



## Delegation Best Practices

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## Objective

Identify the keys to a successful relationship between clients and delegates



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## Overview

- Identifying what is and is not delegation from NCQA's perspective
- What should be in the agreement
- Assessing a new delegate: What should be included
- Identifying what should be included in a delegation quality improvement program
- Survey preparation with the delegate
- Developing a positive relationship with a delegate



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### Delegation – NCQA Definition

- A formal process by which an organization gives another entity the authority to perform **NCQA requirements on its behalf**. Although an organization can delegate the authority to perform a function, **it may not delegate the responsibility for ensuring that the function is performed appropriately**



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### Delegation Considerations

- Is it delegation if the following is delegated?
  - UM approvals
  - Member travel assistance
  - Credentialing dentists
  - Board certified consultants making UM decisions
  - Mailing services to mail materials to members



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### Delegation Agreement (Element A)

- Critical to positive ongoing relationship
- Where many organizations run into trouble meeting NCQA requirements (not just delegation requirements)
- Be clear and extensive. Leave no assumptions!
- Include the requirement owner, compliance officer or other staff who know the NCQA standards in development.
- Do not assume delegate knows details of what is delegated or NCQA requirements.
- Don't assume all factors are met if the agreement is developed by an NCQA Accredited delegate.



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## Delegation Agreement

- Written delegation document
  - Is mutually agreed upon
- **Best practice: Both parties develop the agreement.**
- Describes **specific delegated activities** and responsibilities of both parties
  - “Delegating NCQA requirements” does not meet this factor
- **Best practice: A table listing each NCQA requirement and who is responsible for each.**



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## Delegation Agreement

- Requires at least semi-annual reporting by delegate
  - NCQA is not prescriptive on what is included
  - Should give the client a clear idea of whether critical aspects of NCQA delegated requirements are being met.
- **Best practice: Reports that pertain to most important actions being delegated.**



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## Delegation Agreement

- Organization provides information to delegates when requested
  - Member experience data, if applicable
  - Clinical performance data
    - May allow delegate to collect its own data
- **Can be in a communication with the delegate if executed before 1/1/2019**
- **Not in CR standards**
- **Best practice: State in the agreement whether client provides the data or allows delegate to collect the data.**



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### Delegation Agreement

- Describes process by which performance is evaluated
- Describes **remedies** if delegate does not fulfill its obligations.
- **Termination should be last resort.**



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### Delegation Agreement

- CR written delegation document includes
  - Retains the right, based on quality issues, to approve, suspend and terminate individual practitioners, providers and sites **even** if the organization delegates decision-making



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### Predelegation Evaluation (Element B)

- **Reviewed for any agreement executed within a 12 month look-back period.**
- Assessment of delegate capacity to perform functions **prior to delegation agreement**
  - System capability
  - Staffing
  - References
- Must assess against each delegated activity
- Usually on-site visit and assessment



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### Predelegation Evaluation

- NCQA reviews delegation arrangements initiated in the look-back period
- Score of 100% for NCQA-accredited or NCQA-certified delegates
- **Best Practice:** Evaluate delegate's experience with NCQA requirements, contact other clients of the delegate, review the organization's policies & systems, complete a file review audit.



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### Review of Performance (Element C)

- Applies to delegation in effect for **12 months or longer**
- **Substantive** evaluation of specific delegated activities
  - Program descriptions, policies
  - Reports
  - File audits



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### Annual Review of Performance

- Remember, client is ultimately responsible for all delegated NCQA requirements.
- Surveyor does not evaluate delegate.
- Therefore, clients need to include any review that makes them comfortable that **the delegate is meeting NCQA requirements.**



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## Review of Performance

- Annually review delegate's
  - QI Program
  - PHM Program
  - Network management procedures
  - UM Program
  - Credentialing policies and procedures

Best Practice: Review against NCQA requirements being delegated and client organization's policies/procedures/programs



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## Review of Performance: File Review

- Be clear in the agreement as to how file review will be performed including how many files will need to be presented
- Provide file review worksheets to the delegate so they know how files will be reviewed.
- Include delegate staff in the review.
- Provide immediate feedback



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## Review of Performance: CCM File Review

- Complex case management file review
  - Number of files
    - 5% or 50 files, whichever is less, or
    - 8/30 methodology

Best Practice: Use NCQA's CCM file review workbook. Evaluate the performance and file management practices.



