



The National Association for
Healthcare Quality
2021 Annual Report



Where Opportunity and
Preparation Meet

The Rise of Healthcare Quality

Marian Savage, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, PMP, CPHQ
2021 President
NAHQ Board of Directors



History will remember 2021 as the second year of the great coronavirus pandemic. Yet, for healthcare professionals across the globe, this second year was vastly different from the first. In 2020, we coped with a pandemic for which we were not prepared. We encountered the unknown day-in and day-out. The needs of our communities exceeded our capacity. Public health issues tested our protocols. In short, in 2020 we were charting new territories in healthcare.

By 2021, however, there was a shift. Vaccines were widely distributed. Our systems were adjusting to meet the ongoing requirements of addressing the pandemic. We were communicating more effectively with those we serve within and outside of our organizations. And leading the way were healthcare quality professionals.

As the National Association for Healthcare Quality's® (NAHQ) 2021 president, I am so proud of our members and all healthcare quality professionals across the globe. Like many, we were called upon to go above and beyond. Some of us temporarily returned to full-time clinical care to support the staggering influx of patients. Others worked tirelessly to analyze volumes of cases and data providing insight on how to improve patient care and safety. The contribution of quality professionals to our organization's pandemic response was recognized and appreciated. As a result, healthcare leaders are increasingly focused on how quality is completely intertwined with patient and financial outcomes, and even the general well-being of healthcare practitioners.

“...developing a qualified and competent healthcare quality workforce gained traction in 2021...”

**- Marian Savage,
2021 President**

I am particularly impressed by the number of healthcare quality professionals who made it a priority to study and pass their Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality® (CPHQ) during the pandemic. You worked hard to advance yourselves and your organizations. You joined a community of practice whose passion is quality and safety.

Although the pandemic stretched our capabilities, healthcare quality professionals who are engaged with NAHQ possessed the tools they needed to quickly adjust to a rapidly changing environment. Our continued focus on developing a qualified and competent healthcare quality workforce gained traction in 2021 when we leveraged the NAHQ Healthcare Quality Competency Framework™ and Professional Assessment to develop new programs. NAHQ now works with healthcare organizations to transform their workforce into a quality force. Applying the insights and tools they receive through NAHQ education and research, healthcare organizations are better equipped, not only to meet the challenges of COVID-19, but to finally address long-term issues in patient care and safety.

When I became a part of the NAHQ community years ago, I had wonderful mentors who encouraged me to become a NAHQ leader and give back to our profession and community. But as many of you know, in giving we gain and in serving we are served. 2021 was the pinnacle of my career as a NAHQ leader, but not the end of my journey. I will continue to walk alongside you as we enter a post-pandemic world where healthcare quality is the standard and quality competencies are embraced by all healthcare professionals passionate about patient care and safety. Thank you for the honor of serving you and thank you for being a part of the NAHQ community.



Marian Savage, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, PMP, CPHQ
2021 NAHQ President

Doing Hard Things Fast

Stephanie Mercado, CAE, CPHQ
NAHQ Chief Executive Officer



One of the most important pandemic lessons we have learned in the healthcare community is that we can do hard things fast. Think about how in the last two years:

- Telemedicine programs were launched or expanded.
- The COVID-19 vaccine was developed and approved with millions of people receiving inoculations.
- Predictive analytics are now being used by healthcare systems across the globe to forecast and prepare for surges in COVID-19 cases and other public health crises.

Contributing to this effort, NAHQ also worked fast to bring to market new products and services that reflect our strategic priorities to not only advance healthcare quality professionals but healthcare organizations and healthcare leadership as well. In 2021 we:

- Administered CPHQ examinations to 3,778 candidates, increasing the worldwide number of CPHQs at the end of the year to 13,504
- Engaged 7,208 individuals in NAHQ programs and 2,186 in NAHQ's annual conference.

“We will always work to develop the skills and competency of the healthcare quality workforce.”

-Stephanie Mercado,
NAHQ Chief Executive Officer

- Launched Workforce Accelerator, helping healthcare organizations understand and prioritize opportunities to accelerate achievement.
- Collaborated with leading healthcare organizations to design and deliver NAHQ's Benchmarking Program, providing meaningful data to support improved decision-making by U.S. hospitals and health systems in healthcare quality resourcing.
- Created NAHQ Intelligence providing research, insights, and thought leadership to drive improvements in healthcare quality and safety.
- Received significant healthcare media coverage of NAHQ's original research published in the Journal for Healthcare Quality titled: "Why Competency Standards Matter for Improvement: An Assessment of the Healthcare Quality Workforce."
- Received recognition from the Association for Media and Publishing for our redesigned website, NAHQ.org, to provide better visibility and access to NAHQ content, programs, and services.

The pandemic has also taught us that we can create audacious goals, but if our systems are not aligned, we will not be successful in advancing healthcare. In 2021, this lesson took hold at NAHQ. We will always work to develop the skills and competency of the healthcare quality workforce. Today, we are also dedicated to supporting organizational systems that create an environment in which healthcare quality professionals are successful, providing healthcare leaders with the data and insights to make decisions, and being the healthcare association where preparation and opportunity meet to drive transformation.



Stephanie Mercado, CAE, CPHQ
NAHQ Chief Executive Officer

2021 NAHQ Board of Directors



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Recognition of the Profession Chair



Stephanie Mercado, CAE, CPHQ
Chief Executive Officer

Planning and Succeeding



Introduction

The rise in the importance of healthcare quality has created a great opportunity for NAHQ as the leader in the development of healthcare quality competencies. The responsibility to address the specific needs of individuals and organizations played a prominent role in the 2021 strategic planning process which articulates the contribution NAHQ can make in advancing the healthcare quality workforce across the continuum of care and throughout individual careers.

The strategic framework and supporting governance structures designed in 2021 improve NAHQ's focus in the areas in which it can make the greatest impact and increases capacity to expand and create programs and services. Most importantly, the new strategic plan promises to bring the association closer to achieving its mission of preparing a coordinated, competent workforce to lead and advance healthcare quality across the continuum of healthcare.

Empowering Organizations

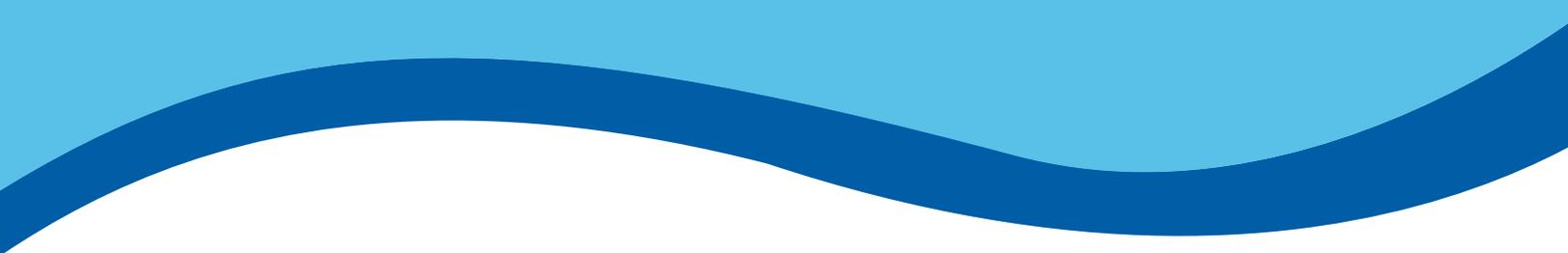
Understanding that healthcare organizations are more likely to achieve their quality goals with a coordinated and competent healthcare quality workforce, the 2021 strategic plan puts organizational workforce development front and center. Strategic initiatives included launching Workforce Accelerator to assess, plan, and upskill the healthcare quality workforce of engaged organizations. Team Training continues to be a priority as an extension of Workforce Accelerator. To further fortify systems within healthcare organizations to achieve their quality goals, NAHQ also launched a Benchmarking Program to provide leaders with the comparative information they need to make the best resourcing decisions. Building the capacity of the association to directly address the needs of organizations across the continuum of care became a priority. The Organizational Workforce Solutions group was formed and staffed by experienced healthcare quality professionals with a track record of success.



In fact, two participants in Workforce Accelerator pilot engagements, Edward (Ted) Donnelly, BSN, MHA, CPHQ, of United Health Systems, and Jaclyn Hunter, MSHI, RN, CPHQ, of Tri-City Medical Center, joined NAHQ in 2021 as NAHQ navigators, guiding other organizations through the process they found so valuable.

Contributing New Knowledge

NAHQ formalized its commitment to contributing new knowledge to the field of healthcare quality in 2021 by identifying research as a strategic priority. The journey to leverage data to advance quality at the workforce level began in 2019. That's when NAHQ released the industry-standard framework for healthcare quality competencies. The Healthcare Quality Competency Framework articulates everything that must be present in a high-functioning quality program and offers career pathways for individuals to explore. The NAHQ Professional Assessment is based on this framework and is a critical source of data that can be used to assess and create strategies to advance the healthcare quality workforce at the individual, organizational, and even national levels. One of the most significant results of this priority was the release of insights from a research study using NAHQ's Professional Assessment data. This research was presented in an article in the September issue of the Journal of Healthcare Quality. "Why Competency Standardization Matters for Improvement: An Assessment of the Healthcare Quality Workforce" provided many insights finding that individuals who are CPHQs perform work at more advanced levels of the competency spectrum compared to those without CPHQ certification.



