



**NAHQ<sup>®</sup>**

**Together we define excellence  
in healthcare quality.  
History of our association**

In 2016, NAHQ continued to focus its efforts on defining healthcare quality competencies. By providing members and other stakeholders with the information and education they need; NAHQ supports healthcare quality professionals to advance their careers and organizations to succeed with their quality initiatives. NAHQ released two additional domains to the set of healthcare quality competencies pamphlets: Regulatory and Accreditation and Quality Review and Accountability. Added to the four existing domains, NAHQ began work to release the complete set of competencies in a new reference and resource publication in 2017.



The association also released HQ Principles, an interactive online certificate program introducing quality and patient safety fundamentals, methodologies, and concepts. HQ Principles was designed to meet the needs of entry-level HQPs while also being valuable to other healthcare professionals seeking to expand their understanding of basic quality concepts. In addition, to encourage continuous learning and drive value to members, NAHQ Learning Labs were made available to members at no additional cost. Learning Labs, live and on-demand, provide members with an easy and accessible way to earn continuing education credits to maintain their CPHQ.

### NATIONAL QUALITY SUMMIT ADDRESSES POPULATION HEALTH

NAHQ held its second National Quality Summit on May 11 and 12, in Dallas, Texas. Immersing participants in a single critical issue impacting healthcare in the United State, the theme of the 2016 event was *Improving Health Outcomes through Population Health*. Dr. Drew Harris, D.P.M, M.P.H., a renowned expert from the Jefferson School of Population Health, chaired the event with the support of co-chairs Nancy Terwoord, Director, Clinical & Quality Systems at Premier Health Partners in Ohio and Leonard Parisi, Vice President, Quality Management at Metropolitan Jewish Health Systems in New York.

Over 650 participants attended the event either in-person or online, case studies were presented describing successes and lessons learned by organizations at the forefront of population health management. In addition, industry leaders shared experiences demonstrating the positive impact that effective population health management creates on quality metrics, and improved health outcomes. One participant who benefitted from the presentations and conversation with peers observed: "The focus tends to be on high-cost, high-risk patients, but perhaps we should invert the pyramid. It's easier and better in the long run to focus on wellness and routine gaps in care than to let people progress through rising risk until they hit a "you're at the edge of the cliff" threshold after which – when it's too late – the care team rallies."

### NAHQ CONTINUES GROWTH TRAJECTORY

From an operational perspective, NAHQ continued its steady growth in key areas. For example, membership grew by just over 5% and the number of active CPHQs grew by over 6%. In particular, the number of healthcare quality professionals practicing outside of the United States and achieving their CPHQ grew by 18%. The needs of these HQPs were better met with a shift to 4 testing windows during the year. The cumulative impact of increased stakeholder engagement with NAHQ was an increase in total assets by nearly \$200,000.



# NAHQ<sup>®</sup> 2017

2017 was a watershed year for NAHQ as association leadership made the decision to establish an independent headquarter operations. The Board of Directors voted to make this move based on the extended growth trajectory of the organization and the belief that the association would thrive managing its own operations. Expressing its gratitude for the decades long management relationship with the Association Management Center (AMC), the association worked closely with AMC to make the transition to a new headquarters office at 8600 West Bryn Mawr Avenue in Chicago which would not be complete until February of 2018.

## HQ ESSENTIALS RELEASED AND AWARDED

While the transition to a new office took the majority of 2017 to complete, NAHQ did not miss a beat in serving its members and advancing the profession of healthcare quality. Work in 2016 on codifying healthcare quality competencies took a major step forward with the publication of HQ Essentials: Competencies for the Healthcare Quality Profession. HQ Essentials defined six areas of competency including: health data analytics; population health and care transitions; performance improvement and process improvement; quality care and accountability; regulatory and accreditation; and patient safety.

The publication was packaged and sent as a “gift” to NAHQ members, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Individual healthcare quality professionals used the competencies included to support development plans while leaders used the resource to design their quality organizations and assess the needs of their teams. In recognition of the impact this publication was making on the profession of healthcare quality, NAHQ was awarded the American Society of Association Executives the Power of A Gold Award for its contribution to solving problems, advancing industry performance, and improving conditions on local, national, and global levels.

## NAHQ Partners with Jefferson College of Public Health

In recognition of the growing interest among its members in post graduate study in healthcare quality, NAHQ formed a partnership with Jefferson College of Public Health, offering NAHQ members a tuition discount on its master’s program in healthcare quality and safety. CPHQs participating in the program were also able to apply 3 credit hours toward the master’s degree in recognition of their accomplishment in achieving the credential.

## NAHQ NEXT RESUMES

After a two-year hiatus, NAHQ’s annual conference, NAHQ Next, resumed on September 18 – 20, 2017. With 1,118 paid participants in attendance either in-person at the Duke Energy Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, or online, the conference was a great success. Plenary sessions included a keynote addresses by author and life coach, Simon T Bailey as well as author and healthcare executive, Liz Jazwiec.

The highly rated panel discussion on the future of healthcare featured Jodi L. Eisenberg, Vizient Inc.; Jeffrey P DiLisi, MD, MBA, Virginia Hospital Center; Deirdre McCaughey, University of Calgary; Maria R. Shirey, FACHE MBA NEA-BC PhD RN, University of Alabama School of Nursing; and Pat Merryweather; Project Patient Care. The panel tackled what impact the shift to value-based care and population health models will have on the role and competencies required of the Healthcare Quality Professional; how the Healthcare Quality Professional can be a catalyst for improving healthcare quality across the continuum; what the career pathway looks like for Healthcare Quality Professionals; and the skills and sphere of influence the Healthcare Quality Professional needs to create and sustain a culture of Quality and Safety.

The return to NAHQ Next was a great success with over 800 individuals attending in person and over 500 attending online.

## NAHQ’S GROWTH SUPPORTS TRANSITION

With the release of HQ Essentials as a member benefit and the return of NAHQ Next, NAHQ membership grew by 7.6% in 2017. In addition, the number of active CPHQs reached the 10,000-threshold growing by 8.6% over 2016.

Expenses related to the transition to an independent headquarters operation were largely funded by the increases to NAHQ’s top line revenue in 2017, positioning the association for continued growth in programs and services in 2018.

# NAHQ® 2018

## NAHQ'S TRANSITION TO AN INDEPENDENT HEADQUARTERS COMPLETE

On February 2, 2018, NAHQ successfully transitioned all operations to its new headquarters to the Presidents Plaza on 8600 West Bryn Mawr Avenue in Chicago, Illinois. With the support of the Board of Directors, staff and consultants were able to execute this complex relocation project on time and at budget in less than six months. 10 full-time staff were in place at the beginning of the year in addition to several business service providers who together ensured there was no disruption in program development and delivery or service to members and customers.

## NAHQ NEXT 2018 A SUCCESS WITH VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE EXCEEDS LIVE ATTENDANCE

NAHQ Next was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota on November 5 – 7, 2018 and for the first time, the number of participants attending online (735) exceeded those attending in person (633) for a total of (1,368). The significance of this would be proved in years to come as the COVID-19 pandemic. Most importantly, the number of HQPs participating in the conference as a professional development and networking opportunity increased by 35% over 2014 when the conference was suspended, indicating redesign efforts were successful.

Over 70 sessions were offered to participants on topics such as Agile Lean Six Sigma for Healthcare Quality to Engaging, Educating, and Implementing Quality within the Clinical Staff to Building an Analytics Infrastructure for Quality Improvement. At the annual membership meeting, Board President Carole Pulaski shared how NAHQ was advancing as an organization to better meet the needs of healthcare quality professionals as exhibited by the growing participation membership, training.

## GOVERNANCE ADVANCES ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH

Staff officially welcomed the NAHQ Board of Directors to their new office on April 5, 2018, for their first board meeting at the new location to continue its governance development journey. With the physical transition complete, the Board attention turned to strategic planning under the guidance of Executive Director and CEO, Stephanie Mercado. Taking a top-down directional approach, the Board and CEO partnered in establishing its vision and high-level goals for the organization under the pillars of Define, Teach, Certify. These were communicated down through the Commissions with staff taking an increasingly active role in creating strategies to achieve the goals. At the same time, the association's management staff began work on an engagement strategy with the focus of transforming NAHQ into the context in which healthcare quality professionals succeed throughout their careers. Known as the Context Strategy, this work became foundational to the creation of sub-strategies in the development and delivery of solutions meeting the needs of healthcare quality professionals and the organizations they serve well into the future. Core to the Context Strategy was the development of a professional assessment based on the domains, competencies and skills represented in Healthcare Quality Framework. This would serve to help individual HQPs plan their development pathway, as well as serve as the basis for assessing and developing healthcare organizations' quality workforces.

## EXTENDING THE VALUE OF NAHQ'S COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK TO PRODUCT AND SERVICE PLANNING

With the critical success of HQ Essentials, NAHQ added domains to the Healthcare Quality Framework bringing the total to 8. With the objective of releasing a professional assessment based on the framework in 2019, NAHQ developed and tested a survey instrument to support the professional assessment and related research on the state of the healthcare quality workforce in the United States.

NAHQ then turned its attention to how to better leverage the framework in the ongoing development of products and services. NAHQ is increasingly recognized as the organization that has set the standard for healthcare quality competencies and organizational structures. The association continued its quest to develop turn-key solutions to train a coordinated competent healthcare quality workforce.

In addition, as healthcare corporations were increasingly recognizing the role of healthcare quality professionals in advancing business and healthcare objects, NAHQ began to discuss how to better meet the needs of healthcare organizations across the continuum of care. NAHQ Team Training became a focus of attention as an option for promoting CPHQ education and certification to prepare HQPs within healthcare organizations and systems.

## NAHQ GROWS BY 50% IN 5 YEAR PERIOD

Achieving total revenue of \$4.58 NAHQ grew by 50% in just five years increasing NAHQ's capacity to continue to develop programs and services to meet the needs of its individual and organizational stakeholders. This growth was also a reflection of the increased recognition of the profession of healthcare quality and the importance of a qualified and competent quality workforce in achieving healthcare organizational goals. This outstanding growth was largely driven by CPHQ certification with the total number of members reaching 7,603 and active CPHQ reaching 11,233.



As a result of the research and development of the Healthcare Quality Framework, NAHQ released the assessment in Fall of 2018, NAHQ released its Professional Assessment in 2019, offering healthcare quality professionals a way to develop their career by utilizing the industry-standard competency framework. This online tool empowers individuals to better articulate their healthcare quality focus areas and goals, as well as understand the quality profession and the potential for their work within it. With the Professional Assessment released, NAHQ was also able to begin work on incorporating the assessment into engagements with healthcare corporations seeking to develop their quality workforce. This work was the foundation of the development of the Workforce Accelerator program.

### NAHQ ISSUES REPORT ON HEALTHCARE QUALITY WORKFORCE AT NAHQ SUMMIT

NAHQ successfully engaged CEOs, CQOs, COOs, and quality leaders to talk about the need for a workforce that is ready to deliver on value in healthcare at its 2019 Summit. Held in Rosemont, Illinois on May 2 – 3, the Summit highlighted the critical need for a coordinated, competent healthcare quality workforce that is ready and able to deliver on the promise of value. Healthcare leaders shared their experiences of how they've been successful in implementing this approach at their organizations.

During the first day of the Summit, NAHQ released Key Workforce Competencies for Quality-Driven Healthcare, the result of a multi-year research effort, involving hundreds of healthcare quality professionals, healthcare executives, and academics, to create and validate a new industry-standard Framework for Healthcare Quality Competencies. The report was a gamechanger because it demystifies the workforce competencies needed to deliver exceptional quality and outcomes cost-effectively. This Framework and the resulting Workforce Report marked the first time the profession of healthcare quality has been defined and measured. The report provides guidance on how to reduce variability in the healthcare workforce through alignment on industry-standard quality competencies.

Feedback to the report was enthusiastic. David Nash, MD, Founding Dean of Jefferson College of Population Health offered this review: "With its work to create and validate an industry-standard Framework for Healthcare Quality Competencies and to present an assessment of the current quality workforce, NAHQ has just advanced us all in the race to improve healthcare."

