

Brief Guide to 2015 Edition Health IT Certification for Electronic Clinical Quality Measures (eCQM)

Updated February 26, 2016

Schedule with Milestones for Release of Cypress v3 for 2015 Certification Rule, eCQM-related CMS programs, and 2016-17 EH/EP Measure Publication

Release	Description	Date
Cypress CE w/2015 Bundle	Initial alpha version of Cypress with certification features for C1-C4	Thu 02/18/16
Cypress Demo Server	Alpha release of Cypress available as VMs and on AHRQ Demo Server	Thu 02/25/16
Cypress API	API allowing vendors to automate C1-C4 certification operations (excluding manual review portion of C1)	Thu 03/31/16
2016 eCQM Publication	Republication of 93 eCQMs for 2017 reporting period	Wed 04/06/16
Multiple Bundle Support	Support for importing multiple measure bundles (2015 & 2016) into a single Cypress application	Thu 04/28/16
Administration System	Role/Permission system to allow ATLS to deploy public Cypress applications so vendors can interact directly with Cypress application during testing	Thu 05/12/16
Cypress Toolbox	Cypress Validation Utility functionality integrated into Cypress including calculation of Cat I documents	Thu 05/26/16
EP/EH Candidate Bundle	Candidate Bundle for 2017 EP/EH measures for use in Cypress v3	Mon 06/6/16
Cypress v3	Cypress v3 + 2017 EP/EH Measure bundle release	Thu 07/28/16

Release	Description	Date
ONC Health IT eCQM test procedures finalized	ATLs and ACBs approved to test and certify health IT modules to the 2015 Edition c1-c4 criteria	August 2016
2017 Reporting Period	eCQMs fully deployed; measurement periods start for 2017 program year	01/01/2017
2016 Submission Period	eCQM data for 2016 Reporting Period submitted to CMS	Jan/Feb 2017
2017 eCQM Publication	Proposed eCQM publication for 2018 Reporting Period	Apr/May 2017
Cypress v3.1 Release	Cypress v3.1 release, corresponding to the 2017 eCQM publication	May/June 2017
2018 Reporting Period	eCQMs fully deployed; measurement periods start for 2018 program year	01/01/2018
2017 Submission Period	eCQM data for 2017 Reporting Period submitted to CMS	Jan/Feb 2018

eCQMUpdate Best Practices Checklist

Through March 2016:

- Review [CMS Meaningful Use Stage 3](#) and [ONC 2015 Edition Certification final rule](#) and [2015 Edition Clarifications and Corrections](#)
- Review [current 170.315\(c\)\(1-4\) Certification Companion Guides and draft test procedures](#)
- Determine which CMS programs you will report to and identify development activities needed to meet program requirements
- Begin development of a testing plan for relevant health IT modules
- Develop an implementation and testing/certification timeline
- Review and provide feedback on draft measure versions for the annual update released by CMS (available on Jira for EH (<https://jira.oncprojecttracking.org/browse/CQM-1865>) and EP measures (<https://jira.oncprojecttracking.org/browse/CQM-1866>))
- Develop a workplan for measure changes for the annual update
- Begin self-testing and analysis of [Cypress v3.0 alpha pre-release versions](#); [provide feedback to ONC/Cypress](#)

April — June 2016:

- Download and perform final review of [2016 eCQM Annual Update specifications](#)
- Finalize work plan for measure updates into products
- Refine internal testing plan
- Begin self-testing and analysis of [Cypress v3.0 beta pre-release versions](#); [provide feedback to ONC/Cypress](#)
- Begin measure development for update and [provide feedback to CMS](#)

July 2016:

- Continue development and self-testing of measure updates
- Begin educational materials and plan for rollout of the annual updates for customers
- Download final [Cypress v3.0 release and 170.315\(c\)\(1-4\) final test procedures](#)
- Download [CMS 2017 QRDA Implementation Guide, sample files and schematrons](#)

August – December 2016:

- Schedule 2015 Edition testing and certification for 2015 or 2016 eCQMs, if not already done
- Finish internal Cypress testing for certification
- Begin analysis and testing of CMS submission requirements for relevant programs
- Provide feedback to CMS and ONC on program requirements, [certification](#), and [eCQM implementation](#) and make additional adjustments as needed
- After successful ATL testing and ONC-ACB certification, roll out the 2015 Edition certified health IT modules and updated measures to clients

January 2017 and later:

- Data collection for the 2017 measurement period begins
- Final reporting validation occurs
- Measure report submission occurs for 2016 program year
- Complete ONC 2015 Edition testing and certification, if not already done

eCQM Testing & Certification Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. What are the similarities between the 2015 Edition Certification testing for eCQMs compared to the 2014 Edition?

