



American College of Nurse-Midwives Comments on National Quality Forum
Perinatal and Reproductive Healthcare: Endorsement Maintenance 2011 Report

The U.S. ranks far behind other developed countries in perinatal health outcomes. NQF-endorsed perinatal measures are powerful mechanisms to improve maternal and newborn quality and safety. Unfortunately, the use of these measures is reportedly low.

ACNM urges NQF and other stakeholders to recommend certain measures for mandatory reporting, including rates of elective and cesarean delivery and exclusive breastfeeding upon discharge.

NQF-endorsed perinatal measures should be applied to individual clinicians/clinician groups and health plans as well as to institutions to increase transparency and informed consumer choice, and drive improvement.

The Committee recommends greater use of birth certificate data. Often, however, the attending practitioner is incorrectly noted on birth certificates. This problem must be addressed if we expand use of this data source.

Optimal perinatal outcomes are best achieved by maternity systems that are transparent, patient- and family-centered, and that support normal, physiologic processes while minimizing interventions. This high-value approach to care improves safety and increases quality. We urge future measure development to focus on promoting spontaneous vaginal birth and access to vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC); and breastfeeding education, early breastfeeding initiation, immediate skin-to-skin contact, and exclusive breastfeeding stratified by maternal intent.

In the face of looming maternity care workforce shortages, we urge NQF to take a leadership role in promoting measures that foster the care practices, systems, settings, and workforce that support optimal outcomes.

We thank the NQF for its ongoing efforts to improve care for women and newborns.