This highlighted a need for organizations to employ dedicated quality and safety experts to meaningfully advance organizational goals and patient outcomes.

With a strategic focus on research, NAHQ has enhanced its ability to help healthcare organizations drive transformation by focusing on quality.

Elevating Individuals

Since 1976, NAHQ has been known for equipping healthcare quality professionals to continually improve healthcare outcomes while reducing costs. NAHQ's dedication to providing its members and stakeholders with the tools, skills, and competencies they need to execute their commitment to quality and safety, support their organizations in achieving their goals, and succeed in their careers will never wane.

In 2021, NAHQ began work to update its flagship program, CPHQ certification, and related programs such as CPHQ Prep and HQ Solutions. This work continues into 2022. In addition, having established priorities for continuing professional education based partly on data from the Professional Assessment, NAHQ developed and is implementing a strategy to provide healthcare quality professionals with convenient access to topics in healthcare quality ensuring that professionals are able to stay on the leading edge of healthcare quality and safety competencies throughout their career.

An Eye to the Future

NAHQ also began the process of articulating strategies to achieve emerging priorities serving international and higher education markets, and contributing to policy discussions. NAHQ is actively engaged in exploring the potential in these areas while building our foundation of serving the needs of individual practitioners.

Extending International Impact

Although NAHQ membership is primarily U.S.-based, the association has been extending its reach by offering opportunities for healthcare quality professionals in other countries to study for and achieve their CPHQ. With a growing number of CPHQs working outside of the United States, NAHQ is establishing an international strategy focusing on the Middle East where the number of CPHQs has reached 2,394. Planning continues with a focus on the development of in-country resources to promote and deliver standardized CPHQ education and certification in-country.

Academia: Partnering to Advance

Healthcare quality professionals come from a variety of educational backgrounds. While many quality professionals are educated and trained in nursing, other pathways, such as healthcare information technology and healthcare administration, are gaining momentum. In recognition of the importance of degree-based education in supporting the successful careers of quality professionals, NAHQ has established a goal of creating meaningful collaborations with academic institutions to support curriculum development and encourage students to consider careers in healthcare quality.

Through a collaboration with NAHQ, a growing number of colleges and universities are including competency-based healthcare quality content from NAHQ in their course curriculum. Collaborations in 2021 include:

- The George Washington University, Master of Science in Nursing, Leadership & Management
- Georgetown University, Executive Master's in Clinical Quality, Safety & Leadership

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- Texas Tech University, Doctor of Medicine/Master of Business Administration in Health Organization Management; Doctor of Pharmacy/Master of Business Administration in Health Organization Management
 - University of North Texas, Master of Healthcare Administration
 - Western Governors University, Master of Science in Nursing, Leadership & Management

Additionally, the following institutions recognized CPHQ in 2021 by providing course credits to students who have the CPHQ:

- The George Washington University, Master of Science in Health Sciences and Graduate Certificate in Health Care Quality
- Georgetown University, Executive Master's in Clinical Quality, Safety & Leadership
- Jacksonville University, Master of Science in Healthcare Quality and Safety
- Jefferson College of Population Health, Master of Science in Healthcare Quality and Safety
- Northwestern University, Master of Science in Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety
- University of Alabama at Birmingham, Master of Science in Healthcare Quality and Safety
- Western Governors University, Master of Health Leadership

NAHQ 2021 by the Numbers

Membership

- Total number of members at the end of 2021: **8,591**
- Percentage increase over 2020: **12.6%**

Certification

- Total number of CPHQs at the end of 2021: **13,504**
- Percentage increase over 2020: **6%**
- Total number of exams administered in the United States: **2,186**
- Total number of exams administered outside of the United States: **1,592**

Education

- Total number of attendees at 2021 NAHQ Next: **2,186**
- Percentage increase over 2020: **13.7%**
- Total number of individuals participating in NAHQ education programs (CPHQ Prep, Principles, Webinars, etc.) in 2021: **7,208**

NAHQ 2021 Financials



Revenue

\$8,527,430

Expenses

\$7,939,423

Increase in Net Assets

\$588,007

