

Introduction

Congratulations on earning NCQA Accreditation 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 Guidelines for Advertising and Marketing (www.ncqa.org/NCQAGuidelines).

Describing Health Equity Accreditation and Health Equity Accreditation Plus

Organizations may use the following statements in marketing and advertising materials:

- NCQA awards Accreditation to organizations that meet or exceed its rigorous requirements for health equity.
- NCQA's Health Equity Accreditation evaluates how well an organization complies with standards in the following areas: organizational readiness; race/ethnicity, language, gender identify and sexual orientation; access and availability of language services; practitioner network cultural responsiveness; culturally and linguistically appropriate services programs; and reducing health care disparities.
- NCQA's Health Equity Accreditation Plus evaluates how well an organization complies with standards in the following areas: organizational readiness; race/ethnicity, language, gender identify and sexual orientation; access and availability of language services; practitioner network cultural responsiveness; culturally and linguistically appropriate services programs; reducing health care disparities; program to improve social risks and address needs; collection, integration and analysis of community and individual data; cross-sector partnerships and engagement; data management and interoperability; and referrals, outcomes and impact.
- Health Equity Accreditation and Health Equity Accreditation Plus are nationally recognized Accreditations that purchasers, regulators and consumers can use to distinguish organizations that meet rigorous standards in serving a diverse population.
- Health Equity Accreditation and Health Equity Accreditation Plus recognize organizations that lead the market in providing culturally and linguistically sensitive services, and work to reduce health care disparities.
 - **Health Equity Accreditation** focuses on the foundation of health equity work: building an internal culture that supports the organization's external health equity work; collecting data that help the organization create and offer language services and provider networks mindful of individuals' cultural and linguistic needs; identifying opportunities to reduce health inequities and improve care.
 - **Health Equity Accreditation Plus** is for organizations further along on their health equity journey. It focuses on collecting data on community social risk factors and patients' social

needs, to help the organization offer social resources that can have the most impact; establishing mutually beneficial partnerships that support community-based organizations; building meaningful opportunities for patient and consumer engagement; identifying opportunities to improve social need referral processes and the partnerships that make them possible.

- Health Equity Accreditation and Health Equity Accreditation Plus are voluntary programs for health plans, MBHOs, wellness organizations, population health organizations, case management organizations, health systems, hospital systems, ACOs, practices, hospitals and FQHCs. Organizations are not required to participate in other NCQA Accreditation programs.

General Guidelines for Advertising and Marketing Health Equity Accreditation and Health Equity Accreditation Plus

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

- Organizations must always advertise their most current Health Equity Accreditation and/or Health Equity Accreditation Plus status.
- Organizations that reference their accreditation status should always write out ‘Health Equity Accreditation’ and ‘Health Equity Accreditation Plus’ by their full titles.
- The organization may not use, disclose, represent or otherwise communicate reports or numeric results from the readiness evaluation to any third party for any other purpose.
- The organization may not represent that they have achieved Health Equity Accreditation and/or Health Equity Accreditation Plus 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 an Accreditation Survey or are scheduled for a survey.
- Organizations may use preapproved quotations from NCQA staff members in their advertising materials.
- Organizations must specify that Accreditation Seals apply only to specific sites, affiliates or entities that have earned Accreditation.
- Organizations are not required to advertise their Accreditation effective or expiration dates.

Regional Comparisons

Organizations may say theirs is the first product line/product in a region or state to earn Accreditation.

If an organization is not the first in a region/state to earn Accreditation, it may promote its status by acknowledging, for example, that it is “one of two plans” or “one of five plans” in the region/state.

Health Equity Accreditation and Health Equity Accreditation Plus Statistics

Organizations may use statistics from the NCQA Health Plan Report Card in promotional materials, provided statistics are in a format that is accurate and can be easily understood by the consumer.

Because statistics can change monthly, all advertising and marketing materials should include the date on which they were drawn. Some durable goods may need to be corrected.

Organizations must maintain accurate marketing materials. If Accreditation status changes, organizations must update all promotional items within 30 days of the status change and must cease distributing materials with incorrect status information.

Find the Health Plan Report Card on the NCQA website at <https://www.ncqa.org/> or by calling NCQA Customer Support at (888) 275-7585.

Use of Health Equity Accreditation and Health Equity Accreditation Plus Seals

NCQA encourages organizations to display Accreditation Seals in their Seals are **provided in EPS and JPEG formats**.

Advertising and Marketing Guidelines: Health Equity Accreditation and Health Equity Accreditation Plus



Approved Quotes Regarding Accreditation

Organizations that have earned Accreditation may use the following quotes in their marketing and advertising materials.

“Earning [Health Equity Accreditation/Health Equity Accreditation Plus] shows that an organization is making a breakthrough in providing excellent health care to diverse populations. I congratulate any organization that achieves this level of distinction,” said NCQA President Margaret E. O’Kane. “Eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in health care is essential to improving the quality of care overall.”

“Cultural competency is crucial to providing high quality health care,” said NCQA President Margaret E. O’Kane. “Organizations achieving [Health Equity Accreditation/Health Equity Accreditation Plus] are leaders in closing the ethnic and racial disparities gap, and NCQA commends them for their dedication.”

“The prevalence of racial and ethnic disparities has been a barrier to improving the quality of health care of many Americans for too long,” said NCQA President Margaret E. O’Kane. “Organizations achieving [Health Equity Accreditation/Health Equity Accreditation Plus] are leaders in closing this gap, and NCQA commends them for their dedication.”

Describing NCQA Accreditation Status

All preceding guidelines apply also to press releases.

Organizations may create press releases mentioning their NCQA status. Press releases must include a description of the Accreditation and the NCQA boilerplate language below. Submit questions related to press releases through [My NCQA](#).

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](https://www.ncqa.org)) contains information to help consumers, employers and others make more-informed health care choices. NCQA can be found online at [ncqa.org](https://www.ncqa.org), on Twitter [@ncqa](https://twitter.com/ncqa), on Facebook at [facebook.com/NCQA.org/](https://www.facebook.com/NCQA.org/) and on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/company/ncqa](https://www.linkedin.com/company/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.

Advertising and Marketing Guidelines: Health Equity Accreditation and Health Equity Accreditation Plus



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.

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 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.

HEDIS® is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).