

SETTING STANDARDS: NCQA EFFORTS TO INCREASE HEALTH CARE EQUITY



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NCQA: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

- Private, independent non-profit health care quality oversight organization founded in 1990
- Mission: To improve the quality of health care
- Committed to measurement, transparency and accountability
- Unites diverse groups around common goal: improving health care quality

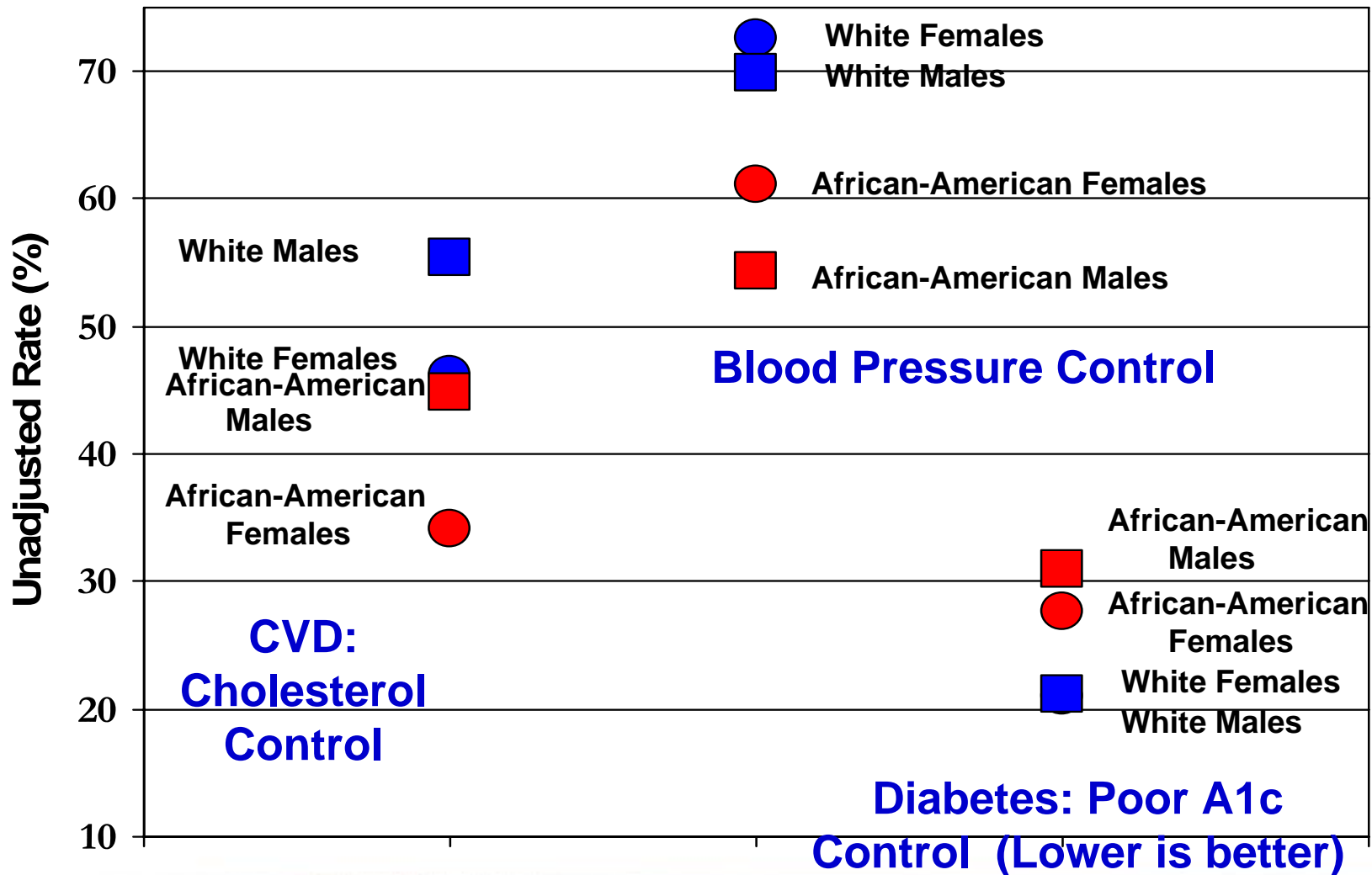
NCQA EFFORTS IN CULTURAL COMPETENCE/DISPARITIES

- Independent research on disparities among managed care enrollees
- *Innovation in Multicultural Health Care Awards* program
- Multicultural Health Care: A Quality Improvement Guide
- Technical Assistance Project for small practices serving diverse populations
- Multicultural Health Care Distinction Program
- Reevaluation of HEDIS Diversity of Membership Measures

KEY FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- 22% of PCPs account for 80% of visits by African-American Medicare beneficiaries
- Small physician practices face resource and technology challenges, and are highly vulnerable to externalities
- 41% of patients are at low end of activation scale; minorities even lower
- Evidence base for addressing disparities/CLAS is limited

Pattern of disparities differs by condition



HEDIS DIVERSITY OF MEMBERSHIP MEASURES

- Health plans report on distribution of race/ethnicity and language needs for membership
- Added to HEDIS in 2003 for Medicare and Medicaid but not publicly reported because of low participation, concerns about categories
- 2010 revisions proposed to align reporting with IOM recommendations on race/ethnicity and language categories and to extend reporting to commercial plans
- Public comment period just ended

STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- Research content, market interest
 - Key Sources: Office of Civil Rights Title VI; OMH National CLAS Standards; NQF Preferred Practices; State laws; NCQA Multicultural Health Care Awards program; scientific literature; interviews with stakeholders
- Multiple stakeholder input
- Public comment
- Pilot test

MULTICULTURAL HEALTH CARE STANDARDS

- **Race/Ethnicity and Language Data**
 - Collect and protect race/ethnicity and language data
- **Language Services**
 - Provide translation, interpretation, and support for practitioner language services
- **Practitioner Network Cultural Responsiveness**
 - Collect and report on practitioner race/ethnicity and language
 - Analyze and improve CLAS in network
- **Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services Program**
 - Formal program, annually evaluated
- **Reducing Health Care Disparities**
 - Use data to assess disparities and monitor language services
 - Conduct interventions to reduce disparities and improve CLAS

CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING STANDARDS & MEASURES

- **Challenges**
 - Variability in purchaser concern
 - Economic environment
 - Lack of standardization
- **Response**
 - Voluntary program for organizations in diverse markets
 - Standards introduced with the goal of becoming more rigorous over time
- **Balance between ideal and feasible**

PROGRESS IN GOVERNMENT ROLE

- **Recent legislation and pending health reform bills include key provisions to reduce disparities**
 - Expanded coverage for uninsured
 - Enhanced collection of race/ethnicity data
 - Performance measures in Medicaid/CHIP
 - Analysis of data to monitor trends
 - Establishment of National Prevention, Health Promotion and Public Health Council
 - Establish a grant program to support evidence-based and community-based prevention and wellness efforts and address disparities
 - Incentives for adoption and meaningful use of EHR

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT

- Direct all areas of government programs to adopt single standard for collecting race/ethnicity and language data
- Encourage health plans, providers and other organizations to build consideration of racial, ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic differences into quality improvement interventions

RESOURCES

- NCQA reports on Multicultural Health Care Award winners
www.ncqa.org/clas.aspx
- Policy brief – *Supporting small Practices: Lessons for Health Reform*
www.ncqa.org/smallpractices
- *Multicultural Health Care: A Quality Improvement Guide* www.clashealth.org

NCQA: Committed to measurement, transparency, accountability

Quality measurement means:

- Use of objective measures based on evidence
- Results that are comparable across organizations
- Impartial third-party evaluation and audit
- Public Reporting

NCQA's quality programs include:

- Accreditation of health plans using performance data
- HEDIS clinical measures
- CAHPS consumer survey
- Measurement of quality in provider groups
- Physician Recognition



NCQA Home About NCQA About Accreditation

Plan Performance ★★★★ best ★★★ very good ★★ good ★ fair ○ poor

Here are the results of your search:

| Plan | Product Line/ Provider | Access to Services | Qualified Providers | Staying Healthy | Getting Better | Living with Illness | Overall Accreditation |
|------------|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Blue Alpha | Commercial/HMO | ★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★★★ | EXCELLENT |
| Blue Beta | Commercial/POS | ★★ | ★ | ★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★ | ACCREDITED |
| Blue Gamma | Commercial/POS | ★★ | ○ | ★★ | ★ | ★ | PROVISIONAL |
| Blue Sigma | Commercial/HMO | ★★★ | ★★ | ★★★★ | ★★ | ★★★★ | COMMENDABLE |