A1. Cypress will remain the eCQM certification testing tool for both 2014 and 2015 certification editions. Cypress will continue to allow testing of QRDA-I and QRDA-III test cases against QDM-based HQMF-formatted eCQMs.

- Certification requirements necessitate continued testing for the capture, calculation and reporting of QRDA
- Cypress will continue to support annual CMS eCQM measure publications.
- Cypress will continue to include functionality for testing CMS QRDA Implementation Guide requirements. It will still not perform some real-time tests that are requirements of submission, like validating individual NPIs or CMS IDs except to form and manner.
- Developers will be able to choose to test either the 2015 or 2016 eCQMs in Cypress v3.0.
- Developers will still be able to test to the 2014 Edition certification requirements using Cypress 2.6.1 with the 2014 eCQM Annual Update.

Q2. What is different from the 2015 Edition Certification testing for eCQMs compared to the 2014 Edition?

A2. Cypress v3.0 is the tool used for the 2015 Edition of certification, while Version 2.6.1 will still be used for the 2014 Edition of certification. The goal of the 2015 Edition is to increase test robustness while adding modularity for users to customize their testing plan.

- Cypress v3.0 testing will be performed on a single measure at a time in the tool; however testing can still be done simultaneously on sets of measures in a single certification test session.

- Systems will be expected to ingest test cases electronically in addition to demonstrating they can manually enter selected data.
- In Cypress v3.0, the validation utility functionality will be integrated into the Cypress tool itself. Errors in conformance to the CMS requirements will be displayed as CMS QRDA IG-related warnings; however, users can hide these warnings if they so choose.
- Negative testing will be incorporated into Cypress testing to check that systems can identify errors in QRDA formatted files.
- Cypress v3.0 will offer an increased ability for vendors to perform code substitution if their systems cannot accept all the optional terminologies in the measure specifications.
- An additional criteria (C4) is now available in the 2015 Edition of certification to test the ability to filter measure reports by TIN, NPI, payer, demographics, problems, and practice site.
- The 2015 Edition of certification references the QRDA-I R3 and Cypress v3.0 will utilize the QRDA-I R3.1, whereas the 2014 Edition of certification referenced the QRDA-I R2.x.

Q3. Why does ONC Health IT Certification not match the requirements for CMS reporting?

A3. ONC has, from the beginning, envisioned a certification program that can be flexible to meet the needs of different uses and users.. This also avoids the possibility that two different programs will have conflicting requirements. In the 2015 Edition of certification, systems may optionally certify to CMS QRDA IG requirements as described in 170.315(c)(3).

- For that reason, certification testing is agnostic generally to program requirements. Other HHS programs use ONC certification and this could potentially avoid additional testing requirements for users who are already certified.
- In addition, individual program requirements may not always be available in the timeframe of certification regulations and subsequent testing procedures/test tool development.

The 2015 Edition of certification and Cypress v3.0 allow optional testing for the CMS eCQM program IG requirements, which at the current time includes only the CMS 2016 and 2017 QRDA Implementation Guides requirements for reporting. The Cypress Validation Utility, which had previously been a standalone product, will be integrated into the Cypress v3.0 version available in July 2016.

Q4. [What is the Cypress Validation Utility and what does it do?](#)

A4. The Cypress Validation Utility allows users to validate that their QRDA-I and –III reports can be formatted correctly to the additional requirements outlined in the appropriate CMS QRDA Implementation Guide for that measure version. For Cypress v3.0, it is intended to be released as an integrated part of the Cypress Certification Tool in July 2016 and used throughout measure implementation and testing to help reporters and systems ensure reporting success on the first attempt. In Cypress v3.0, you can turn off warnings from the CMS IG additional tests if you choose. If not, they will be visible as warnings but not fail testing as errors.

