



Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Electronic Clinical Quality Measure (eCQM) Naming and Terminology Guide

Version 1.8

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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

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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, and technical terms used in conjunction with electronic clinical quality measures (eCQMs).

Clinical quality measures (CQMs) quantify and measure some aspects of quality in our healthcare system. An eCQM is a CQM that is expressed and formatted to use data captured in structured form from electronic health records (EHRs) and/or health information technology (IT) systems to measure healthcare quality, ideally data captured in structured form during the process of patient care. eCQMs measure the performance of hospitals, clinicians, and others who provide healthcare 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. Publication vehicles include, but are not limited to:

- Proposed and final rules
- Public Comment webpages
- Websites
- eCQMs and supporting files
- Communications
- Education and outreach (E&O) materials

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

Note: HHS has an extensive internal [Guide to Document Preparation](#) that addresses publication requirements for all HHS agencies. If there are any differences between this terminology document and the HHS Guide to Document Preparation, the HHS Guide governs.

2 General eCQM Terminology

2.1 Electronic Clinical Quality Measure

The “e” in eCQM means that performance is measured using data pulled from health IT such as an EHR. 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. The correct terminology for a clinical quality measure that has been electronically specified is an **electronic clinical quality measure**.¹ However, measures that have been electronically specified (eCQMs) but

¹ Previous quality programs may have referenced CQM.

submitted via attestation method are referred to as CQMs and those reported from data captured electronically as eCQMs.

Use this term or its acronym **eCQM** after its first reference in a publication has been fully spelled out. Table 1 presents the correct and incorrect references for eCQMs.

Table 1. eCQM References

Correct eCQM Reference	Incorrect eCQM Reference	Notes
eCQM	eMeasure	Term being phased out
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 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 references identifiers for eCQMs, such as the National Quality Forum (NQF) ID, the CMS Inventory 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 that consists of: CMS eCQM ID, CMS Inventory ID, Measure Set ID, Program ID	Language or a table that consists only of: CMS Inventory 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 Reference Number or CMIT Ref No.
- NQF ID
- NQF eMeasure ID (NQF ID with ‘e’)
- Meaningful Measure Area
- Measure Set ID
- Measure Type
- Quality Domain
- Steward
- Description
- Initial Population
- Numerator
- Denominator

The elements noted in Table 4 are required, recommended, or optional when publishing tables with eCQMs in rules and/or educational materials. It is recommended that 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	Meaningful Measure Area	Short eCQM Title
NQF ID		CMIT Reference Number or CMIT Ref No.
		NQF eMeasure 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) 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 that 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
2021 Performance Period Eligible Clinician eCQMs Or if space is limited, 2021 Performance Period EC eCQMs eCQM Annual Update for 2021 Reporting/Performance	eCQMs for eReporting for the 2021 Reporting Period	N/A
2021 Reporting Period Eligible Hospital eCQMs Or, if space is limited, 2021 Reporting Period EH eCQMs	2021 eCQMs	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
HTML	{measure-id}.html	CMS22v6.html
XML	{measure-id}.xml	CMS22v6.xml
Zip	{measure-id}.zip	CMS22v6.zip
Technical Release Notes	{measure-id}TRN.xlsx	CMS22v6TRN.xlsx
CQL	{CQLLibrary}-{CQLLibraryVersion}.cql	MyLibrary-1.0.0.cql

Measure developers are to submit the first version of measure materials files to the eCQI Resource Center 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.

