



Expanding Contraceptive Access Through Performance Measures

Performance measures are tools with the power to drive improvement in the health care industry, inform and empower consumers to ask questions and make the best choices, and drive how providers are paid.

They serve as a mechanism for assessing health care delivered against recognized standards. In the area of contraceptive care, however, there were no validated contraceptive performance measures before 2016. Since then, performance measures have been developed and should continue to be applied, improved, and monitored

Development of performance measures concerning contraception

Performance measures are based on many different aspects of patient care. The Office of Population Affairs (OPA), within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and private foundations have led the development of several measures to assess both the provision of contraception and patient experience.

Important performance measures include:

- 1 Contraceptive provision measures** to help providers have a broad range of options available – including oral pills, patches, intrauterine devices and other methods – to ensure that people have access to the contraceptive method that works best for them.
- 2 Person centered contraceptive counseling (PCCC) measures** to help ensure that patients have the ability to make informed choices concerning all contraceptive care options and that they are able to do so freely and without being coerced to choose a particular method over another, or none at all.

Endorsement of the performance measures

The measures go through an endorsement process led by the National Quality Forum (NQF), a not-for-profit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization focused on promoting and ensuring patient protections and healthcare quality. The federal government and many private sector entities depend on NQF-endorsed measures because of the rigor and consensus process behind them.

- NQF has already endorsed a claims-based version of contraceptive provision measures.
- NQF has also recommended endorsement of the PCCC measure.
- NQF should also endorse electronic clinical quality measures (eCQMs), which use electronic health records to measure performance.

Use of the performance measures

Performance measures have been successful in making the case for Medicaid and other health plans to adequately re-imburse for contraceptive care. They are also instrumental in monitoring the quality of programs and care, and incentivizing providers to better serve and inform consumers on where and how to get the care they need. They are also critical for setting policy agendas, program planning and implementation, program evaluations, and for research.

Challenges with performance measures that impact access to contraception

The development of measures to assess the provision of contraception to all people in need of contraceptive services and the client experience with contraceptive services is a major milestone in itself, however:

- There is no clear framework or vision for driving and implementing the work; and
- Current efforts to develop and test the measures, while critical steps forward, are often siloed and lack sustainable funding or infrastructure.

Solutions to expand contraceptive access through performance measures

When the right measures are in place to drive health care improvement, patient care and outcomes can and do improve. Supporting the continued development and testing of the contraceptive care performance measures, followed by integration into the reporting systems of federal programs, has the potential to greatly expand access to contraceptive care and keep contraceptive care current with new innovations in health care delivery.

We can achieve the successful and widespread application of stronger performance measures by:

