

National Quality Forum Metrics for Thoracic Surgery



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KEYWORDS

• National Quality Forum • Lung cancer • Esophageal cancer • Endorsed measures

KEY POINTS

- The NQF is a multistakeholder, nonprofit, membership-based organization that tries to improve health care through the preferential use of valid performance measures.
- The NQF uses a multistep, formal, consensus development process to evaluate and endorse potential measures that are created by either public or private groups.
- The Society of Thoracic Surgeons has the most endorsed measures, 34, of any specialty medical society. These include six endorsed general thoracic surgery measures, four pediatric cardiac surgery measures, and 24 adult cardiac surgery measures.
- The endorsed general thoracic surgery measures include one structure measure, two process measures, and three risk-adjusted models of morbidity and mortality after lung and esophageal resection. They represent the only NQF-endorsed measures for general thoracic surgery.

INTRODUCTION

Measuring surgeon performance has become an essential professional responsibility for surgeons.¹ Professional societies have incorporated performance measurement and quality improvement into their maintenance of certification.^{2,3} Not only does performance improvement help define quality but it is increasingly linked directly to payment through value-based purchasing and accountable care arrangements.⁴ It is likely that most surgeons reading this article have some of their salary directly tied to quality-based incentive compensation plans. The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) has been at the leading edge of surgeon performance measurement, analysis, and patient safety through the three national databases: (1) Adult Cardiac Surgery Database, (2) General Thoracic Surgery Database, and (3) Congenital Heart Surgery Database.⁵ The STS commitment to

performance improvement is also evidenced by the fact that they have developed 34 quality measures that have been endorsed by the National Quality Forum (NQF) (**Table 1**). The NQF is the federally designated organization responsible for recommending measures for use in payment and public reporting programs.⁶

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM?

NQF is a private, nonprofit, membership-based organization that promotes the continual improvement of national health care quality by means of using reliable quality measures and public reporting. It is the only consensus-based health care organization in the nation, as defined by the Office of Management and Budget, and as such, the federal government relies on the consensus-standards endorsed by the NQF to measure and publically report on performance in the health care setting.⁶

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Table 1
NQF endorsed measures sponsored by the STS

NQF No.	General Thoracic Surgery Measures
Cip0455	Recording of clinical stage before surgery for lung or esophageal cancer resection
0456	Participation in a systematic national database for general thoracic surgery
0457	Recording of performance status before lung or esophageal cancer resection
0459	Risk-adjusted morbidity: length of stay >14 days after elective lobectomy for lung cancer
0460	Risk-adjusted morbidity and mortality for esophagectomy for cancer
1790	Risk-adjusted morbidity and mortality for lung resection for lung cancer
NQF No.	Adult Cardiac Surgery Measures
0113	Participation in a systematic database for cardiac surgery
0114	Risk-adjusted postoperative renal failure
0115	Risk-adjusted surgical re-exploration
0116	Antiplatelet medication on discharge
0117	β -Blockade on discharge
0118	Antilipid treatment on discharge
0119	Risk-adjusted operative mortality for CABG
0120	Risk-adjusted operative mortality for aortic valve replacement
0121	Risk-adjusted operative mortality for mitral valve replacement
0122	Risk-adjusted operative mortality for mitral valve replacement + CABG
0123	Risk-adjusted operative mortality for aortic valve replacement + CABG
0126	Selection of antibiotic prophylaxis for cardiac surgery patients
0127	Preoperative β -blockade
0128	Duration of antibiotic prophylaxis in cardiac surgery patients
0129	Risk-adjusted postoperative prolonged intubation (ventilation)
0130	Risk-adjusted deep sternal wound infection
0131	Risk-adjusted stroke/cerebrovascular accident
0134	Use of internal mammary artery in CABG
0696	STS CABG composite score
1501	Risk-adjusted operative mortality for mitral valve repair
1502	Risk-adjusted operative mortality for mitral valve repair + CABG
2514	Risk-adjusted CABG readmission rate
2561	STS aortic valve replacement composite score
2563	STS aortic valve replacement + CABG composite score
NQF No.	Pediatric Cardiac Surgery Measures
0732	Surgical volume for pediatric and congenital heart surgery: total programmatic volume and programmatic volume stratified by the five STS-EACTS mortality categories
0733	Operative mortality stratified by the five STAT mortality categories
0734	Participation in a national database for pediatric and congenital heart surgery
2683	Risk-adjusted operative mortality for pediatric and congenital heart surgery

Abbreviations: CABG, coronary artery bypass graft; STAT, Society of Thoracic Surgeons - European Association of Thoracic Surgery.

Data from <https://www.qualityforum.org/>. Accessed October 1, 2016.

As of 2016, the NQF recognizes more than 400 members including public and private health agencies, health care provider organizations, consumer groups, health care purchasers, and research and quality improvement organizations.⁷

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM

Demands for greater health care accountability culminated in the release of three independently

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