### BOARD LEADERS AND CEO MAKE IN-ROADS TO RAISING AWARENESS AND COLLABORATIONS

NAHQ Board leaders continued to represent the association at industry events in 2019 including QSEN, HCAT. Supported by the Board of Directors, CEO Stephanie Mercado worked to gain recognition for NAHQ and its work to advance healthcare quality competencies. Mercado met with numerous healthcare association executives, healthcare organization leaders, and industry press to build NAHQ awareness and cultivate collaborations. Of particular significance were conversations between Mercado and Western Governors University ultimately resulting in the incorporation of CPHQ in the Masters curriculum.

### NAHQ NEXT HELD IN PHOENIX

NAHQ Next was held on September 16 – 18 in Phoenix, Arizona. For the first time, the content of the over 70 education sessions were mapped to the Healthcare Quality Framework allowing participants to better meet their specific development needs.

CEO Stephanie Mercado gave remarks urging healthcare quality professionals to embrace their leadership role within their organizations and to actively engage in their professional and career development by making the most of the new competency tools and experiences NAHQ has to offer.

### NAHQ ENSURES CPHQ MEETS THE HIGHEST STANDARDS

In 2019, NAHQ engaged in the rigorous process to gain re-accreditation for the CPHQ by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies. CPHQ remains the only healthcare quality certification program to adhere to and be recognized for its compliance with best practices in certification programs ensuring the health, welfare, and safety of the public. As the number of CPHQ hit the watershed mark of 12,000, the total number of candidates sitting for their CPHQ in 2019 increased to just under 2,800, also a record high.



# NAHQ<sup>®</sup> 2020

## IMPACTED BUT NOT DEFINED BY THE PANDEMIC

Going into 2020, NAHQ was working hard to leveraging the extraordinary work done to create the NAHQ Healthcare Quality Competency Framework and Professional Assessment. By late February, however, COVID-19 was rapidly spreading across the globe. The NAHQ Board of Directors and staff leaders began to prepare for what was going to be a long, hard year for healthcare quality professionals.

The pandemic presented healthcare quality professionals with unprecedented challenges. HQPs were standing-up crisis command centers, and making urgent staffing decisions, including deploying administrative staff to the frontlines. They were dealing with serious safety issues, and many worked in fear without sufficient and proper personal protective equipment. Regulatory requirements were changing not on a monthly or annual timeline, but daily and sometimes hourly. Still, NAHQ and its members stepped up to the challenge.

NAHQ's board, staff and volunteers worked nights and weekends to develop a COVID-19 response plan to support constituents. NAHQ launched its COVID-19 Resource Center, a growing library of webinars, interviews and documents that can be quickly consumed. Listening and sharing sessions for NAHQ members were held on a weekly basis. NAHQ developed partnerships with organizations like ACHE, HFMA and others to share resources with healthcare providers – free of charge. More than 5,000 people engaged with NAHQ in these efforts during the early days of the pandemic. As a result, quality professionals demonstrated indispensable value in their ability to pivot and take on new challenges through acquired skills and knowledge, across the continuum of care demonstrating a whole new level of value to your employer and community.

## NAHQ CONTINUES TO DEVELOP PROGRAMS BASED ON THE HEALTHCARE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

Although the pandemic required an immediate response from NAHQ, the association remained focused on building the capacity and capabilities for quality in the healthcare workforce. Early in the year, NAHQ began assessing healthcare organizations' workforce competencies and identifying ways to improve healthcare systems, processes, and structures for quality. Piloting this solution, now known as Workforce Accelerator, NAHQ received positive feedback and continued to refine the service to launch in 2021.

Throughout the year, NAHQ continued to promote the NAHQ Healthcare Quality Competency Framework and Professional Assessment to healthcare quality professionals and the healthcare industry. By the end of 2020, 1,652 individuals had taken the self-assessment and the data was being analyzed to gauge the overall performance of the healthcare quality workforce and create strategies for improvement.

