Key Workforce Competencies for Quality-Driven Healthcare

Where We Are and Imperatives for Improvement

September 2019

NAHQ
National Association for Healthcare Quality

Contents

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The previous version of this report dated April 2019 included a reporting error in the breakdowns of novice, proficient, and expert categories in the individual charts on pages 14-21. This error was identified and resolved by NAHQ. This September 2019 version updates and replaces the previous version of the report. The updated charts in this report do not change the key findings of April 2019 which documented a high-degree of variability in experience, training, and competencies among the healthcare quality workforce that must be overcome to achieve workforce readiness to deliver on value.

Executive Summary

As the U.S. health system rapidly shifts to business models designed to reward cost-efficient, quality care that improves patient outcomes, healthcare quality professionals are playing an increasingly central role in this transformation.

Are Healthcare Quality Professionals Up to the Challenge?

New research asked that question by inviting healthcare quality professionals to assess their work against the only industry standard for healthcare quality competencies, the NAHQ Healthcare Quality Competency Framework. The research, conducted by the National Association for Healthcare Quality (NAHQ), found mixed results about the readiness of the quality workforce to meet current and new demands in healthcare. While healthcare quality professionals are succeeding at moving their organizations in the directions prioritized by healthcare leaders, a number said key aspects of their work were more aligned with competencies ranked on the novice end of the spectrum than the more advanced levels of proficient and expert.

Key reasons for these results include the pace of change in healthcare and the deployment of just-in-time staffing solutions for healthcare quality which creates a high degree of variability in roles, structures, and process.

Another reason is that keeping pace with the changes in healthcare and quality makes training and re-training an infinite experience, that never ends.

As healthcare focuses on the path to value, an emphasis is often placed on innovation, infrastructure, and technology. While those strategies are essential to advance healthcare, workforce development, particularly in professional competencies needed to deliver higher quality, is often an unrecognized and unmet need.

To achieve the promise of healthcare value, it's crucial to move quality professionals from good to great. Doing so demands a systemic and strategic focus on quality that includes:

1. **Adopt NAHQ's industry-standard Healthcare Quality Competency Framework and take steps to hardwire it into the practice of healthcare quality.**

2. **Pursue training and education to reach new performance levels.**

3. **Take responsibility for workforce development and ensure teams are trained on the industry-standard healthcare quality competencies.**

Environmental Factors Highlight the Need for the Workforce to Adapt

The U.S. health system is moving aggressively to adopt new care delivery and payment models to achieve higher quality with better outcomes while controlling costs. As a result, a growing share of provider reimbursement is being tied to payer and regulatory mandates for high-quality patient care and outcomes, and in some cases downside financial risk if the goals are not achieved.

Healthcare is struggling to meet the new requirements. Hospital CEOs ranked financial challenges, government mandates, and patient safety and quality as their top three concerns in 2018, according to a survey by the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE).

In a January 2019 survey by Kaufman Hall, 13% of healthcare CFOs say their organizations are very prepared to manage evolving payment and delivery models using their existing financial planning processes and tools, down from 15% in 2017.

And when *Leaders for Today*, a healthcare interim and permanent staffing company, asked 200 healthcare leaders about their workforce challenges, 31% of respondents said their organization can't find enough candidates, and nearly 24% reported that the qualifications of new hires are questionable.

Pivotal Role of Quality Professionals

While everyone, including patients, needs to play a role in making the new healthcare models succeed, healthcare quality professionals are the key to reaching a new level of quality performance.

Healthcare quality professionals are leading quality and patient safety improvement efforts for their organizations. They've steadily taken on increasing responsibility since their early days in the 1970s as utilization reviewers. They made sure providers met legal reporting requirements. Now, they work both on the front lines and in administrative roles. To achieve affordable, quality healthcare, they design and lead in key areas such as data analytics, value-based contract readiness and implementation, quality reporting, outcomes improvement activities, regulatory and accreditation, population health initiatives, and more.

Variability in Quality Efforts

Quality progress in healthcare has been inconsistent and disjointed. The U.S. health system lacks agreement on a single set of competency standards that would give quality professionals the skills, tools, and techniques to spearhead quality-driven healthcare. Instead, individual healthcare organizations, including hospitals and health systems, have created their own quality standards and approaches.

Healthcare organizations have also responded to rapidly escalating demands for healthcare quality with just-in-time staffing solutions, creating a surge of new quality roles, including healthcare data analysts, population health directors, vice presidents of quality, and chief quality officers, to name a few. While the roles share a common goal to improve quality, the competency standards and expectations they rely on within and across organizations are highly variable. And, with rare exceptions, on-the-job-training has been the dominant strategy to teach the skills needed to do the work of healthcare quality.

Many associations and certification organizations for pharmacists, doctors, nurses, and other clinicians, as well as independent healthcare organizations, payers, and academia, have their own versions of quality goals, tools, and methodologies. While well-intentioned, the range of uncoordinated content, methods, and standards has added to the high degree of variability in practices and impacted results and effectiveness on a local level. These different quality practices compromise healthcare quality efforts across systems and disciplines.

A 2016 paper in The Joint Commission *Journal on Quality and Patient Safety*, documented the limited conformity of patient safety and quality improvement competencies, specifically the knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for all healthcare professionals. The authors called for a consensus on the competencies needed at all skill levels for the field of patient safety and quality.

