

DEC 17 2010

NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM

December 14, 2010

Eliot L. Friedman, MD
President
Pennsylvania Society Oncology & Hematology
777 East Park Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8820

Dear Dr. Friedman,

Thank you for your letter of December 8th. I am pleased to hear about the work of the American Society of Clinical Oncology in developing the Quality Oncology Practice Initiative.

I want to take this opportunity to clarify the role of the National Quality Forum (NQF). Our multi-stakeholder organization is a private sector 501(c)(3) organization that performs work to identify and achieve consensus on health care quality standards through our consensus development process (CDP). Our process meets the requirements of the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act thus allowing those standards that are endorsed through our consensus development process to be adopted by the federal government. NQF endorsed standards are also adopted by private sector payers, insurance companies, health systems, state and local communities, etc. NQF does not have the authority to mandate utilization of particular measures by any entity. Rather, the meaningful use requirements were mandated under public law. Our role has been to provide input to the federal government on potentially available endorsed quality measures. However, selection of measures was the responsibility of HHS. We have also provided support to the federal government to assure that the quality measures selected by the government are converted to an electronic format that can be utilized by electronic health records.

The NQF measure endorsement process begins with a planned public call for measures in a particular condition specific or cross cutting area. Nominations are also publicly sought for participants on expert panels to evaluate the submitted measures and make recommendations for endorsement. Public comment is sought on the proposed committee slates and later on the slate of measures proposed for endorsement. Public comments are reviewed by the expert panel prior to the recommendations for endorsement that are ultimately approved by our Board of Directors. A more complete description of the consensus development process (CDP) and the criteria for evaluating measures is contained on our web site, www.qualityforum.org.

NQF anticipates proceeding with a cancer measure consensus development project in mid-2011. We hope that ASCO will consider the submission of measures developed in the QOPI to that project.

Thank you for your interest in advancing quality measurement in oncology care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet M. Corrigan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "C".

Janet M. Corrigan, PhD, MBA
President and CEO