

Five Performance Measurement and Public Reporting Lessons for Stakeholders

All stakeholders—patients, doctors, hospitals, employers, health plans, and policy-makers—have a vested interest in making sure that performance measurement and public reporting about the quality of health care is done right. Getting it right includes using stakeholder consensus to select performance metrics, engaging physicians from the start, and making comparative information as easy for patients to understand as possible.

In order to help patients to make informed choices about their care, enable health care professionals to see where they can improve, and allow payers to see the value they are getting for their money, those developing reports should keep these tips in mind:

- 1 Consider what information can be realistically extracted from data sources.** Identify local data sources prior to selecting the specific performance measures to include when publicly reporting quality data. Narrowing the focus early to a select number of measures most relevant to the audience helps avoid unrealistic expectations of the data.
- 2 Physician support is key.** Sharing performance data among physicians often generates conversations about how to lift the quality of care, and leads them to identify ways to improve care. If physicians do not believe that the measurement process is sound or if they generally oppose it, they will be less likely to see the value of the data and less willing to share reports internally within their practice and externally with patients. Thus, it is important for physicians to be at the table from the outset when deciding what to measure and how to report it.
- 3 Understand when people are receptive to performance information.** Research has demonstrated key events that provide defined moments in time when people are most open to seeking out quality information. Those include: a change in health coverage; a change in location, either because of a move or physician relocation; a new diagnosis or other major shift in health status; a significant problem that arises with a provider; or an opportunity to provide information to others.
- 4 Present data in a clear, actionable way.** Designing consumer-friendly Web portals is challenging, but a few standards hold true. Use language that doesn't require a medical degree to interpret, with explanations that help people understand the meaning and importance of specific measures, and guidance on specific ways to use the information, especially to make decisions.
- 5 Organize reports to help users focus on their interests.** When faced with many data points, people will look for ways to limit how much information they have to take in. Some display strategies help users organize information in a way that highlights the topics of most interest, allowing them to focus on a partial set of topics or providers and shut out the rest.

