

Advertising and Marketing Guidelines Health Information Products Certification



Introduction

Congratulations on earning NCQA Accreditation, Certification, Recognition, Distinction or other NCQA status! We encourage you to publicize your achievement and have developed the following Marketing and Advertising Guidelines to help you get the most out of your NCQA status. 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).

Health Information Products (HIP) Certification Guidelines

HIPs Certified for 7 out of 7 Certification Options

- Organizations should use the following language to describe their certification status:
 - HIP A received NCQA Certification for 7 out of 7 certification options.
 - HIP A is NCQA Certified for 7 out of 7 certification options.
 - HIP A is fully Certified by NCQA for 7 out of 7 certification options. (Organizations should not use the term "Full Certification.")
 - HIP A is NCQA Certified for the following certification options...
- Organizations that have been certified for all 7 certification options are not required to individually list all of the 7 services for which they have received certification.
- HIP organizations that have been certified for 7 certification options may also say that they "comply" or "meet" applicable NCQA standards. The applicable standards include, member connections (Health Risk Appraisals – MEM 1, Consumer Health Tools – MEM 2 and Pharmacy Benefits – MEM 4), care management, and health improvement standards addressing wellness (Health Information Line - MEM 7 and Encouraging Wellness and Prevention -MEM 8), Physician and Hospital Directories (RR 5) and Physician and Hospital Quality (Hospital Performance - PHQ 2).
- **Example of correct language:**
 - HIP A meets the applicable NCQA standards for health plans.
 - HIP A is compliant with the applicable NCQA Standards specifically within the health plan standards and guidelines.

HIPs Certified for 6 or Fewer Certification Options

- A HIP must state its certification status relative to individual certification options for which it has been certified in any advertising or marketing material. These definitions must be clearly defined.:
- **Example of correct language:**
 - HIP A has received certification from the National Committee for Quality Assurance for the following certification options...
 - HIP A was certified by NCQA for 6 out of 7 certification options. (This should be followed later in the text with an actual listing of those six services.)
- HIPs that have been certified for fewer than 7 certification options may say that their certification options are “designed to comply with NCQA health information standards for applicable standards for health plans” or are “structured to be consistent with NCQA health information standards.”

Descriptions of Health Information Products Certification Process

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

- Is a quality assessment program that health plans can use to assess organizations that develop and provide content, tools and services addressed in one or more of the certification options.
- Evaluates a HIP organization’s management of various aspects of its data collection and systems operation, and the process it uses to continuously improve the services it provides.
- Is a voluntary review process.
- Reduces duplicative oversight and inefficient gathering of information by health plans.
- Includes rigorous evaluations conducted by a team of health care professionals. A national oversight committee of physicians analyzes the team’s finding and determines certification based on the HIP organization’s compliance with NCQA standards.
- Is governed by NCQA’s rigorous Standards for Certification, developed with the assistance of representatives from the industry, as well as input from health plans.

Descriptions of Health Information Products Certification Process

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

- Health Information Products Certification is awarded to participating organizations on the basis of individual options. Organizations may be certified for all, some, or none of the 7 HIP options addressed in the NCQA Standards. These options are:
 - Health Appraisals
 - Self Management Tools
 - Pharmacy Benefits
 - Health Information Line
 - Encouraging Wellness and Prevention
 - Hospital Performance
 - Physician and Hospital Directories
- Health Information Products Certification is not considered all-inclusive, and pertains only to those options reviewed as part of the NCQA HIP certification process.

Use of Health Information Products Certification Seals

NCQA encourages organizations that have received Health Information Products Certification to display their seals in marketing and advertising materials.

- There are 8 seals for Health Information Products Certification.
- Plans with more than one HIP Certification may use one seal or multiple seals on materials. Please note that if you use one seal, you are required to specify the elements in which you have been certified (listed underneath the seal or footnoted below the seal).
- Organizations must use the seal they have received certification in (if you choose to use the seal).
- You may access the seals at www.ncqa.org/seals.
- Seals are provided in EPS and JPEG formats.
- Organizations should be aware that Certification 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.

Approved Quotes

Organizations earning HIP "Certification" can use the following quote from Lisa Slattery, Vice President, Accreditation and Recognition Operations, NCQA, in their marketing material.

"Earning NCQA's HIP Certification demonstrates that an organization has expertise in gathering and disseminating health care information for health plan members," said Lisa Slattery, Vice President, Accreditation and Recognition Operations."

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 Health Information Products Certification status. The press release must include a description of the Health Information Products Certification 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).

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.