

Advertising and Marketing Guidelines

Accountable Care Organizations



Introduction

Congratulations on earning NCQA Accreditation. We encourage you to publicize your achievement. The guidelines include how to market your achievement, appropriate language to incorporate into your marketing and advertising materials and helpful ideas to get you started.

The guidelines are designed to help NCQA customers to create advertising and marketing materials that reference NCQA status in a clear, factual and accurate manner. They are also designed to protect the integrity of NCQA's programs and allow all participants to benefit from their achievement in a fair and accurate manner.

The guidelines below are to be used in conjunction with NCQA's Guidelines for Advertising and Marketing (www.ncqa.org/NCQAGuidelines).

Descriptions of NCQA Accountable Care Organization Accreditation Process

The following statements may be used in your marketing and advertising material:

- NCQA Accountable Care Organization Accreditation evaluates organizations' abilities to deliver coordinated, patient centered care and be accountable for improving clinical quality, enhancing patient experience and reducing cost.
- NCQA Accountable Care Organization Accreditation is a voluntary review process.
- NCQA Accountable Care Organization Accreditation surveys include a rigorous evaluation of 14 standards and 65 elements. Based on review of the survey, NCQA assigns a status to the organization.

Descriptions of NCQA Accountable Care Organization Accreditation Standards

The following statements may be used in your marketing and advertising material:

- The standards are set high to encourage ACOs to continuously enhance their quality.
- The standards are intended to help organizations achieve the goal of simultaneously improving health and patient experience and reducing per capita costs and create an environment of continuous improvement.
- The NCQA Accountable Care Organization Accreditation not only involves a rigorous review of an organization's structure and processes, but also requires organizations to collect data on key clinical and service measures (e.g., mammography screening rates, comprehensive diabetes care; consumer satisfaction).
- NCQA Accountable Care Organization Accreditation provides purchasers and consumers with an unprecedented ability to evaluate the quality of different ACOs along a variety of important dimensions, and to make decisions based on demonstrated value rather than simply on cost.

Descriptions of NCQA Accountable Care Organization Accreditation Levels

Organizations must indicate their accreditation levels when describing their accreditation statuses. The following statements may be used in your marketing and advertising material:

Level 3

The National Committee for Quality Assurance has awarded its highest accreditation status for demonstrating strong performance or significant improvement in performance measures across the triple aim of better experience, better health and lower cost.

Level 2

The National Committee for Quality Assurance has awarded an accreditation status of level 2 for demonstrating a broad range of capabilities of an Accountable Care Organization.

Level 1

The National Committee for Quality Assurance has awarded an accreditation status of level 1 for possessing some, but not all, of the capabilities of an Accountable Care Organization.

NCQA Accountable Care Organization Accreditation: Educational Assessment Option (Not available for organizations that undergo accreditation)

NCQA offers organizations an Educational Assessment which provides the opportunity to obtain feedback from trained NCQA experts on the NCQA ACO requirements tailored to the needs of the organization. The Educational Assessment will provide vital feedback to an organization on their path to becoming an ACO.

The Educational Assessment will not render a status decision for the organization and the organization cannot present an Educational Assessment as an Accreditation Survey or claim they achieved a certain level. The organization also cannot present their performance under any specific standards, elements, factors and NCQA reporting categories. Please refer to the Policies and Procedures in the 2012 Accountable Care Organization Standards and Guidelines publication for further information. The following statements may be used in your marketing and advertising material:

- Undergoing the NCQA Accountable Care Organization Educational Assessment is a voluntary process.
- A NCQA ACO Educational Assessment serves as a roadmap for organizations to receive vital feedback on their Accountable Care Organization Accreditation performance.
- NCQA ACO Educational Assessments use the same 14 standards and 65 elements as the 2012 Accountable Care Organization Accreditation program.

Use of Accountable Care Organization Accreditation Seal

NCQA encourages organizations that have received Accountable Care Organization Accreditation to display their seals in marketing and advertising materials.