Uncoordinated content, methods, and standards has added to the high degree of variability
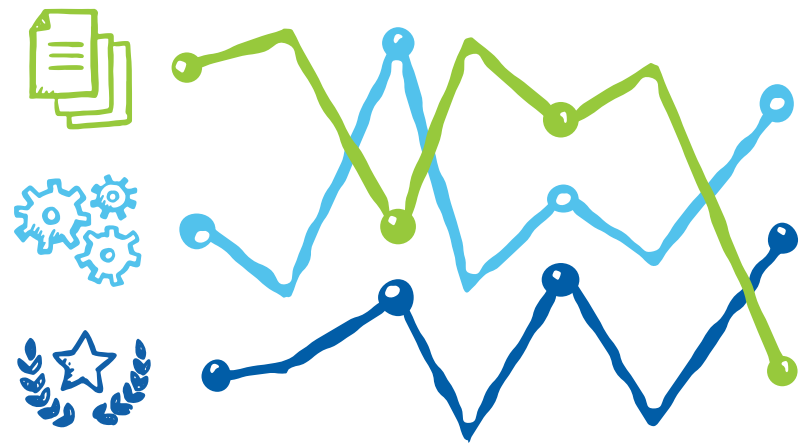
Healthcare Quality Competency Framework

Developing and Validating Industry-Standard Healthcare Quality Competencies

In late 2018, NAHQ created the first comprehensive framework of novice, proficient, and expert competencies for the healthcare quality profession. NAHQ's Healthcare Quality Competency Framework sets specific job requirements and capabilities across eight dimensions, 29 competencies, and 486 behavior-based competencies, stratified against novice, proficient, and expert levels. To develop these, NAHQ convened a panel of quality experts* from across healthcare to define and articulate the competencies required to fulfill healthcare quality needs. Broad representation and perspectives were brought to the development of the Competency Framework through the participation of experts from providers that ranged in size, patient population, geography, and care continuum to academics, consultants, association leaders, and payers.

See appendix for complete list of framework contributors

NAHQ
HEALTHCARE QUALITY
COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK
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QUALITY REVIEW AND ACCOUNTABILITY
- Relate current and emerging payment models to quality.
- Execute measure requirements.
- Facilitate practitioner performance review activities.
- Direct activities that support compliance with voluntary, mandatory and contractual reporting requirements for data acquisition, analysis, reporting, and improvement.

PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT
- Integrate ethical standards into practice.
- Engage in lifelong learning.
- Participate in activities that advance the profession.
- Engage in the healthcare quality profession with a commitment to practicing ethically, enhancing one's competence and advancing the field.

QUALITY LEADERSHIP AND INTEGRATION
- Direct the quality infrastructure.
- Regulate the use of privileged or confidential information.
- Implement processes for engagement and teamwork.
- Create learning opportunities to advance the organization.
- Communicate effectively.
- Advance the organization through collaboration, learning and communication. Lead the integration of quality into the fabric of the organization to achieve objectives.

PERFORMANCE AND PROCESS IMPROVEMENT
- Implement standard PPI methods.
- Apply project management methods.
- Use change management principles and tools.
- Use performance and process improvement (PPI), project management and change management methods to support operational and clinical quality initiatives.

POPULATION HEALTH AND CARE TRANSITIONS
- Integrate PH management strategies into quality.
- Apply a holistic approach to improvement.
- Collaborate to improve care processes and transitions.
- Evaluate and improve healthcare processes and care transitions to advance the efficient, effective and safe care of defined populations.

HEALTH DATA ANALYTICS
- Apply procedures for the governance of data assets.
- Design data collection plans for KPIs.
- Acquire data from source systems.
- Integrate data from internal and external electronic systems.
- Use statistical and visualization methods.
- Leverage the organization's analytic environment to help guide data driven decision making and inform quality improvement initiatives.

PATIENT SAFETY
- Assess patient safety culture.
- Apply safety science principles and methods.
- Identify and report patient safety risks and events.
- Collaborate to analyze patient safety risks and events.
- Cultivate a safe healthcare environment by promoting safe practices, nurturing a just culture and improving processes that detect, mitigate or prevent harm.

REGULATORY AND ACCREDITATION
- Operationalize processes to support standards compliance.
- Facilitate continuous survey readiness activities.
- Guide the organization through survey processes and findings.
- Direct the evaluating, monitoring & improving compliance with internal and external requirements. Lead the processes to prepare for, participate in, and follow up on R/A and certification surveys.

NAHQ validated the framework through two sequential surveys. First, it created a competency statement survey. It was distributed to 260 randomly selected healthcare quality professionals with the title of director and above who were drawn from NAHQ's database. Thirty eligible participants completed the survey, ranking the healthcare quality competency statements on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being very important. Respondents ranked all competency statements 3 or higher, with an overall mean of 3.54, confirming all the competency statements in the framework were important. The survey also sought suggestions for missing competency statements. None were identified.

NAHQ then developed a self-assessment on the Competency Framework validated by the experts. It was distributed through an e-mail survey to a random sample from within the NAHQ database of 1,500 healthcare quality professionals. The response rate was 32%. There were 484 respondents with 369 (76%) meeting the inclusion criteria for the survey and

283 answering in all eight domain areas. Content and discriminant validity were both confirmed.

