

# Quality of Life Measures in Action: Identifying Opportunities and Methods of Quality of Life Care Within the Cancer Care Continuum

Health care providers (HCPs) may implement quality of life (QoL) metrics into a variety of care settings. Each setting employs different tactics to implement health-related quality of life (HRQoL) metrics into implementation guidelines.

## Three Models Measuring the Impact of HRQoL in the Cancer Care Setting

1. The Quality Oncology Practice Initiative (QOPI®) draws on a library of American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) quality measures developed by oncologists and quality experts. The model includes more than 150 quality measures.
  - a. QOPI measures fall into 4 primary categories: core measures (eg, staging, pathology testing, and pain), symptom/toxicity management, care at end-of-life, and palliative care.
  - b. The QOPI model focuses on team-based care in the outpatient oncology setting, with an emphasis on holistic cancer care and helping practices meet reporting requirements.<sup>1</sup>
2. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) bases their HRQoL survey on 14 core metrics.
  - a. Survey questions determine “healthy days” over a 30-day period.
  - b. Questions focus primarily on mental and physical health metrics.<sup>2</sup>
3. The World Health Organization (WHO) uses 2 QoL assessment tools. HCPs can use the tools across the cancer care continuum to ascertain patients’ perceived QoL.
  - a. The WHOQOL-100 tool assesses 6 broad domains of QoL: physical health, psychological health, level of independence, social relationships, environment, and spirituality/religion/personal beliefs.
  - b. Derived from the WHOQOL-100, the WHOQOL-BREF tool accounts for physical, psychological, and social relationships and environmental factors.<sup>3</sup>

## End-of-Life Communication Skills

HCPs can factor HRQoL metrics into existing patient-specific cancer care plans:

- Develop treatment goals at the start of the patient journey
- Review goals and evaluate/adjust as necessary
- Establish interdisciplinary care team responsibilities
- Account for patient insurance and estimated out-of-pocket costs
- Establish a cancer care, survivorship, and palliative care plan
- Collect QoL information and patient’s anticipated experience with treatment



# Managing the Patient's Treatment Plan to Incorporate HRQoL Touchpoints Along the Cancer Care Continuum

Key touchpoints include:

1. **Care management team meetings**, in which the team discusses the cancer care plan with the patient and centralizes communications/patient outreach.
2. **Physician appointments**, where HCPs assess, collect, and measure overall patient treatment to adjust care as needed.
3. **Integrated care delivery** allows for care coordination among HCPs, patient care coordinators/managers (navigators), and other stakeholders. Integrated care meetings provide an opportunity for scheduled touchpoints and software utilization (eg, electronic medical records) across the team.
4. **Behavioral health support** may be needed if the treatment team determines that this would be beneficial to the patient's treatment. In addition to support from trained counselors, patients may benefit from emotional and spiritual health services.

There are many ways to incorporate QoL evaluation and treatment in cancer care plans. **Practices can leverage QoL metrics when they consider the scope, need, and capacity of their practice.**

## Additional Resources

- **Assessing quality of life in research and clinical practice**<sup>4</sup>
- **Administering the Patient Health Questionnaires 2 and 9 (PHQ 2 and 9) in integrated care settings (although this survey is specific to mental health, administration tactics will have a high degree of similarity for patient QoL questionnaires)**<sup>5</sup>



## References

1. ASCO Practice Central. QOPI-related measures. <https://practice.asco.org/quality-improvement/quality-programs/quality-oncology-practice-initiative/qopi-related-measures>. Accessed October 22, 2020.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC HRQOL-14 "Healthy Days Measure". [https://www.cdc.gov/hrqol/hrqol14\\_measure.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/hrqol/hrqol14_measure.htm). Accessed October 21, 2020.
3. World Health Organization. WHOQOL: measuring quality of life. <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/t10129/retrieve>. Accessed October 22, 2020.
4. Cancer Network. Assessing quality of life in research and clinical practice. <https://www.cancernetwork.com/view/assessing-quality-life-research-and-clinical-practice>. Accessed October 22, 2020.
5. New York State Department of Health. Administering the patient health questionnaires 2 and 9 (PHQ 2 and 9) in integrated care settings. [https://www.health.ny.gov/health\\_care/medicaid/redesign/dsrip/2016-07-01\\_phq\\_2\\_and\\_9\\_clean.htm#v](https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/redesign/dsrip/2016-07-01_phq_2_and_9_clean.htm#v). Accessed October 22, 2020.