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## Review of Performance: UM File Review

- Utilization management file review

- Denials
- Appeals
- Number of files
  - 5% or 50, whichever is less, or
  - 8/30 methodology

**Best Practice:** Use NCQA's UM file review workbook. Evaluate the performance and file management practices.



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## Review of Performance: CR File Review

- Credentialing file review

- Credentialing and recredentialing
- Number of files
  - 5% or 50, whichever is less; minimum 10 initial and 10 recredentialing files, or
  - 8/30 methodology

**Best Practice:** Use NCQA's CR file review workbook. Evaluate the performance and file management practices.



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## Review of Performance

- Organization must receive delegate reports at least semi-annually

- Must demonstrate **evaluation** of reports
  - Review must be documented
- Must receive reports for all delegates, even if delegate is NCQA-accredited or NCQA-certified

**Best Practice:** Evidence of evaluation included in QI (QI, NET, PHM, ME), UM or CR Committee minutes.



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### Review of Performance

- Organizations that receive ongoing transfer of verified credentials information from a CVO meet the semi-annual reporting requirement
- For NCQA accredited or certified entities, reports may include only names or files of practitioners or providers processed by the delegate



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### Review of Performance

- Annual Evaluation
  - Different from review of P & Ps and file review
  - Review other NCQA requirements client has delegated (materials, reports) and any aspects not included in P & Ps and file review.



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### Opportunities for Improvement (Element D)

- Applies to delegation in effect for 12 months or longer
- At least once, in each of past 2 years delegation in effect, identify and act on opportunities
- NA if no opportunities identified
- Score of 100% for NCQA-accredited or NCQA-certified delegates
  - Delegated activity must be specified in delegation agreement



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### Opportunities for Improvement (Element D)

- Opportunities should be specific to the issues not met in the annual evaluation and reports.
- Termination of the relationship should be the last step after all other actions are taken
- Work with the delegate to identify how the client can assist in making improvements.



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### Preparing for a Survey

- Review non-file documentation against NCQA requirements that was the responsibility of the delegate (if not reviewed during annual evaluation) at least 6 months before the look-back period begins.
- Set a timetable as to when the client must receive all delegated documentation (policies, reports, materials)
- Discuss NCQA's process for client submission of files and when final file list will be sent.



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### Keys to a Positive Relationship

- Designate internal staff and/or committee responsible for delegation oversight
- Include internal owner of NCQA requirement in agreement development
- Ensure delegate capacity to perform is evaluated prior to signing delegation agreement
  - Evaluate thoroughly
  - Choose carefully



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### Keys to a Positive Relationship

- For the delegation agreement...
  - **Mutually** agree on clearly defined responsibilities
  - Document delegated activities using language as close to NCQA language as possible
    - Specify each delegated factor
    - Do not use only standards numbers

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### Keys to a Positive Relationship

- For the delegation agreement...
  - Specify exact reporting requirements including frequency (at least semi-annually), content and format
  - **Specify what happens to files if relationship is terminated.**
  - Identify delegate responsibilities for client's survey preparation

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### Keys to a Positive Relationship

- Meet regularly with delegate.
- Discuss any changes to NCQA requirements as soon as they are published.
- Schedule a specific date to perform formal annual assessment
- Ensure delegate receives timely feedback both positive and negative

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### Keys to a Positive Relationship

- If issues are detected, get to the root of the problem and identify solutions **with the delegate.**
- Implement corrective actions and reassess as necessary.
- Make it a win-win situation. If the delegate succeeds, the client will too.



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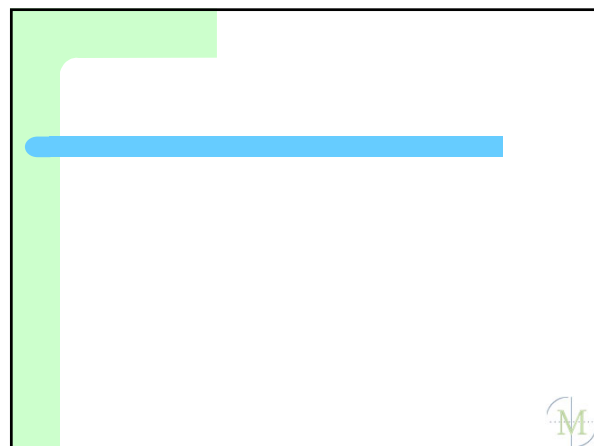
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