



Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Electronic Clinical Quality Measure (eCQM) Naming and Terminology Guide

Version 1.17

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

Version	Date	Author / Owner	Description of Change
1.11	October 23, 2023	CMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated stakeholder to interested party • Clarified date naming convention for eCQM Annual Update files • Updated NQF to CBE • Updated Pre-Rulemaking to Program Candidate • Updated years and versions within examples and provided OQR examples
1.12	April 22, 2024	CMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated naming convention for AU resource and eCQM files • Added section on corrections of files within zips
1.13	August 27, 2024	CMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated eCQM File Formats to new MADiE-based QDM and Versioning – Table 6
1.14	November 1, 2024	CMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated eCQM File Formats to new MADiE-based QDM and Versioning – Table 6 (Added missing dash)
1.15	February 6, 2025	CMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated references to outpatient and inpatient eCQMs removing OQR when referencing outpatient eCQMs, and eligible when referencing hospital eCQMs, updated MAT Global Common Library to CQMGlobalQDMCommon Library
1.16	February 20, 2025	CMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included a section for Special Characters to Avoid
1.17	February 10, 2026	CMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated file names to reflect eCQM in preparation for dQMs • Removal of corrections within files section

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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 resources
- 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	eCQM ID	Information on eCQM naming conventions is found on the eCQM page 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 reference 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, 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. Rules and/or educational materials may require, recommend, or make optional the elements noted in **Table 4** when publishing tables with eCQMs.

Table 4. eCQM Publication Elements

Required Elements	Optional Elements
CMS eCQM ID	Program/Quality ID
Full eCQM Title	Short Name
CBE ID, when endorsed and Not Applicable if not endorsed	CMIT Measure ID
	Measure Set ID
	Measure Type
	Measure Steward
	Measure Description
	Initial Population
	Numerator
	Denominator

Format for Listing eCQMs by Reporting/Performance Year

The format for listing the eCQMs for quality reporting for hospitals-inpatient, hospitals-outpatient 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 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
2026 Performance Period Eligible Clinician eCQMs Or if space is limited, 2026 Performance Period EC eCQMs 2026 EC eCQMs	eCQMs for eReporting for the 2026 Reporting Period	N/A
2026 Reporting Period Hospital Inpatient eCQMs Or, if space is limited, 2026 Reporting Period Hospital-IP eCQMs 2026 Hospital-IP eCQMs	2026 eCQMs	N/A
2026 Reporting Period Hospital Outpatient eCQMs Or, if space is limited, 2026 Reporting Period Hospital-OP eCQMs 2026 Hospital-OP eCQMs	2026 eCQMs	N/A

2.5 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)	{full measure-id}.html	CMS1074-v2.0.000-QDM.html
Extensible Markup Language (XML)	{full measure-id}.xml	CMS1074-v2.0.000-QDM.xml
Zip	{full measure-id}.zip	CMS1074-v2.0.000-QDM.zip
Technical Release Notes (TRN)	{full measure-id}-TRN.xlsx	CMS1074-v2.0.000-QDM-TRN.xlsx
Flow Diagram	{full measure-id}-eCQMFlow.pdf	CMS1074-v2.0.000-QDM-Flow.pdf
File Type	Filename with Updated Version	Filename Example with Updated Version
HTML	{full measure-id}.html	CMS1074-v2.1.000-QDM.html
XML	{full measure-id}.xml	CMS1074-v2.1.000-QDM.xml
Zip	{full measure-id}.zip	CMS1074-v2.1.000-QDM..zip
Technical Release Notes	{truncated measure-id}-TRN.xlsx	CMS1074-v2.1.000-QDM-TRN.xlsx
Flow Diagram	{truncated measure-id}-eCQMFlow.pdf	CMS1074-v2.1.000-QDM-Flow.pdf

Program contractors 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	YEAR-Hospital-IP-eCQM.zip	2026-Hospital-IP-eCQM.zip
	YEAR-EligibleClinician-eCQM.zip	2026-EligibleClinician-eCQM.zip
	YEAR-Hospital-OP-eCQM.zip	2026-Hospital-OP-eCQM.zip
	YEAR-Hospital-IP-ProgramCandidate-eCQM.zip	2026-Hospital-IP-ProgramCandidate-eCQM.zip
	YEAR-Hospital-IP-Hybrid-eCQM.zip	2026-Hospital-IP-Hybrid-eCQM.zip