Q5. [Why can't I certify with the 2015 eCQM Annual Update using either the 2014 or the 2015 Edition versions of certification now?](#)

A5. The two editions reference different specifications that can not be interchanged. The 2015 eCQM Annual Update was not initially available for certification because the 2014 Certification Edition referenced the HL7 QRDA-I R2 specifications, but the 2015 eCQM Annual Update uses the HL7 QRDA-I R3. While the 2015 Certification Edition references the HL7 QRDA-I R3, the increased test robustness required in the 2015 Certification Edition rule is not available in Cypress 2.7, the version associated with the 2015 eCQM publication.

Therefore, the 2015 Edition of certification will not be available until the Cypress v3.0 release, scheduled for July 2016. It is still strongly encouraged that users of the 2015 eCQM publication perform routine testing using Cypress v3.0 pre-release versions. We also currently offer testing to the

2016 CMS QRDA IG requirements for the 2015 measure update in the Cypress validation utility.

Q6. Can I still certify the 2015 measures in 2016 to the 2015 Edition of Certification?

A6. Yes, ONC does not require you to be certified to a specific measure version as long as it is supported by the correct Edition.

Q7. Will CMS allow me to certify the 2015 measures in 2016 to qualify for certification to the 2015 Edition?

A7. When intending to report to a specific program, it is necessary to check each program's requirements to confirm that a specific measure version is required, a specific Edition of certification is allowed, and whether re-certification is required for that measure version. CMS does not generally require systems and reporting providers/sites to certify every measure version, although it is considered a best practice to use each Cypress version to test each measure update.

Q8. Can I just use the Cypress v2.7 version to test my 2014 Edition certified health IT modules to the CMS 2015 eCQM Annual Update and then, when Cypress Version 3.0 available, test and certify my my 2015 Edition health IT modules to the 2016 eCQM Annual Update?

A8. Yes. In fact, since the Cypress v3.0 version that supports 2015 Edition Certification will not be available until after the 2016 eCQM Annual Update, it is expected most users will certify the 2016 measure version rather than certifying the 2015 eCQM Annual Update. However, both 2015 and 2016 measure publications will be made available in Cypress v3.0 so that users can select which measure versions they want to test.

Q9. When will additional measures be added to the eCQM programs?

A9. To add new measures to eCQM programs, CMS must publish these proposed measures formally in rule-making. Continue to look towards measure program regulation announcements for new measure content.

Q10. What about the CMS validation tools? Do I need to use multiple tools to validate my eCQMs?

A10. CMS and ONC have provided several optional tools for validation testing to the CMS requirements. Some CMS programs offer specific tools for presubmission testing for specific program requirements, so it is necessary to read closely the submission requirements for programs in advance. The new version of Cypress (v3.0) will facilitate minimal burden by including CMS QRDA IG conformance testing integrated into the tool itself. In general, we recommend testing early and often. It is up to the vendor to determine if they want to use the Cypress tool for CMS IG validation testing with or without additional testing.

Q11. When will the previous versions of Cypress be retired?

A11. Cypress v2.7, which cannot be used for certification, will be live until a stable Cypress v3.0 pre-release becomes available for testing with the 2015 eCQM Annual Update, anticipated some time in April or May 2016. Cypress v2.6.1 will continue to be available beyond the Cypress v3.0 production release for 2014 Edition Certification only, but it will not be removed until either it is allowed by the expiration of the regulation or it is superseded by other requirements.

Q12. When will the eCQM Test Procedures be updated?

A12. Since the Cypress v3.0 release that supports the 2015 Edition is still in development, the ONC Final Test Procedures are being held pending final clarifications and will be released with the July Cypress v3.0 release). For more detail, review and provide feedback to current certification companion guides and draft test procedures at <https://www.healthit.gov/policy-researchers-implementers/2015-edition-test-method>.

Q13. How is testing run differently in Cypress v3.0?

A13. Manual and automated test case entry: Testing in Cypress v3.0 now includes a manual and automated test deck entry. Manual testing will involve ATLS visually confirming selected data elements can be entered into the user interface.

Single measure testing: Unlike in Cypress v2.0, testing will run individual measures one at a time, but test data can be downloaded in a single file and tests will run concurrently to minimize testing time.

API: The team is currently working on an API to facilitate test data uploads for streamlined testing—this will not be available in the alpha Cypress release; however, the Cypress team will work with the community and is accepting volunteers to determine the API requirements and test them prior to the formal Cypress v3.0 production release. If you are interested in participating in this testing, please contact the [Cypress listserv](#).