How the Healthcare Quality Competency Framework Works

Collectively, the competencies framework describes the knowledge and skills required for developing and leading a successful healthcare quality program. All healthcare quality professionals should meet at least the novice level of capability in all eight dimensions. Because different quality professionals often specialize in certain areas, it's unlikely and unnecessary for a single professional to possess all competencies at an expert level. Instead, the spectrum of novice, proficient, and expert capabilities should be represented across each organization's quality workforce, both within and outside the quality department, and through services provided by consultants or other vendors. It's also important to recognize that quality work is being conducted by a wide variety of healthcare professionals.

Current State of the Healthcare Quality Profession

Assessment

NAHQ conducted the workforce self-assessment research in late 2018. The goal, in addition to validating the competencies, was also to observe the self-assessed competency level of the quality workforce on the industry-standard Healthcare Quality Competency Framework. With a changing healthcare industry presenting new demands for quality and calling for better outcomes, NAHQ sought to find out the current levels of competencies of quality workers and their readiness to meet new goals. NAHQ also sought to create the industry's first benchmark on healthcare quality competencies. Starting with the industry-standard Quality Competency Framework and its own database of quality professionals, NAHQ had a way to establish a baseline for the profession to improve. In taking this approach, it followed the precedent of many other professions who have used self-assessment to standardize and advance their practices.

While the research asked healthcare quality professionals to evaluate the scope of their work against the eight dimensions, 29 competencies, and 486 competency behaviors within NAHQ's Healthcare Quality Competency Framework, it was designed to segment respondents' quality capabilities into three proficiency categories: novice, proficient, and expert. Respondents were not aware of these categories when answering the survey, rather their responses determined their assessed level of performance. The professionals who took the survey only assessed themselves on the competency behavioral levels of their current work, meaning respondents could have broader capabilities than what the assessment shows. It's also important to note that environmental factors like lack of technical interoperability and organizational culture likely influenced the responses. Regardless, this assessment tells a story of how quality professionals perceive their own work. While individuals took the survey, this data can be extrapolated in the aggregate to assess how the workforce in total is being utilized by healthcare organizations.

Self-Assessment Survey—By the Numbers

369 TOTAL RESPONDENTS

283 ANSWERED IN ALL EIGHT DOMAINS

ABOUT **1/2** DO QUALITY WORK 100% OF THE TIME

74% WORK FOR A HEALTH SYSTEM

60% MASTER'S DEGREE

10% DOCTORAL DEGREE

95% OF RESPONDENTS WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

Key Findings

Healthcare quality professionals are proficient in their capabilities, with a score of 2 on a 1- to 3-point scale on all eight dimensions of healthcare quality within the Competency Framework.

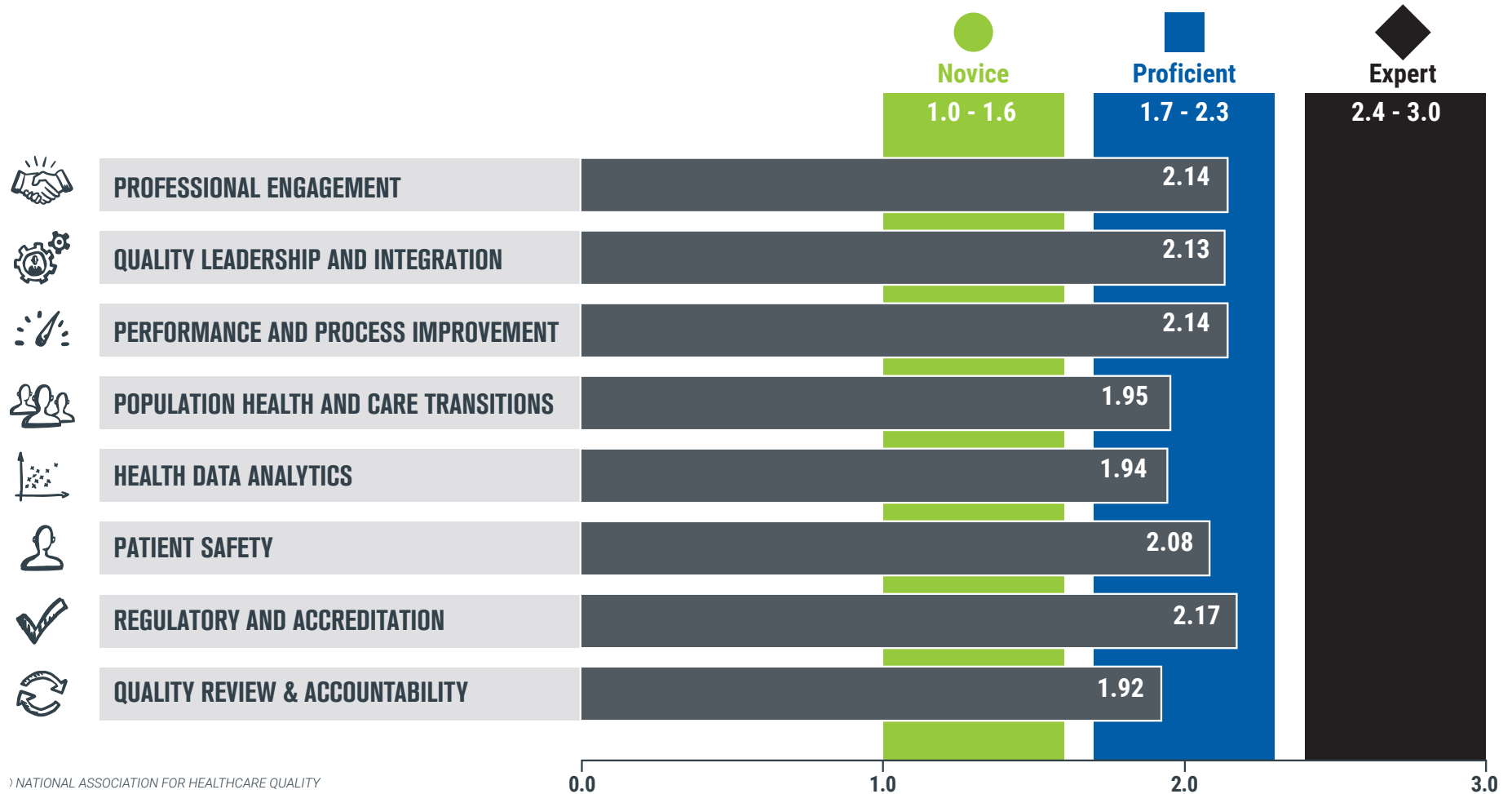Other key findings from the self-assessment included:

Years of work experience is highly variable. Work experience mean is 6-12 years, median is 11-20 years, while mode is 21+ years. A diverse workforce requires training and re-training.	There is no meaningful difference in competency levels between those with clinical backgrounds and those without. This finding answers a long-debated question regarding the necessity of a clinical background to support healthcare quality.	A number of healthcare quality professionals said key aspects of their work were aligned with competencies ranked on the novice end of the spectrum for competencies associated with value, thereby highlighting the need for continued professional development to keep pace with environmental shifts.

NAHQ

OVERALL COMPETENCY RATINGS

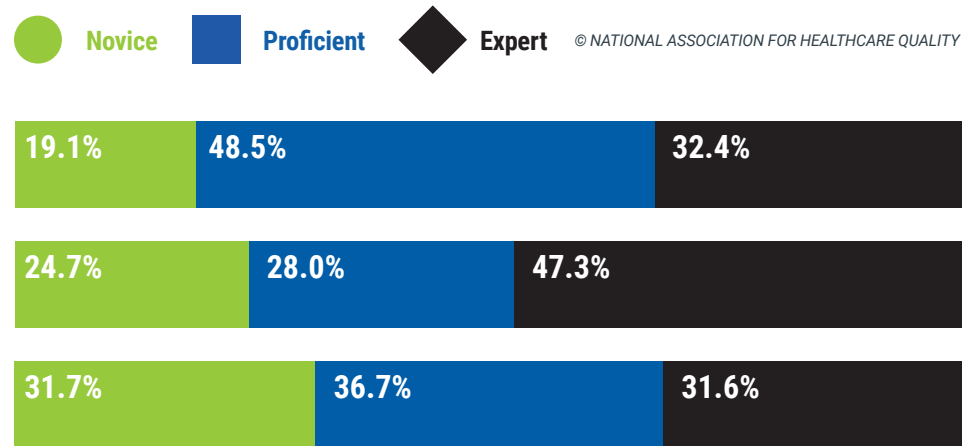The mean response for all respondents hovered in the proficient in all domain areas.

	Novice	Proficient	Expert
	1.0 - 1.6	1.7 - 2.3	2.4 - 3.0
PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT		2.14	
QUALITY LEADERSHIP AND INTEGRATION		2.13	
PERFORMANCE AND PROCESS IMPROVEMENT		2.14	
POPULATION HEALTH AND CARE TRANSITIONS		1.95	
HEALTH DATA ANALYTICS		1.94	
PATIENT SAFETY		2.08	
REGULATORY AND ACCREDITATION		2.17	
QUALITY REVIEW & ACCOUNTABILITY		1.92	

0.0   1.0   2.0   3.0
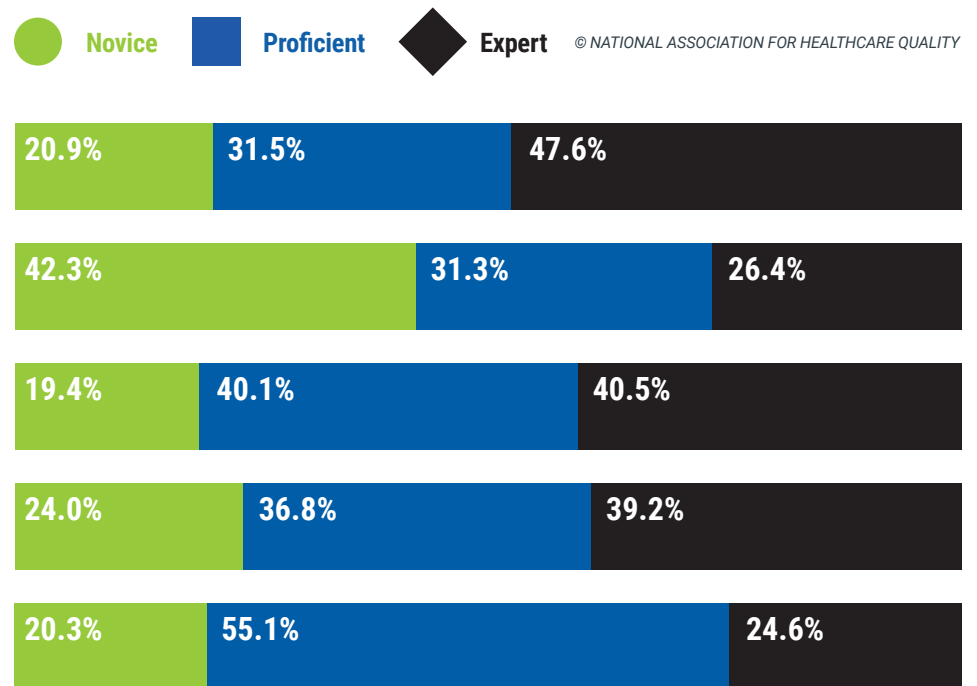
PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The quality workforce is no different than other professions when it comes to following well-established, professional growth patterns. Aspiring to higher levels of performance, quality professionals work to improve capabilities and skills through lifelong learning, more active participation within the profession, and incorporating ethical standards into their programs.

