Overview

• About NCQA
• Health Plan Accreditation standards on network adequacy
• Narrow networks and new 2015 requirements on transparency and monitoring
• Key lessons and concepts for future accreditation standards
About NCQA

Private, independent non-profit health care quality oversight organization founded in 1990

Our Mission
- To improve the quality of health care

Our Method
- Measurement
  We can’t improve what we don’t measure
- Transparency
  We show how we measure so measurement will be accepted
- Accountability
  Once we measure, we can expect and track progress
**Health Plan Accreditation**

**Structure & Process**
- Quality improvement
- Utilization management
- Credentialing
- Members’ rights & responsibilities
- Member connections

50% of Score

**HEDIS**
Clinical Performance Measures

**CAHPS 5.0H**
Patient Experience

50% of Score

Performance-Based Accreditation
Health Plan Network Adequacy Standards

• Availability of Practitioners:
  - Assesses cultural, ethnic and linguist needs of members, adjusts network if necessary
  - Sets standards on number and geographic distribution of PCPs, high-volume specialists and behavioral health providers
  - Assesses performance at least annually

• Accessibility of Services:
  - Sets standards for access to routine appointments, urgent care, after-hours care & members services
  - Behavioral health access standards: 6 hours for emergent care, urgent care within 48 hours, routine office visit with 10 days
  - Assesses performance at least annually
Network Adequacy Standards (Continued…)

• Continuity of care:
  - Works to improve coordination of care for members
  - Notifies members of a termination of a practitioner at least 30 days prior and helps them select a new practitioner
  - Allows members under active treatment or in 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} trimester of pregnancy to continue care for 90 days or through the post-partum period, respectively

• Complaints and Appeals:
  - Track and analyze complaints and appeals related to access (e.g., requests for out of network coverage)

• Consumer Survey (CAHPS):
  - Plans required to collect and report standardized data on consumer experience
  - CAHPS survey includes questions on access: How often did you get appointments/care as soon as you thought you needed?
Narrow Networks: Pro & Con

Some narrow network plans are among top performers

But...

Could harm access & quality if networks are not structured to ensure & improve both
New 2015 Standards for Marketplace Plans

- Transparency of network design:
  - Make available criteria used to pick in network hospitals and practitioners
  - Must be included in provider directory and written in consumer-friendly language

- Member experience monitoring
  - Analyzes complaints and appeals, requests for out of network services
  - Identifies and acts on opportunities to improve
Engaging the delivery system is critical for solving network adequacy problems

- Plan-provider communication to improve accuracy of provider directories
- Short and long-term workforce strategies to address provider shortages, especially in mental health
- Care delivery transformation to promote new models of care that enhance access (NCQA tackling this through ACO, PCMH and PCMH neighbor programs)

Future also involves getting more real-time information from consumers

- CAHPS a start, but annual reporting cycle and sample issues may limit usefulness as regulatory tool
- Designing secret shopper methodology under research project
- Exploring pulse surveys, other innovative approaches
Early Considerations for HPA 2016

- Build on existing standards, expand some 2015 requirements to other product lines
- Provide members with information about wait time for appointments and where to seek help if they cannot get an appointment
- Adopt standardized format for reporting number of denied/approved requests for out of network service
- Clearly describe pharmacy coverage in marketing materials, identify if drugs for common or chronic conditions are not available in lowest-cost tier
Questions?

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