR), and/or eligible clinicians (ECs) should include a reference to the reporting or performance period. Use the format: **{Year} {Performance or Reporting} Period {Eligible Party} eCQM**.

Please note eligible clinician and eligible hospital should only be abbreviated when referenced in filenames, pick lists, and publication tables that are character limited. Table 5 presents the correct and incorrect formats for eCQM reporting/performance year references.

**Table 5. eCQM Reporting/Performance Year References**

| Correct Format   | Incorrect Format                                      | Notes |
|--|---|-------|
| 2024 Performance Period Eligible<br>Clinician eCQMs<br><br>Or if space is limited,<br>2024 Performance Period EC eCQMs<br>eCQM Annual Update for 2024<br>Performance | eCQMs for eReporting for the 2024<br>Reporting Period | N/A   |
| 2024 Reporting Period Eligible Hospital<br>and Critical Access Hospital eCQMs<br><br>Or, if space is limited,<br>2024 Reporting Period EH eCQMs                      | 2024 eCQMs  | N/A   |



| Correct Format  | Incorrect Format | Notes |
|---|------------------|-------|
| 2024 Reporting Period Outpatient Quality Reporting eQMs<br><br>Or, if space is limited,<br>2024 Reporting Period OQR eQMs | 2024 eQMs        | N/A   |

## 2.6 eCQM File Formats and Versioning

Technical eCQM filenames are machine-readable and must remain consistent from update to update to ensure easy consumption and comparison by various tools, resources, and EHRs. Use the filename formats noted in Table 6 and Table 7 when naming and publishing eCQMs and supporting materials.

**Table 6. Measure-specific eCQM File Formats**

| File Type                        | Filename Standard                    | Filename Example    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| HyperText Markup Language (HTML) | {measure-id}.html                    | CMS22v12html        |
| Extensible Markup Language (XML) | {measure-id}.xml                     | CMS22v12.xml        |
| Zip                              | {measure-id}.zip                     | CMS22v12.zip        |
| Technical Release Notes (TRN)    | {measure-id}-TRN.xlsx                | CMS22v12-TRN.xlsx   |
| Clinical Quality Language (CQL)  | {CQLLibrary}-{CQLLibraryVersion}.cql | MyLibrary-1.0.0.cql |

| File Type               | Filename with Updated Version        | Filename Example with Updated Version                                     |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| HTML                    | {measure-id}.html                    | CMS22v12.html   |
| XML                     | {measure-id}.xml                     | CMS22v12.xml  |
| Zip                     | {measure-id}-vX.zip                  | CMS22v12-v2.zip   |
| Technical Release Notes | {measure-id}-TRN-vX.xlsx             | CMS22v12-TRN-v2.xlsx  |
| CQL                     | {CQLLibrary}-{CQLLibraryVersion}.cql | MyLibrary-1.0.0.cql or<br>MyLibrary-1.0.1.cql (to reflect the actual cql) |

Measure developers are to submit measure materials files to the eCQI Resource Center for eCQM Annual Update publication without a version indicator. A version indicator such as v2, v3, v4, etc. is only used when a file is updated after the current corresponding Annual Update is published and before the next Annual Update is published. Note: the version indicator is for the name of the updated specification zip files and resource file names only.

Table 7. eCQM Materials File Formats

| File Type  | Filename Standard                             | Filename Example                         |
|--|---|--|
| Measures Package   | EH-CAH-eCQM-YEAR-MM.zip                       | EH-CAH-eCQM-2023-05.zip                  |
|  | EC-eCQM-YEAR-MM.zip                           | EC-eCQM-2023-05.zip                      |
|  | OQR-eCQM-YEAR-MM.zip                          | OQR-eCQM-2023-05.zip                     |
| Measures Package – Correction  | EH-CAH-eCQM-YEAR-MM-v2.zip                    | EH-CAH-eCQM-2023-05-v2.zip               |
|  | EC-eCQM-YEAR-MM-v2.zip                        | EC-eCQM-2023-05-v2.zip                   |
|  | OQR-eCQM-YEAR-MM-v2.zip                       | OQR-eCQM-2023-05-v2.zip                  |
| Measures Table   | EH-CAH-MeasuresTable-YEAR-MM.pdf              | EH-CAH-MeasuresTable-2023-05.pdf         |
|  | EC-MeasuresTable-YEAR-MM.pdf                  | EC-MeasuresTable-2023-05.pdf             |
|  | OQR-MeasuresTable-YEAR-MM.pdf                 | OQR-MeasuresTable-2023-05.pdf            |
| Measures Table – Correction  | EH-CAH-MeasuresTable-YEAR-MM-v2.pdf           | EH-CAH-MeasuresTable-2030-05-v2.pdf      |
|  | EC-MeasuresTable-YEAR-MM-v2.pdf               | EC-MeasuresTable-2023-05-v2.pdf          |
|  | OQR-MeasuresTable-YEAR-MM-v2.pdf              | OQR-MeasuresTable-2023-05-v2.pdf         |
| Program Candidate Measure(s)<br>Value Set File<br>(only used when not included in<br>Value Set Authority Center (VSAC)<br>Annual Update downloadables) | EH-CAH-ProC-Valueset-{measure-id}-YEAR-MM.zip | EH-CAH-ProC--Valueset-CMS999-2023-05.zip |
|  | EC-ProC-Valueset-{measure-id}-YEAR-MM.zip     | EC-ProC-Valueset-CMS999-2023-05.zip      |
|  | OQR-ProC-Valueset-{measure-id}-YEAR-MM.zip    | OQR-ProC-Valueset-CMS999-2023-05.zip     |
| Measure(s) Value Set File<br>(only used when not included in<br>VSAC Annual Update<br>downloadables)   | EH-CAH-Valueset-{measure-id}-YEAR-MM.zip      | EH-CAH-Valueset-CMS999-2023-05.zip       |
|  | EC-Valueset-{measure-id}-YEAR-MM.zip          | EC-Valueset-CMS999-2023-05.zip           |
|  | OQR-Valueset-{measure-id}-YEAR-MM.zip         | OQR-Valueset-CMS999-2023-05.zip          |