Novice   **Proficient**   **Expert**   © NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTHCARE QUALITY

1. Integrate ethical standards into practice

19.1%	48.5%	32.4%

2. Engage in lifelong learning

24.7%	28.0%	47.3%

3. Participate in activities that advance the profession

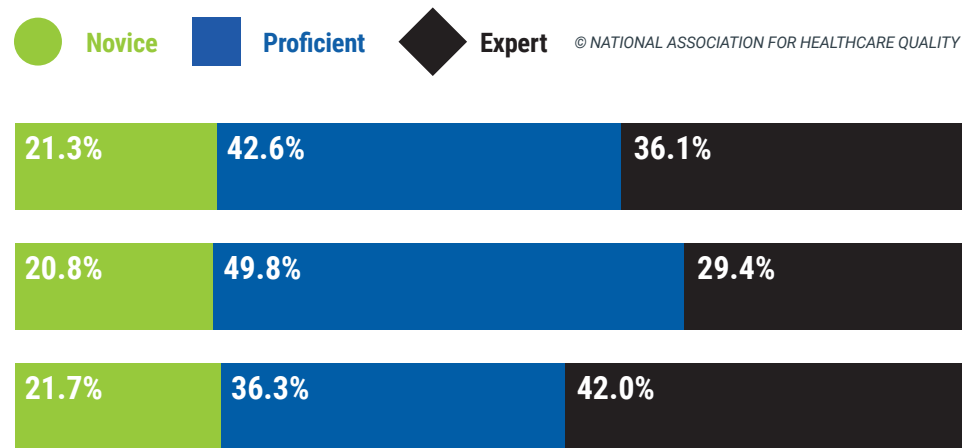| 31.7%	36.7%	31.6%

QUALITY LEADERSHIP AND INTEGRATION

Quality professionals have long been recognized for their ability to communicate effectively, to engage stakeholders, and to organize infrastructure to achieve quality healthcare goals.

● Novice ■ Proficient ◆ Expert   © NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTHCARE QUALITY

1. Direct the quality infrastructure

| 20.9% | 31.5% | 47.6% |

2. Regulate the use of privileged or confidential information

| 42.3% | 31.3% | 26.4% |

3. Implement processes for engagement and interprofessional teamwork

| 19.4% | 40.1% | 40.5% |

4. Create learning opportunities to advance the organization

| 24.0% | 36.8% | 39.2% |

5. Communicate effectively
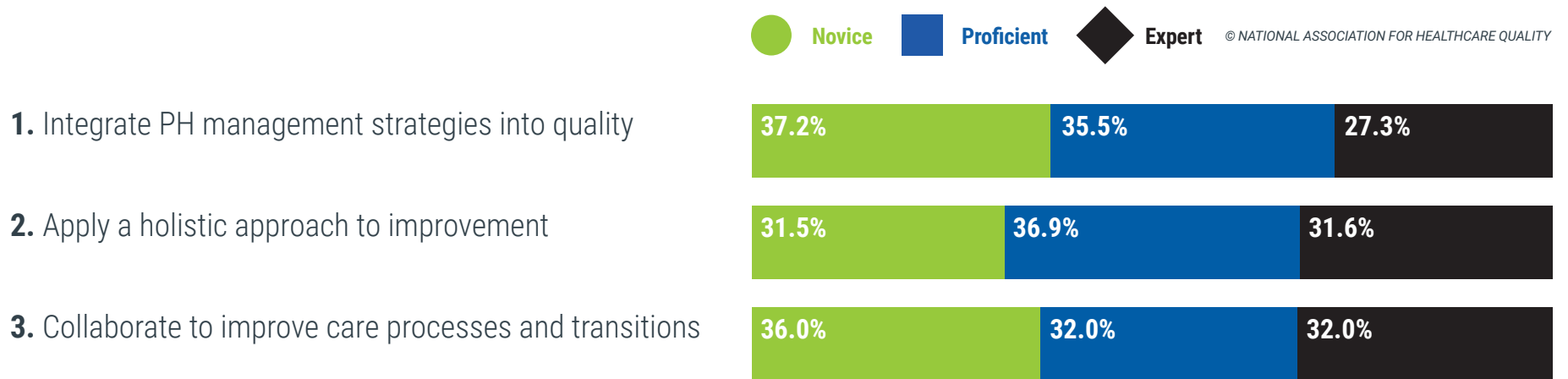
| 20.3% | 55.1% | 24.6% |

PERFORMANCE AND PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

Performance and process improvement is a foundational element of the healthcare quality profession. Because improving patient outcomes and financial performance are priorities for healthcare, this is an area for continued focus and professional development for healthcare quality professionals.

