



## **GUIDELINES FOR MARKETING AND ADVERTISING NEW HEALTH PLAN ACCREDITATION**

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## 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 General Marketing Guidelines. Organizations that receive New Health Plan Accreditation are required to follow NCQA's General Guidelines for review and approval of all marketing and advertising materials.**

## NEW HEALTH PLAN ACCREDITATION (NHP) GUIDELINES

The following statement **must** appear in the text of every piece of advertising or marketing material which references a new health plan's accreditation status. This statement **must** appear in the *main text*, and not as a footnote:

**"NCQA's New Health Plan Accreditation Program applies to health plans that are less than 36 months old. The program is distinct from NCQA's Health Plan Accreditation Program"**

- NHPs may not make competitive comparisons about their Accreditation.
- NHPs may advertise or market their Accreditation status during its effective and expiration dates (a three-year period). Once a New Health Plan's accreditation status expires, it should no longer be communicating this status. *The one exception to this policy is the following: If a new health plan is awaiting a new accreditation decision from a subsequent survey under the Accreditation of Health Plans and its current status--New Health Plan Accreditation--expires during that time period, NCQA will automatically extend that current status until the new decision becomes final.*

## DESCRIPTIONS OF NEW HEALTH PLAN ACCREDITATION PROCESS

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

- NCQA NHP Accreditation is a nationally recognized evaluation that purchasers, regulators, and consumers can use to assess managed care plans.

- NCQA NHP Accreditation evaluates how well a new health plan manages all parts of its delivery system -- physicians, hospitals, other providers and administrative services -- in order to continuously improve health care for its members.
- NCQA NHP Accreditation is a voluntary review process.
- NCQA NHP Accreditation is designed for health plans that are less than 36 months old.
- NCQA New Health Plan Accreditation surveys consist of an on-and off-site review of the organization by a team of physicians and managed care experts.

## **DESCRIPTIONS OF NEW HEALTH PLAN STANDARDS AND DECISIONS**

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

- A New Health Plan Accreditation Survey may result in either a pass or fail decision. A pass equals a decision of "New Health Plan Accreditation." A denial equals the status of "New Health Plan Denial."
- The New Health Plan Accreditation decision is effective for 36 months from the date of the final report.
- New Health Plans are able to undergo a New Health Plan Accreditation Survey only once.
- Subsequent surveys of the new health plan will use the full health plan standards for accreditation that are in effect at the time of the new survey.
- NCQA's Accreditation of New Health Plans Program is different from NCQA's Accreditation of New Health Plan Program in that it focuses on a core set of standards from *Standards for the Accreditation of New Health Plan* modifies the scoring guidelines to accurately reflect this core set of standards and redistributes the category scoring weights.

## **USE OF NEW HEALTH PLAN ACCREDITATION SEALS**

NCQA encourages organizations that have received New Health Plan Accreditation to display their seals in marketing and advertising materials.

- You may access the seals at [www.ncqa.org/marketing.aspx](http://www.ncqa.org/marketing.aspx) .
- Seals are provided in EPS and JPG formats.
- NCQA has updated all program seals effective with the 2008 Accreditation cycle. All organizations, regardless of their place in the review cycle, must use the updated seals on their materials and must cease use of any old seals no later than December 31, 2009. All electronic

materials and websites should be updated immediately and all new print materials or reprints should use the new seal as well.

- Organizations should be aware that Accreditation 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 NHP Accreditation can include the following quote from Margaret E. O'Kane, President, in their marketing material.

"Health plans that step forward to participate in NCQA's New Health Plan Accreditation program early on in their history are to be especially commended. Our standards are rigorous, and by meeting them \_\_\_\_\_ has shown that it is well designed and serious about the quality of care it provides."

## **COMPLIANCE**

Any advertising material or other promotional effort that refers to NCQA status and violates any of the NCQA Marketing and Advertising Guidelines, or which is in any way false or misleading as determined by NCQA, may be grounds for revocation of the organization's status (es).

It is the responsibility of the organization to follow the General Marketing Guidelines as well as the product specific guidelines and conform to all applicable NCQA Marketing and Advertising Guidelines. Failure to do so may jeopardize the organization's status.

NCQA reserves the right to require an organization to withdraw advertising material 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. In addition, NCQA reserves the right to conduct an audit of an organization's NCQA-related advertising and marketing materials at any time.

**Thank you for observing these guidelines, and please don't hesitate to contact us with questions at [marketing@ncqa.org](mailto:marketing@ncqa.org)**