Quick Start Guide:
Hospital Commitment to Health Equity Measure

As part of the FY2023 IPPS/LTCH final rule, CMS is requiring hospitals that participate in the Hospital Inpatient Quality reporting program to report on the Hospital Commitment to Health Equity Measure on an annual basis. CMS states that "this structural measure assesses hospital commitment to health equity using a suite of equity-focused organizational competencies aimed at achieving health equity for racial and ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) community, individuals with limited English proficiency, rural populations, religious minorities, and people living near or below poverty level."

Hospitals must attest to activities within five domains: strategic planning, data collection, data analysis, quality improvement and leadership engagement. For hospitals to receive credit for each domain, the hospital must evaluate and determine whether it engages in each of the elements that comprise the domain. Each domain will be represented as a point, for a total of five possible points. The hospital must meet each element within a domain to receive a point. CMS will not give partial credit within the domain for meeting a few, but not all, of the elements. This Quick Start Guide provides resources and direction on how to meet each domain criteria.

Domain 1: Equity is a Strategic Priority

Hospital commitment to reducing healthcare disparities is strengthened when equity is a key organizational priority.

Elements	Quick Start Resources
Our hospital strategic plan identifies priority populations who currently experience health disparities.	Utilize your hospital quarterly disparities reports to identify your vulnerable populations (e.g., within harm areas, the social vulnerability index, the area deprivation index) and ensure it is part of your hospital strategic plan.
Our hospital strategic plan identifies healthcare equity goals and discrete action steps to achieve these goals.	The Mass General Brigham Example Strategic Plan outlines 10 health equity goals and includes action steps to achieve each goal. Use this example as a guide in creating a plan with clearly outlined activities.
Our hospital strategic plan outlines specific resources that have been dedicated to achieving our equity goals.	Utilize health equity resource libraries to select specific resources for your strategic plan: • HEAL: Health Equity Action Library • HQIN Resource Center • SIREN Evidence & Resource Library

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Elements	Quick Start Resources
Our hospital strategic plan describes our approach for engaging key stakeholders, such as community-based organizations.	AHA's Community Partnerships: Strategies to Accelerate Health Equity Toolkit provides steps toward building successful community partnerships between hospitals and local organizations. It also provides resources and discussion guides for the executive team, leadership and governance team, and interdisciplinary team. The Creating Effective Hospital-Community Partnerships to Build a Culture of Health leadership guide summarizes a range of approaches that hospitals, health systems and communities have used successfully; provides a framework for building effective partnerships and describes approaches to evaluating partnerships. The Improving Health Equity: Partner with the Community guide provides case study examples of ways in which health systems might partner with others in the community to improve health equity, including key tactics to build a multistakeholder coalition.

Other Resources

The Improving Health Equity: Make Health Equity a Strategic Priority guide describes strategies and lessons learned from eight health care organizations that have tested changes in the framework's first component. The guide includes: three strategies for making health equity a strategic priority in your health care organization; examples of changes the eight Pursuing Equity organizations tested in each of the three strategies; and common challenges that arise while pursuing equity and strategies for mitigating them.

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Domain 2: Data Collection

Collecting valid and reliable demographic and social determinant of health data on patients served in a hospital is an important step in identifying and eliminating health disparities.

Elements	Quick Start Resources
Our hospital collects demographic information, including self-reported race and ethnicity, and/or social determinant of health information on the majority of our patients.	Health Equity Guide: Step 1 of the guide explores how to collect data, reviewing the necessary steps to start a quality improvement project that integrates reducing disparities. The Collecting REAL Data Learning Module explains why it's essential to collect REAL data and provides strategies to prepare teams to collect demographics across all areas uniformly. The Improving Health Equity Through Data Collection AND Use: A Guide for Hospital Leaders identifies seven key strategies for collecting patient race, ethnicity and language data, as well as provides a review of the literature on leading practices for use in collecting REAL data. See page 6 for a table of key strategies and pages 7-8 for a case study. The Simple Strategies for Collecting REAL Data resource provides information strategies on collecting REAL data at the basic, intermediate and advanced levels.
Our hospital has training for staff in culturally sensitive collection of demographics and/or social determinant of health information.	Health Equity Guide: Step 3 of the guide explores how to gain buy-in and create a culture of equity. It includes a link to a work plan template for creating an equity culture. The Simple Strategies for Data Collection Training resource focuses on key actions hospitals can take to train registration and administration staff on collecting REAL data. The Simple Strategies to Shape Organizational Infrastructure and Culture resource reviews why hospital leaders should embrace cultural competency interventions and provides activities hospitals can adopt at the basic, intermediate and advanced levels.

Elements	Quick Start Resources
	The Becoming a Culturally Competent Health Care Organization resource reviews steps to becoming a culturally competent organization, including conducting community services, community engagement and staff education.
Our hospital inputs demographic and/or social determinant of health information collected from patients into structured, interoperable data elements using a certified EHR technology.	Modules 3-6 of the Health Equity Learning Module series cover an overview of SDOH and its relation to health equity. It also includes various screening tools available to collect information and explains how to use data to address SDOH, integrate SDOH into workflows and use Z-codes to capture SDOH.

Domain 3: Data Analysis

Effective data analysis can provide insights into which factors contribute to health disparities and how to respond.

Elements	Quick Start Resources
Our hospital stratifies key performance indicators by demographic and/or social determinants of health variables to identify equity gaps and includes this information in hospital performance dashboards.	The Using REAL Data Learning Module reviews how organizations can use REAL data to start a quality improvement project. The Simple Strategies for Data Stratification resource reviews why data stratification is important and provides steps to take toward stratifying data at the basic, intermediate and advanced levels.

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Domain 4: Quality Improvement

Health disparities are evidence that high quality care has not been delivered equally to all patients. Engagement in quality improvement activities can improve quality of care for all patients.

Elements	Quick Start Resources
Our hospital participates in local, regional or national quality improvement activities focused on reducing health disparities.	Participating in the QIN-QIO, HQIC or AHC helps meet this requirement. Participate in the ACO Realizing Equity, Access, and Community Health (REACH) Model. Participate in an Alternative Payment Model (APM) that includes a health equity component.

Domain 5: Leadership Engagement

Leaders and staff can improve their capacity to address disparities by demonstrating routine and thorough attention to equity and setting an organizational culture of equity.

Elements	Quick Start Resources
Our hospital senior leadership, including chief executives and the entire hospital board of trustees, annually reviews our strategic plan for achieving health equity.	The Improving Quality and Achieving Equity: A Guide for Hospital Leaders guide, targeted toward hospital leaders, highlights evidence for disparities in health care, model practices for hospital leaders to engage in addressing disparities and recommended activities hospital leaders can initiate to take action. See pages 8-9 for frequently asked questions, page 10 for a recommendation checklist and pages 44-45 for tips on getting started.
Our hospital senior leadership, including chief executives and the entire hospital board of trustees, annually reviews key performance indicators stratified by demographic and/or social factors.	

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