

# National Quality Strategy: Using Levers to Achieve Improved Health and Health Care

## About the National Quality Strategy

The National Quality Strategy is the first-ever national effort backed by legislation to align public- and private-sector stakeholders to achieve better health and health care for all Americans. The Strategy serves as a guiding force in the multitude of quality improvement efforts across the Nation, fostering alignment across national, Federal, State, and private-sector stakeholders to improve health and health care quality for all Americans.

## Using Levers to Align to the National Quality Strategy

Stakeholders can align to the National Quality Strategy by adopting one or more of the three aims and/or six priorities. Stakeholders can now align to the Strategy in a new way, using one or more of the nine “levers” described below. Each lever represents a core business function, resource, and/or action that stakeholders can use to align to the Strategy. In many cases, stakeholders may already be using these levers but haven’t connected these activities to National Quality Strategy alignment.

## National Quality Strategy Alignment

Each lever description below includes one example for adoption, but every lever can be applied to a variety of organizations in a number of settings.



Payment



Public Reporting



Learning and  
Technical Assistance



Certification,  
Accreditation,  
and Regulation



Consumer  
Incentives and  
Benefit Designs



Measurement  
and Feedback



Health  
Information  
Technology



Workforce  
Development



Innovation and  
Diffusion



National Quality Strategy Levers			
Lever	Icon	Definition	Example
Payment		Reward and incentivize providers to deliver high-quality, patient-centered care.	Join a regional coalition of purchasers that are pursuing value-based purchasing.
Public Reporting		Compare treatment results, costs, and patient experience for consumers.	A regional collaborative may ask member hospitals and medical practices to align public reports to the National Quality Strategy aims or priorities.
Learning and Technical Assistance		Foster learning environments that offer training, resources, tools, and guidance to help organizations achieve quality improvement goals.	A Quality Improvement Organization may disseminate evidence-based best practices in quality improvement with physicians, hospitals, nursing homes, and home health agencies.
Certification, Accreditation, and Regulation		Adopt or adhere to approaches to meet safety and quality standards.	The National Quality Strategy aims and priorities may be incorporated into continuing education requirements or certification maintenance.
Consumer Incentives and Benefit Designs		Help consumers adopt healthy behaviors and make informed decisions.	Employers may implement workforce wellness programs that promote prevention and provide incentives for employees to improve their health.
Measurement and Feedback		Provide performance feedback to plans and providers to improve care.	A long-term care provider may implement a strategy that includes the use of Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement data to populate measurement dashboards for purposes of identifying and addressing areas requiring quality improvement.
Health Information Technology		Improve communication, transparency, and efficiency for better coordinated health and health care.	A hospital or medical practice may adopt an electronic health record system to improve communication and care coordination.
Workforce Development		Investing in people to prepare the next generation of health care professionals and support lifelong learning for providers.	A medical leadership institution may incorporate quality improvement principles in their training.
Innovation and Diffusion		Foster innovation in health care quality improvement, and facilitate rapid adoption within and across organizations and communities.	Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation tests various payment and service delivery models and shares successful models across the Nation.

## What You Can Do

Learn more by visiting [www.ahrq.gov/workingforquality](http://www.ahrq.gov/workingforquality), and tell us about your efforts by submitting comments to [NQStrategy@ahrq.hhs.gov](mailto:NQStrategy@ahrq.hhs.gov).