| File Type                            | Filename Standard         | Filename Example          |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Technical Release Notes              | TRN-YEAR-MM.pdf           | TRN-2023-05.pdf           |
|                                      | EH-CAH-TRN-YEAR-MM.zip    | EH-CAH-TRN-2023-05.zip    |
|                                      | EC-TRN-YEAR-MM.zip        | EC-TRN-2023-05.zip        |
|                                      | OQR-TRN-YEAR-MM.zip       | OQR-TRN-2023-05.zip       |
| Technical Release Notes – Correction | TRN-YEAR-MM-v2.pdf        | TRN-2023-07-v2.pdf        |
|                                      | EH-CAH-TRN-YEAR-MM-v2.zip | EH-CAH-TRN-2023-07-v2.zip |
|                                      | EC-TRN-YEAR-MM-v2.zip     | EC-TRN-2023-07-v2.zip     |
|                                      | OQR-TRN-YEAR-MM-v2.zip    | OQR-TRN-2023-07-v2.zip    |
|                                      | CMSXXXvX-TRN-v2.xlsx      | CMS156v11-TRN-v2.xlsx     |

Note: The filename year is to reflect its original published date. For example, EH-CAH-eCQM-2023.05.zip was published in May of 2023 for use in the EH/CAH 2024 Reporting Period.

## 2.7 eCQM Data Element Repository (DERep)

The eCQM Data Element Repository (DERep) provides additional clarification for all the data elements associated with published eCQMs used in CMS quality reporting programs as well as the definitions and clinical focus for each data element. There are other data element repositories in use by CMS and other federal health agencies. Be sure to use **eCQM** whenever referencing the eCQM DERep. Table 8 presents the correct and incorrect references for the eCQM Data Element Repository.

**Table 8. eCQM Data Element Repository (DERep) References**

| Correct eCQM Reference       | Incorrect eCQM Reference | Notes                                     |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| eCQM Data Element Repository | Data Element Repository  | Should not be used without eCQM precursor |
| eCQM DERep                   | DERep                    | Should not be used without eCQM precursor |

## 3 Additional Publishing Information

Additional publication guidance and Federal Plain Language Guidelines are available at [PlainLanguage.gov](https://www.plainlanguage.gov).

Other helpful resources include:

- [APA Style](#)
- [The Elements of Style](#) (Strunk & White)
- The [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#)

U.S. government resources include:

- [Document Drafting Handbook](#)
- [The Government Printing Office Style Manual](#)

## 4 Additional Information on eCQMs

The [eCQI Resource Center](#) provides additional information on eCQMs.

## 5 Updates to This Guide

The eCQM Governance Group and CMS Measures Group reviews this guide annually and provides updates if significant changes are warranted.

Please direct suggestions for revisions to [ecqm-governance@icf.com](mailto:ecqm-governance@icf.com)

## Acronyms

| <b>Term</b>  | <b>Definitions</b>                           |
|--------------|--|
| <b>CAH</b>   | Critical Access Hospital                     |
| <b>CMIT</b>  | CMS Measures Inventory Tool                  |
| <b>CBE</b>   | Consensus-based Entity                       |
| <b>CMS</b>   | Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services     |
| <b>CQL</b>   | Clinical Quality Language                    |
| <b>DERep</b> | Data Element Repository                      |
| <b>eCQI</b>  | Electronic Clinical Quality Improvement      |
| <b>eCQM</b>  | Electronic Clinical Quality Measure          |
| <b>EC</b>    | Eligible Clinician                           |
| <b>EH</b>    | Eligible Hospital                            |
| <b>EHR</b>   | Electronic Health Record                     |
| <b>HHS</b>   | Department of Health and Human Services      |
| <b>HL7</b>   | Health Level Seven International             |
| <b>HTML</b>  | HyperText Markup Language                    |
| <b>ID</b>    | Identifier                                   |
| <b>IT</b>    | Information Technology                       |
| <b>MS</b>    | Measure Set                                  |
| <b>NARA</b>  | National Archives and Records Administration |
| <b>TRN</b>   | Technical Release Note                       |
| <b>VSAC</b>  | Value Set Authority Center                   |
| <b>XML</b>   | Extensible Markup Language                   |