- There are three Accountable Care Organization Accreditation seals. Organizations must use the seals with the correct level.
 - Level 3
 - Level 2
 - Level 1

You may access the seals at www.ncqa.org/seals

- The seal is provided in EPS and JPG formats.
- Organizations should be aware that Accreditation statuses can change which may affect the statement on durable goods (e.g.: a billboard that is no longer accurate will have to be corrected). It is the organization's responsibility to maintain and update accurate marketing materials. Should your status change, you are responsible for updating all promotional items, and must cease distribution of all materials with incorrect status information. Updating of website and other distributed materials should take place within 30 days of the status change.

Participating Providers and Other Entities of an Accredited Accountable Care Organization

NCQA offers organizations an Educational Assessment which provides the opportunity to obtain feedback from trained NCQA experts on the NCQA ACO requirements tailored to the needs of the organization. The Educational Assessment will provide vital feedback to an organization on their path to becoming an ACO.

Approved Quotes

Organizations earning Excellent or Commendable Accreditation can include one of the following quotes from Margaret E. O'Kane, President in their marketing material.

"By earning NCQA ACO Accreditation, [Name] has demonstrated to payers and other purchasers that it has met challenging requirements designed to show the efficiency, integration and high quality expected of an Accountable Care Organization. NCQA ACO Accreditation also shows patients and providers that [Name] is prepared to deliver on the promise of better care on all these dimensions."

How to Describe Your NCQA Status in a Press Release

All of the preceding rules apply to press releases. Organizations are welcome to create their own press releases mentioning their NCQA Accountable Care Organization Accreditation status. The press release must include a description of Accountable Care Organization Accreditation and the NCQA boiler plate:

NCQA is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving health care quality. NCQA accredits and certifies a wide range of health care organizations. It also recognizes clinicians and practices in key areas of performance. NCQA's Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) is the most widely used performance measurement tool in health care. NCQA's website (ncqa.org) contains information to help consumers, employers and others make more-informed health care choices. NCQA can be found online at ncqa.org, on Twitter [@ncqa](https://twitter.com/ncqa), on Facebook at facebook.com/NCQA.org/ and on LinkedIn at linkedin.com/company/ncqa.

Submit questions related to press releases through [My NCQA](#).

Compliance

It is the responsibility of the organization to follow and conform to all applicable NCQA Marketing and Advertising Guidelines. The information referencing your NCQA status or product must be accurate and not misleading. Only the organization that obtained the NCQA status can advertise such status and use the corresponding seal. The organizations' affiliates, including delegated entities, contractors and partners, are not allowed to use the NCQA status and seal. Failure to comply with these guidelines may jeopardize the organization's NCQA status.

In addition, NCQA will conduct periodic audits of customers' marketing and advertising materials at any time to ensure that marketing materials are true, not misleading, and that the organization's NCQA status is represented correctly. Failure to participate in the NCQA audit or refuse to comply with NCQA's request to address inaccuracies in information related to NCQA, NCQA status and/or product in your marketing and/or advertising materials constitutes a violation of NCQA's advertising guidelines and may result in, at NCQA's discretion, a revocation of an organization's NCQA status(es).

Accredited organizations must maintain all copies of their marketing and advertising materials referencing NCQA status(es) and/or product(s) released or used in the past six months.

NCQA reserves the right to require an organization to withdraw their advertising materials from distribution immediately or to publish, at the organization's cost, a retraction and/or clarification in connection with any false or misleading statements or any violation of all applicable NCQA Marketing and Advertising Guidelines. Each organization agrees in advance to remedy such violation with the action deemed appropriate by NCQA.

Special Situations

NCQA realizes that these guidelines may not address all potential marketing and advertising materials. In such instances, organizations should contact the NCQA Marketing department through [My NCQA](#) to discuss the proposed marketing/advertising activity and associated marketing and/or advertising materials to achieve outcomes consistent with the spirit of these guidelines.

NCQA will respond to complaints regarding inaccurate and/or misleading advertising materials by our customers and their affiliates. Such complaints could initiate an audit of an organization's materials outside of the regular audit process.