## NAHQ RESPONDS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE PANDEMIC

Understanding that healthcare quality professionals were being taxed by the pandemic, NAHQ encouraged individuals to continue their professional development by offering a deep discount to CPHQ Prep materials and the exam. The practice exam was available at no charge and over 3,400 individuals took advantage of this offering. In addition, since onsite testing was a safety concern, NAHQ worked with its testing provider to transition to secure online, remote proctored exams.

Unable to meet in person, NAHQ NEXT 2020 was a fully virtual experience, consisting of competency- and solution-based sessions as well as professional development and career sessions helping individuals to assess, re-center, and continue to thrive in their careers even during the pandemic. 1,905 individuals attended NAHQ Next on September 14 – 16. This was the largest attendance at a NAHQ annual conference in its history. In addition, 1,447 individuals participated in Healthcare Quality Week 2020 viewing online presentations.

## NAHQ CONTINUES TO ADVANCE

Although 2020 was a challenging year in many respects, NAHQ was able to advance in the following areas:

- Strategic Planning: The Board of Directors and the CEO worked together to define the guideposts of a new strategic plan grounding in advancing healthcare quality competencies.
- Academic partnership: NAHQ signed agreements with 10 academic institutions to either embed NAHQ training or offer Masters-level credit for CPHQs.
- Industry collaboration: NAHQ and Joint Commission International (JCI) announced a collaboration to provide an educational program to healthcare organizations seeking to develop their workforce with the industry-standard healthcare competencies.
- Advocacy: NAHQ signed a letter of support asking Congress to advance permanent telehealth reform.

2020 tested the meddle of healthcare quality professionals and their association. Both were able to rise to the challenge, exceed expectation, and advance under the most difficult of conditions.

# NAHQ<sup>®</sup> 2021 THE PANDEMIC CONTINUES

2021 marked one year since COVID-19 upended any sense of normalcy. But it is not hard to believe how healthcare professionals focus on quality have stepped up, shared their expertise, and led significant and rapid transitions within healthcare organizations across the nation and the globe.

NAHQ continued to focus on serving the profession by launching new research and organizational solutions to create a more quality-focused, quality-capable workforce within healthcare organizations. Our research and organizational workforce development efforts provide healthcare executives with the information and the tools they need to make strategic decisions on how to advance quality in their organizations.

## FOR EXAMPLE:

- In NAHQ research published in the September 2021 issue of The Journal for Healthcare Quality, we validated those individuals achieving and maintaining the Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality (CPHQ) credential perform work at more advanced levels across all eight domains of the NAHQ Healthcare Quality Competency Framework.
- Building on this insight, we launched Workforce Accelerator, a scalable, three-phased enterprise solution for healthcare organizations to partner with NAHQ in a data-based approach to assessing, planning, and upskilling their quality workforce.
- We also launched NAHQ's benchmarking program to support improved decision-making by organizations in healthcare quality resourcing. The benchmarking program enables healthcare leaders to develop a data-driven business case for needed resources by informing the organization's resourcing requirements.

NAHQ remains dedicated to serving as the professional home for individual healthcare professionals, but to make the changes needed in healthcare on a larger scale and more quickly, we must continue to collaborate with others in this journey.

## HERE IS HOW WE ARE MAKING CONNECTIONS AT THESE LEVELS:

- Working with health systems to provide solutions to equip teams to address today's challenges.
- Collaborating with higher education institutions to hardwire NAHQ content into their curriculum.
- Partnering with HealthStream, one of the nation's largest providers of online healthcare training, to offer a suite of programming in healthcare quality and safety to the millions of employees who work for one of the thousands of active HealthStream client organizations. HealthStream client organizations will have access to NAHQ training through their learning management system.
- Launched Aggregage, a content aggregator, for healthcare quality news and thought leadership digest that will curate timely and relevant content from more than 100 authors and contributors.
- With the success of a fully virtual NAHQ NEXT in 2020 the board decided to continue with the annual conference in a virtual format. 1,905 individuals attended NAHQ Next on September 14 – 16. This was the largest attendance at a NAHQ annual conference in its history. In addition, 1,447 individuals participated in Healthcare Quality Week 2020 viewing online presentations.

## NAHQ NEXT 2021

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