File Type	Filename Standard	Filename Example
Measures Package – Correction/Updated	YEAR-Hospital-IP-eCQM-v2.zip	2026-Hospital-IP-eCQM-v2.zip
	YEAR-EligibleClinician-eCQM-v2.zip	2026-EligibleClinician-eCQM-v2.zip
	YEAR-Hospital-OP-eCQM-v2.zip	2026-Hospital-OP-eCQM-v2.zip
	YEAR-Hospital-IP-ProgramCandidate-eCQM-v2.zip	2026-Hospital-IP-ProgramCandidate-eCQM-v2.zip
	YEAR-Hospital-IP-Hybrid-eCQM-v2.zip	2026-Hospital-IP-Hybrid-eCQM-v2.zip
Measures Table	YEAR-Hospital-IP-eCQM-Table.pdf	2026-Hospital-IP-eCQM-Table.pdf
	YEAR-EligibleClinician-eCQM-Table.pdf	2026-EligibleClinician-eCQM-Table.pdf
	YEAR-Hospital-OP-eCQM-Table.pdf	2026-Hospital-OP-eCQM-Table.pdf
	YEAR-Hospital-IP-Hybrid-Measures-Table.pdf	2026-Hospital-IP-Hybrid-Measures-Table.pdf
Measures Table – Correction/Updated	YEAR-Hospital-IP-eCQM-Table-v2.pdf	2026-Hospital-IP-eCQM-Table-v2.pdf
	YEAR-EligibleClinician-eCQM-Table-v2.pdf	2026-EligibleClinician-eCQM-Table-v2.pdf
	YEAR-Hospital-OP-eCQM-Table-v2.pdf	2026-Hospital-OP-eCQM-Table-v2.pdf
	YEAR-Hospital-IP-Hybrid-Measures-Table-v2.pdf	2026-Hospital-IP-Hybrid-Measures-Table-v2.pdf
Measure(s) Value Set File (only used when not included in VSAC Annual Update downloadables)	YEAR-Hospital-IP-ProgramCandidate-Valueset-{measure-id}.zip	2026-Hospital-IP-ProgramCandidate-Valueset-CMS999.zip
	YEAR-Hospital-IP-Valueset-{measure-id}.zip	2026-Hospital-IP-Valueset-CMS999.zip
	YEAR-EligibleClinician-Valueset-{measure-id}.zip	2026-EligibleClinician-Valueset-CMS999.zip
	YEAR-Hospital-OP-Valueset-{measure-id}.zip	2026-Hospital-OP-Valueset-CMS999.zip
Technical Release Notes	YEAR-Hospital-IP-eCQM-TRN.zip	2026-Hospital-IP-eCQM-TRN.zip
	YEAR-EligibleClinician-eCQM-TRN.zip	2026-EligibleClinician-eCQM-TRN.zip
	YEAR-Hospital-OP-eCQM-TRN.zip	2026-Hospital-OP-eCQM-TRN.zip
	YEAR-Hospital-IP-Hybrid-TRN.zip	2026-Hospital-IP-Hybrid-TRN.zip
Technical Release Notes –Correction	YEAR-Hospital-IP-eCQM-TRN-v2.zip	2026-Hospital-IP-eCQM-TRN-v2.zip
	YEAR-Hospital-IP-Hybrid-TRN-v2.zip	2026-Hospital-IP-Hybrid-TRN-v2.zip
	YEAR-EligibleClinician-eCQM-TRN-v2.zip	2026-EligibleClinician-eCQM-TRN-v2.zip
	YEAR-Hospital-OP-eCQM-TRN-v2.zip	2026-Hospital-OP-eCQM-TRN-v2.zip
Flow Diagrams	YEAR-Hospital-IP-eCQM-Flows-v2.zip	2026-Hospital-IP-eCQM-Flows-v2.zip

File Type	Filename Standard	Filename Example
	YEAR-EligibleClinician-eCQM-Flows-v2.zip	2026-EligibleClinician-eCQM-Flows-v2.zip
	YEAR-Hospital-OP-eCQM-Flows-v2.zip	2026-Hospital-OP-eCQM-Flows-v2.zip
	YEAR-Hospital-IP-Hybrid-Flows-v2.zip	2026-Hospital-IP-Hybrid-Flows-v2.zip
CQMCommonQDM Library Technical Release Notes	YEAR-CQMCommonQDM-Library-TRN.zip	2026-CQMCommonQDM-Library-TRN.zip
CQMCommonQDM Library Technical Release Notes - Correction	YEAR-CQMCommonQDM-Library-TRN-v2.zip	2026-CQMCommonQDM-Library-TRN-v2.zip

Note: The filename year is to reflect the reporting/performance year the file contents are to be used for.

2.6 Special Characters to Avoid when Naming eCQMs

The eCQMs are machine readable by standards and software used in EHRs, VSAC and the eCQI Resource Center. Special characters may indicate a machine is to interpret the character as a specific function to perform. Refrain from the use of these characters within eCQM titles and descriptions:

- \
- /
- <
- >
- En dash rather than a hyphen or Em dash

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.

Acronyms

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