

FRIENDS OF NQF

June 9, 2017

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman, Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member, Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Neal
Ranking Member, Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hatch, Ranking Member Wyden, Chairman Brady, Ranking Member Neal, Chairman Walden, and Ranking Member Pallone:

The Friends of NQF is a coalition committed to the National Quality Forum (NQF) and its role to improve the nation's health. The NQF is integral to our national efforts to achieve a cost-efficient, high quality, value-based healthcare system that ensures the best care for Americans and use of the nation's healthcare dollars.

As you know, the NQF is a private, nonpartisan, independent organization that convenes physicians, hospitals, payers, consumers, and national experts in a multi-stakeholder, consensus-based process to endorse the best measurement tools for improving accountability and patient care. Each year, the NQF provides invaluable private sector input prior to the regulatory process to assist the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in selecting best quality and performance measures for use in public payment and reporting programs. Private sector payment programs also rely on the NQF's endorsed measures and guidance. Multi-stakeholder endorsement and adoption of high-impact measurement is key to driving better quality care and lower costs, while also decreasing the burden on physicians and other providers.

We, the Steering Committee of Friends of NQF, strongly urge you to continue Medicare funding for the NQF and its work to advance our national commitment to safer, more effective care.

The nation has made significant strides to improve healthcare quality and safety for Medicare beneficiaries and all Americans because of NQF's leadership. Today, federal improvement programs using quality measures endorsed by the NQF have reduced patient harm in hospitals by 21 percent, saving 125,000 lives and \$28 billion in costs. The 3.1 million fewer harms to patients achieved from 2010-2015 include a 91 percent decrease in central line infections and a 16 percent decrease in surgical site infections. Hospital readmission rates for Medicare patients have decreased by 8 percent since 2012. These are examples of how funding from the Medicare Trust Fund directly improves the health and well-being of the nation's 57 million Medicare beneficiaries while also lowering costs.

Without the NQF's efforts, it would be impossible to know whether new payment models are working as intended to secure better quality and more cost-effective care for patients and families.

The NQF is a key change agent, actively responding to healthcare stakeholder and policymaker calls for the next level of quality and performance measurement: more efficient, effective measures that will result in high-quality care at lower costs. Specifically, the NQF is:

- Setting measurement priorities to increase the focus on the health outcomes that are important to the nation;
- Streamlining the NQF's endorsement process to enable quicker review of measures;
- Collecting feedback from healthcare's frontline providers to understand better the impact of measurement, reduce the data collection burden on physicians and other providers, and ensure that measurement is producing valuable and actionable information; and
- Creating new pathways for measure developers and other stakeholders to access the NQF's expertise so that development of new measures is more informed, efficient, and effective.

For this important work to continue, and for the NQF to conduct the essential work of endorsing best-in-class measures and bringing diverse, multi-stakeholder, private sector input to federal programs, Congressionally authorized support for the NQF as a Medicare extender must continue. We hope you will support continuing the currently authorized \$30 million in annual Medicare funding for the NQF and quality and performance measurement.

As the leader in national efforts to identify the best measures of healthcare quality and improvement, the NQF moves the health system forward to reduce cost, save Medicare money, and advance the quality and safety of care that Medicare beneficiaries, and all Americans, receive.

We appreciate your consideration of this initial request and look forward to continued conversations with you about the importance of the NQF to the nation's health. Thank you for your ongoing leadership of and support for improving healthcare quality and the critical role the NQF plays to securing it for patients, families, health care providers, payers and the nation's taxpayers.

Sincerely,

Federation of American Hospitals
National Partnership for Women and Families
American Academy of Family Physicians
American College of Physicians
American College of Surgeons
America's Essential Hospitals
Blue Cross Blue Shield Association
Compassus
Healthcare Leadership Council
Kaiser Permanente
Memphis Business Group on Health
Pacific Business Group
Society of Thoracic Surgeons

PAGE 3

Cc:

The Honorable Patrick J. Toomey
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Pat Tiberi
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sander Levin
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Burgess
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gene Green
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515