Novice | **Proficient** | **Expert** © NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTHCARE QUALITY

1. Implement standard performance and process improvement

Novice	Proficient	Expert
21.3%	42.6%	36.1%

2. Apply project management methods

Novice	Proficient	Expert
20.8%	49.8%	29.4%

3. Use change management principles and tools

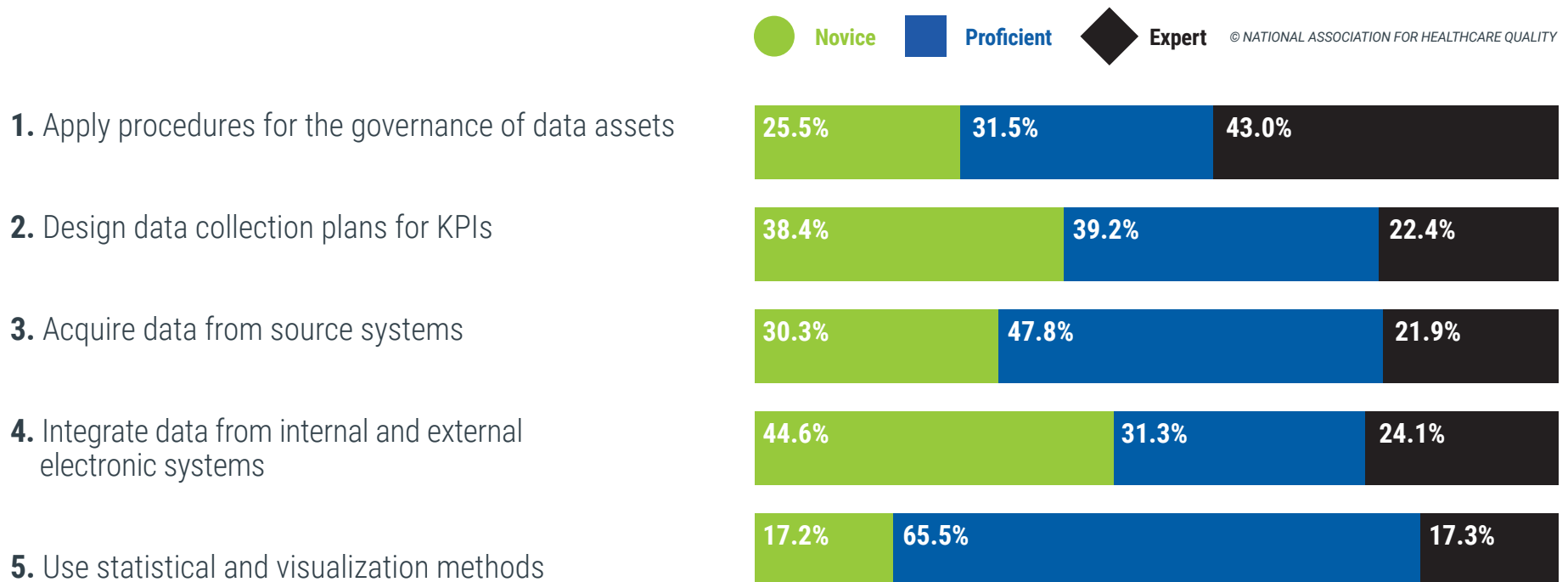| Novice	Proficient	Expert
21.7%	36.3%	42.0%

POPULATION HEALTH AND CARE TRANSITIONS

The newness of population health and care transitions indicate the need to advance quality professionals to more proficient and expert levels of the competency spectrum.
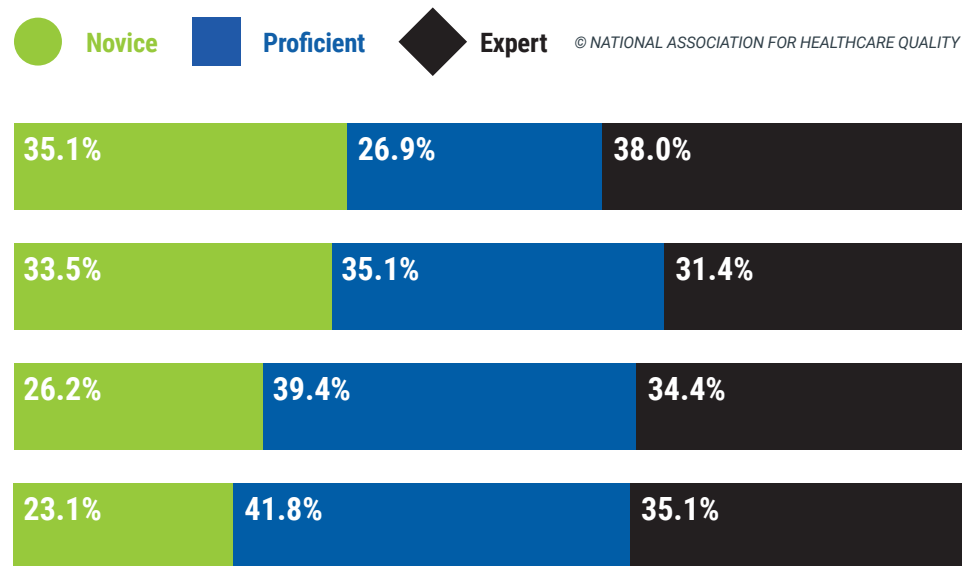
Novice   **Proficient**   **Expert**   © NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTHCARE QUALITY

1. Integrate PH management strategies into quality

Novice	Proficient	Expert
37.2%	35.5%	27.3%

2. Apply a holistic approach to improvement

Novice	Proficient	Expert
31.5%	36.9%	31.6%

3. Collaborate to improve care processes and transitions

Novice	Proficient	Expert
36.0%	32.0%	32.0%

HEALTH DATA ANALYTICS

Capability levels vary in health data analytics, with a shortage of expert competency in areas that are increasing in complexity and growing exponentially, such as in integrating data from various sources.

