

Advertising and Marketing Guidelines

Physician and Hospital Quality Certification



Introduction

Congratulations on earning NCQA Accreditation, Certification, Recognition, Distinction or other NCQA status! We encourage you to publicize your achievement. The following Marketing and Advertising Guidelines will assist you in getting 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).

Description of Physician and Hospital Quality Certification

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

- NCQA's Physician and Hospital Quality (PHQ) Certification program evaluates how well health plans measure and report the quality and cost of physicians and hospitals.
- Physician and Hospital Quality Certification is the first program to independently assess provider measurement programs.
- Physician and Hospital Quality Certification is based on four key principles:
 - **Standardization and sound methodology**, allowing results to be compared across organizations.
 - **Transparency**. Organizations should offer physicians the opportunity to provide input on measurement programs. Organizations should also provide clear, understandable information about how the results will be used.
 - **Collaboration**. Where possible, organizations should pool their data on standardized measures to produce results with greater statistical reliability.
 - **Action on quality and cost**. Organizations should not sacrifice quality for cost reduction. Organizations must not use results of cost measurement alone.
- Physician and Hospital Quality Certification is a voluntary program and is open to any organization conducting functions evaluated by the standards, whether a health plan, a measurement collaborative, a provider network or an information provider such as a website.

General Guidelines for Advertising and Marketing Physician and Hospital Quality Certification

- Organizations must always advertise their most current Physician and Hospital Quality Certification status.
- Organizations that reference their Certification status should always capitalize the “P” and “H” and “Q” in Physician Quality, Hospital Quality or Physician Hospital Quality and the “C” in “Certification” that follows.
- The organization may not use, disclose, represent or otherwise communicate reports or numeric results from the readiness evaluation to any third party for any purpose.
- The organization may not represent that it has achieved Physician and Hospital Quality Certification based on reports or numeric results without a final NCQA decision. In addition, the organization may not release supplemental worksheets.
- Organizations may advertise that they are either awaiting the results of a Certification survey or are scheduled for a survey.
- Organizations with one designated Physician and Hospital Quality Certification status may use pre-approved quotations provided within this document.
- Organizations are not required to advertise their Physician and Hospital Quality Certification effective or expiration dates.
- Certification is effective for two years with the exception of Interim and Provisional Certification for Physician Quality.
- Organizations may advertise their Interim or Provisional Certification status but NCQA does not issue seals for either status.

Use of Physician and Hospital Quality Seals

NCQA encourages organizations that have received Physician and Hospital Quality Certifications to display their seals in marketing and advertising materials.

- There are three (3) distinct seals associated with Physician and Hospital Quality Certification:
 - Physician Quality Certification and Hospital Quality Certification.
 - Physician Quality Certification only.
 - Hospital Quality Certification only.
- Organizations may attach the Physician and Hospital Quality seal to their letterhead, emails and business cards.
- Organizations may use the seal that corresponds with the program for which they are certified. For example, organizations that have received Physician Quality Certification or Hospital Quality Certification can only use the individual status seal. If the organization has come through the Certification separately for Physician Quality Certification and Hospital Quality Certification, the organization may not use the PHQ seal; they must use the two separate seals.

- You may access the seals at www.ncqa.org/seals.
- Seals are provided in EPS and JPG 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 Physician and Hospital Quality Certification status change, you are responsible for updating all promotional items, and must cease distribution of all materials with incorrect status information.

Approved Quote

Organizations earning Physician and Hospital Quality Certification can use the following quote from Margaret E. O'Kane, President, in their marketing material.

"By earning PHQ Certification, [org name] has shown its commitment to quality includes transparent, rigorous review of the physicians and hospitals with whom it works," said Margaret E. O'Kane, NCQA President. "That measurement, transparency and collaboration between organizations are cornerstones of better care."

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 Physician and Hospital Quality Certification status. The press release must include a description of the Physician and Hospital Quality 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.