Table 7. eCQM Materials File Formats

File Type	Filename Standard	Filename Example
Measures Package	EH-CAH-eCQM-YEAR-MM.zip	EH-CAH-eCQM-2020-05.zip
	EC-eCQM-YEAR-MM.zip	EC-eCQM-2020-05.zip
Measures Package – Correction	EH-CAH-eCQM-YEAR-MM-v2.zip	EH-CAH-eCQM-2020-05-v2.zip
	EC-eCQM-YEAR-MM-v2.zip	EC-eCQM-2020-05-v2.zip
Measures Table	EH-CAH-MeasuresTable-YEAR-MM.pdf	EH-CAH-MeasuresTable-2020-05.pdf
	EC-MeasuresTable-YEAR-MM.pdf	EC-MeasuresTable-2020-05.pdf
Measures Table – Correction	EH-CAH-MeasuresTable-YEAR-MM-v2.pdf	EH-CAH-MeasuresTable-2020-05-v2.pdf
	EC-MeasuresTable-YEAR-MM-v2.pdf	EC-MeasuresTable-2020-05-v2.pdf
Technical Release Notes	TRN-YEAR-MM.pdf	TRN-2020-05.pdf
	EH-CAH-TRN-YEAR-MM.zip	EH-CAH-TRN-2020-05.zip
	EC-TRN-YEAR-MM.zip	EC-TRN-2020-05.zip
Technical Release Notes – Correction (Pre-Addenda)	TRN-YEAR-MM-v2.pdf EH-CAH-TRN-YEAR-MM-v2.zip EC-TRN-YEAR-MM-v2.zip	TRN-2021-07-v2.pdf EH-CAH-TRN-2021-07-v2.zip EC-TRN-2021-07-v2.zip
Technical Release Notes – Addendum 1	TRN-YEAR-MM-AddendOnly.pdf TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend.pdf EH-CAH-TRN-YEAR-MM-AddendOnly.zip EH-CAH-TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend.zip EC-TRN-YEAR-MM-AddendOnly.zip EC-TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend.zip	TRN-2021-05-AddendOnly.pdf TRN-2021-05-Addend.pdf EH-CAH-TRN-2021-05-AddendOnly.zip EH-CAH-TRN-2021-05-Addend.zip EC-TRN-2021-05-AddendOnly.zip EC-TRN-2021-05-Addend.zip

File Type	Filename Standard	Filename Example
Technical Release Notes – Addendum 1 Correction	TRN-YEAR-MM-AddendOnly-v2.pdf TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend-v2.pdf EH-CAH-TRN-YEAR-MM-AddendOnly-v2.zip EH-CAH-TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend-v2.zip EC-TRN-YEAR-MM-AddendOnly-v2.zip EC-TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend-v2.zip	TRN-2021-07-AddendOnly-v2.pdf TRN-2021-07-Addend-v2.pdf EH-CAH-TRN-2021-07-AddendOnly-v2.zip EH-CAH-TRN-2021-07-Addend-v2.zip EC-TRN-2021-07-AddendOnly-v2.zip EC-TRN-2021-07-Addend-v2.zip
Technical Release Notes – Addendum 2	TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend2Only.pdf TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend2.pdf EH-CAH-TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend2Only.zip EH-CAH-TRN-YEAR-MM-Addendu.zip EC-TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend2Only.zip EC-TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend2.zip	TRN-2021-09-Addend2Only.pdf TRN-2021-09-Addend2.pdf EH-CAH-TRN-2021-09-Addend2Only.zip EH-CAH-TRN-2021-09-Addend2.zip EC-TRN-2021-09-Addend2Only.zip EC-TRN-2021-09-Addend2.zip
Technical Release Notes – Addendum 2 Correction	TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend2Only-v2.pdf TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend2-v2.pdf EH-CAH-TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend2Only-v2.zip EH-CAH-TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend2-v2.zip EC-TRN-YEAR-MM-Addend2Only-v2.zip EC-TRN-EAR-MM-Addend2-v2.zip	TRN-2021-11-Addend2Only-v2.pdf TRN-2021-11-Addend2-v2.pdf EH-CAH-TRN-2021-11-Addend2Only-v2.zip EH-CAH-TRN-2021-11-Addend2-v2.zip EC-TRN-2021-11-Addend2Only-v2.zip EC-TRN-2021-11-Addend2-v2.zip

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. 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 is available at [PlainLanguage.gov](https://www.plainlanguage.gov). The Federal Plain Language Guidelines and style guides are available at <http://www.PlainLanguage.gov/howto/guidelines>.

Other helpful resources include:

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

HHS internal resources include:

- [Guide to Document Preparation](#)
- [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 will review this guide annually and provide updates if significant changes are warranted.

Please direct suggestions for revisions to ecqm-governance@esacinc.com.

Acronyms

CAH	Critical Access Hospital
CMIT	CMS Measures Inventory Tool
CMS	Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
CQL	Clinical Quality Language
CQM	Clinical Quality Measure
DERep	Data Element Repository
E&O	Education and Outreach
eCQI	Electronic Clinical Quality Improvement
eCQM	Electronic Clinical Quality Measure
EC	Eligible Clinician
EH	Eligible Hospital
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
NQF	National Quality Forum
TRN	Technical Release Note
XML	Extensible Markup Language