● Novice　■ Proficient　◆ Expert　© NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTHCARE QUALITY

1. Apply procedures for the governance of data assets

| 25.5% | 31.5% | 43.0% |

2. Design data collection plans for KPIs

| 38.4% | 39.2% | 22.4% |

3. Acquire data from source systems

| 30.3% | 47.8% | 21.9% |

4. Integrate data from internal and external electronic systems

| 44.6% | 31.3% | 24.1% |

5. Use statistical and visualization methods

| 17.2% | 65.5% | 17.3% |

PATIENT SAFETY

In the 20 years since the Institute of Medicine disclosed the shocking annual toll in preventable hospital patient deaths and other medical errors, the U.S. health system has worked diligently to improve patient safety and quality. Despite real and important progress since the landmark report, *To Err is Human: Building a Safer Health System*, there is still opportunity for improvement.

Novice Proficient Expert © NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTHCARE QUALITY

1. Assess patient safety culture

Novice	Proficient	Expert
35.1%	26.9%	38.0%

2. Apply safety science principles and methods

Novice	Proficient	Expert
33.5%	35.1%	31.4%

3. Identify and report patient safety risks and events

Novice	Proficient	Expert
26.2%	39.4%	34.4%

4. Collaborate to analyze patient safety risks and events

Novice	Proficient	Expert
23.1%	41.8%	35.1%

REGULATORY AND ACCREDITATION

Regulatory and Accreditation are foundational areas for quality. The responses reflect the profession's experience in this area.

● **Novice** ■ **Proficient** ◆ **Expert** © NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTHCARE QUALITY

1. Operationalize processes to support compliance with standards

27.5%	34.0%	38.5%

2. Facilitate continuous survey readiness activities

25.9%	39.9%	34.2%

3. Guide the organization through survey processes and findings

24.4%	24.4%	51.2%
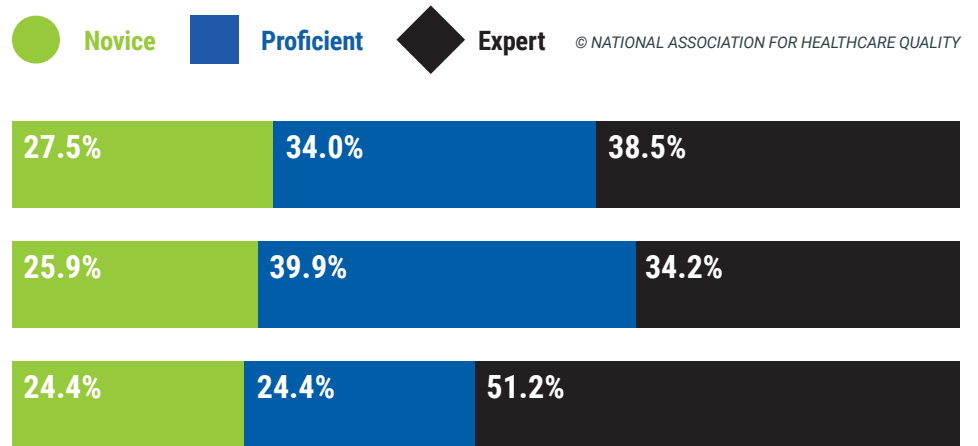
QUALITY REVIEW AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Payment models, measurement, and practice performance reviews are important concepts to achieve value in healthcare quality. As value models evolve this is an area for continued professional development.

	Novice	Proficient	Expert	© NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTHCARE QUALITY

1. Relate current and emerging payment models to quality

39.1%	34.8%	26.1%

2. Execute measure requirements

35.6%	41.4%	23.0%

3. Facilitate practitioner performance review activities

33.7%	33.8%	32.5%
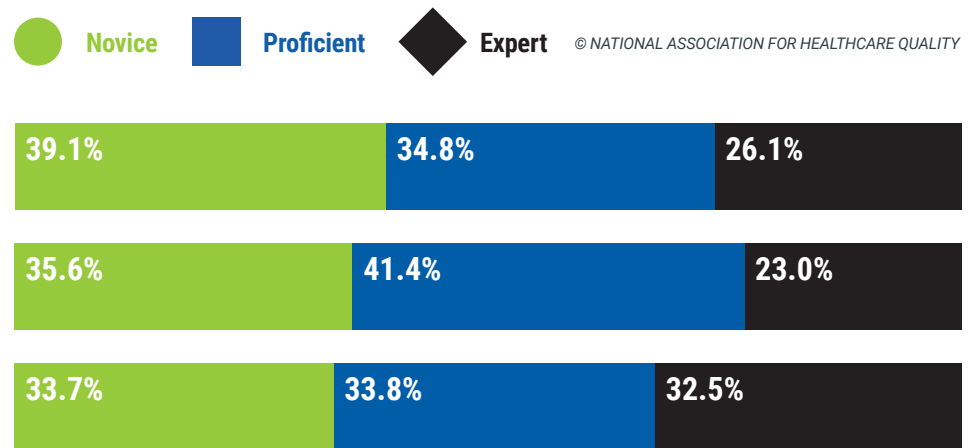
Recommendations

Taking Quality to the Next Level

The self-assessed current state of the quality workforce provides clear direction for improvement across the quality competency spectrum. It also points the way to opportunities for making faster progress on quality and value.

