In a worthwhile attempt to align Core Measures reporting with eCQM reporting, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and The Joint Commission (TJC) have outlined alternative, electronic voluntary submission options (eCQM submissions). These options are for a limited number of measures needed to meet a subset of the Inpatient Prospective Payment Systems (IPPS) and Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Program reporting requirements — as well as to meet the ORYX® performance measurement requirements.

The eCQM submissions must use clinical data from an Office of the National Coordinator (ONC)-certified EHR system. The end goal is to reduce the burden and manual effort of quality measures reporting over time. Hospitals can now choose, if they wish, to use eCQM submissions-only for a limited set of measures, without continuing the conventional Core Measures abstraction and reporting. But while the voluntary eCQM submissions-only option may seem like a viable strategy, it doesn’t have a monopoly on getting it right.

HOSPITAL PLAYER 1

Chooses to continue manual abstraction and submission of Core Measures (for CMS and TJC), as well as manual attestation for Meaningful Use (MU) CQMs — while also using the new voluntary eCQM submission options.

SMART START

Reporting using two separate formats (abstraction and eCQM) takes time. Both a familiar abstraction and a new, unfamiliar eCQM submission method may need to be mastered.

CAUTION: LONG ROAD AHEAD, ADVANCE STEADILY

Hospitals will need to review all reports and reconcile data elements for CMS and TJC, as well as requirements for other entities that may not accept eCQMs.

SURPASS COMPETITION

Ongoing improvement in CMS and TJC metrics ensures the player is not left behind. eCQMs have been validated over the years, but eCQMs have not. The data crunch will ensure that the player is ahead of the competitors.

COLLECT AND WIN

All requirements are met, reimbursements are received, and requirements for other programs not yet accepting eCQMs continue to be met. Plus, the player has time in 2015 to prepare for eCQM submissions in a subsequent year — when the submission processes are more mature and validated.

HOSPITAL PLAYER 2

Chooses to use the voluntary eCQM submission options for meeting a subset of the CMS (Core Measures and MU reporting) and TJC ORYX reporting requirements.

FAST START

Simplifies the reporting process, making it more efficient. Reporting is moving quickly.

STOPPED BY CHANCE

Measure results may be inaccurate since eCQMs have not had industry-wide validation. Learning curve in the eCQM submission process may mean delays in the first year and may include data issues.

RECALCULATING

Even if eCQM submission is successful and the hospital meets CMS and TJC requirements, player may still need to abstract measures not currently included in the eCQM option to meet requirements for other stakeholders. For instance, a Primary or Comprehensive Stroke Center would still need to report abstracted measures to TJC in 2015, as well as abstract outpatient measures and psychiatric measures for CMS.

LOSE A TURN

CMS (Core Measures and MU) and TJC quality requirements are not met because data submitted was not accepted, had errors, or was too late. Hospital loses Annual Payment Update (APU) and MU payments, and does not meet the TJC accreditation requirements.

COLLECT AND WIN

All requirements are met, reimbursements are received, and requirements for other programs not yet accepting eCQMs continue to be met. Plus, player has time in 2015 to prepare for eCQM submissions in a subsequent year when the submission processes are more mature and validated.

Game Recap

Don’t Leave Quality Reporting to a Roll of the Dice

The movement toward accurate, complete, and aligned quality reporting will likely be a slow process, taking several years. In the meantime, hospitals will benefit from continued use of manually abstracted Core Measures, even if they participate in the new voluntary eCQM submission options.

A Trusted Partner Can Help You Make the Right Move

Truven Health Analytics™ can help your organization navigate the changing reporting rules with strategy comparisons, expert advice, eCQM submissions, and even a new analytic dashboard that combines, compares, and analyzes Core Measures and MU eCQMs results in one location.

Get Connected

Send us an email at info@truvenhealth.com or visit truvenhealth.com