

What are eCQMs?

Electronic clinical quality measures (eCQM) are measures specified in a standard electronic format that use data electronically extracted from electronic health records (EHR) and/or health information technology (IT) systems to measure the quality of health care provided. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) use eCQMs in a variety of quality reporting and value-based purchasing programs.

Who uses eCQMs?

Eligible hospitals, critical access hospitals, eligible clinicians, and/or eligible professionals use eCQMs. Program eligibility requirements are available on CMS quality reporting program sites.

How are eCQMs calculated?

Each eCQM is captured in a specification that defines its intent, populations included, logic, data elements, and value set identifiers. EHR systems certified by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology use patient data to calculate the results for each eCQM based on its specification.

What types of eCQMs are there?

eCQMs measure many aspects of patient care, including:

- Patient and Family Engagement
- Patient Safety
- Care Coordination
- Population Health/Public Health
- Efficient Use of Healthcare Resources
- Clinical Process/Effectiveness

How are eCQMs chosen by CMS?

Each year, CMS makes updates to create a set of eCQMs approved for CMS programs that reflect national priorities based on evidence-based medicine and updates to value sets – clinical codes and terms that help health care providers and payers define clinical concepts.

What is the eCQM timeline?

Participants must use the most current version of eCQMs to report according to program-specific timelines and updates. The eCQM Annual Timeline provides timeframes for eCQM updates, reporting, rules, public comments, and more.

Where are the eCQMs published?

The eCQMs used in CMS programs are located on the eCQI Resource Center.

What's in it for me?

- eCQM programs help clinicians focus on patient care rather than paperwork
- eCQMs save time and improve quality by moving from manual chart abstraction to electronic measurement
- eCQMs use detailed clinical data to assess the quality of treatment by healthcare providers and organizations and to drive clinical action
- eCQMs foster the goal of access to real-time data for quality improvement and clinical decision support (CDS)
- Incentive programs reward quality outcomes
- eCQMs lower costs by reducing preventable readmissions and decreasing medication errors

What's next for eCQMs?

CDS/eCQM Harmonization

Harmonization of CDS and eCQMs will make it easier to facilitate health IT-enabled clinical quality improvement and to promote integration and reuse.

Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR)

CMS is exploring the next generation exchange framework being adopted by the healthcare community to advance interoperability for its potential use in quality measurement. FHIR provides a means for representing and sharing information among clinicians and organizations in a standard way regardless of the ways local electronic health records represent or store the data.

Where can I learn more?

For hospital reporting guidance, visit QualityNet and the Quality Reporting Center for specific program reporting education.

For clinician reporting guidance, visit the Quality Payment Program website and the Quality Payment Program Resource Library. For information about the Promoting Interoperability Program, refer to the CMS Promoting Interoperability Program webpage.

eCQM Activities