The future of healthcare depends on delivering exceptional quality and outcomes cost-effectively. Reaching this future, expeditiously, depends on shared quality priorities, investment, and active engagement throughout healthcare. The healthcare quality workforce self-assessment makes an important contribution to this effort. As the first benchmark of healthcare quality workers against industry-standard quality competencies needed to deliver improvements, it promotes understanding of how to develop the healthcare workforce to achieve value. The research points to three key actions that the healthcare industry should take to develop their workforces to improve healthcare now.

Recommendation #1

Adopt NAHQ's industry-standard Healthcare Quality Competency Framework and take steps to hardwire it into the practice of healthcare quality.

Healthcare embraces standardization and evidence-based best practices throughout clinical care and the same approach promises to deliver big benefits for healthcare quality professionals and quality improvement efforts. The Healthcare Quality Competency Framework, developed and validated by quality experts and professionals, gives healthcare a common quality language, sets standards and expectations for quality work, and provides accountability by offering a way to assess performance.

A shared vocabulary, quality toolsets, and protocols developed by those whose sole focus is healthcare quality will ease the burden of numerous stakeholders trying to define their own paths to quality. By using the industry-standard competencies to align quality staff against organizational quality needs, it will not only make improvements happen faster but make them sustainable.

Recommendation #2

Pursue training and education to reach new performance levels.

To deliver quality innovation that improves healthcare value, healthcare quality professionals will need to pursue more training to reach advanced levels in key competencies. Just as healthcare continues to evolve, the healthcare quality workforce must acquire new skills to continue to make and maintain quality progress. Continued training on specific topics like reducing readmissions, sepsis, patient engagement, etc., are important, however, that training would be much better leveraged with underlying training on the industry-standard healthcare quality competencies required to do this work.

Well-rounded quality professionals should attain the proficient level in all eight dimensions of the healthcare quality framework which is the industry-standard and is certified by the only accredited certification in healthcare quality, the Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality® (CPHQ).

Recommendation #3

Take responsibility for workforce development and ensure teams are trained on the industry-standard healthcare quality competencies.

Healthcare conversations often speak about moving upstream to improve healthcare and health. Healthcare executives need to focus on workforce development and move upstream in their business to solve today's business and care delivery challenges. They should balance solutions such as just-in-time training to solve downstream challenges, with an upstream focus on developing a coordinated, competent workforce. When the workforce is trained on industry-standard healthcare quality competencies and is armed with a healthcare quality toolkit, executives have a better chance of getting in front of the challenges versus fixing them after-the-fact, which can take energy from other initiatives, create distractions that disrupt work, and discourage the workforce.

Aligning Quality Work and Higher Education

At present, it makes sense to prioritize developing quality workforce competencies where the need is most pressing: in the healthcare workplace. Longer term, aligning undergraduate and graduate healthcare quality education with best practices in the quality field, will produce students who are better prepared to meet the rigor of the quality work on Day One.

The recent growth in collegiate quality and safety degree programs, triggered by escalating demand for these professionals, has led to the same type of variety and inconsistency in academia, leading academics to realize that there must be broadly accepted standards for the education of quality and safety professionals, especially for those earning graduate degrees in the field. These standards are necessary to help students graduate from programs that will provide them with the skills that healthcare employers value and that are necessary to succeed in quality work.

Alignment between quality practitioners and academia is already underway. NAHQ's competencies serve as valuable building blocks for curriculum development in many U.S. graduate degree programs. Northwestern University, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Jacksonville University and Thomas Jefferson University now award master's level credit hours to graduate students who earn NAHQ's Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality® (CPHQ) designation. The recognition of the CPHQ as a foundational building block for advanced training is important and provides a bridging strategy for those healthcare quality professionals pursuing advanced degrees.

More recently, NAHQ and top-quality practitioners collaborated with the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME) and 11 leading universities to develop accreditation standards for those universities' graduate programs in healthcare quality. Employers prioritize hiring graduates of academic programs with accreditations for management from CAHME, public health from the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), and health informatics from the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM). Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that incorporating standardized quality competencies as part of the accreditation for quality and safety education will speed acceptance in academia and by employers.

In spring 2019, academia will see the first programs that meet minimally accepted academic and practitioner accreditation standards. These programs will be considered CAHME certified in quality and safety. Full accreditation, which includes a period of academic self-reflection and peer review, is expected to be conferred for the first time in 2021.

Drexel University
George Washington University
Jacksonville University
Misericordia University
Queen's University
Sam Houston State University
Thomas Jefferson University
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Calgary
University of Illinois at Chicago
University of Toronto

How NAHQ Will Help

As the leader in setting industry-standard quality competencies, NAHQ is dedicated to preparing a coordinated, competent workforce to lead and advance healthcare quality across the continuum of care. NAHQ is the only association solely dedicated to healthcare quality professionals and to developing this critical expertise within the workforce. In this role, NAHQ has developed resources, education, and research to advance the quality profession, including the only accredited certification program for healthcare quality professionals, the CPHQ.

To help the quality workforce, their organizations, and U.S. healthcare overall move from good to great on quality, NAHQ is pursuing an ambitious agenda, including:

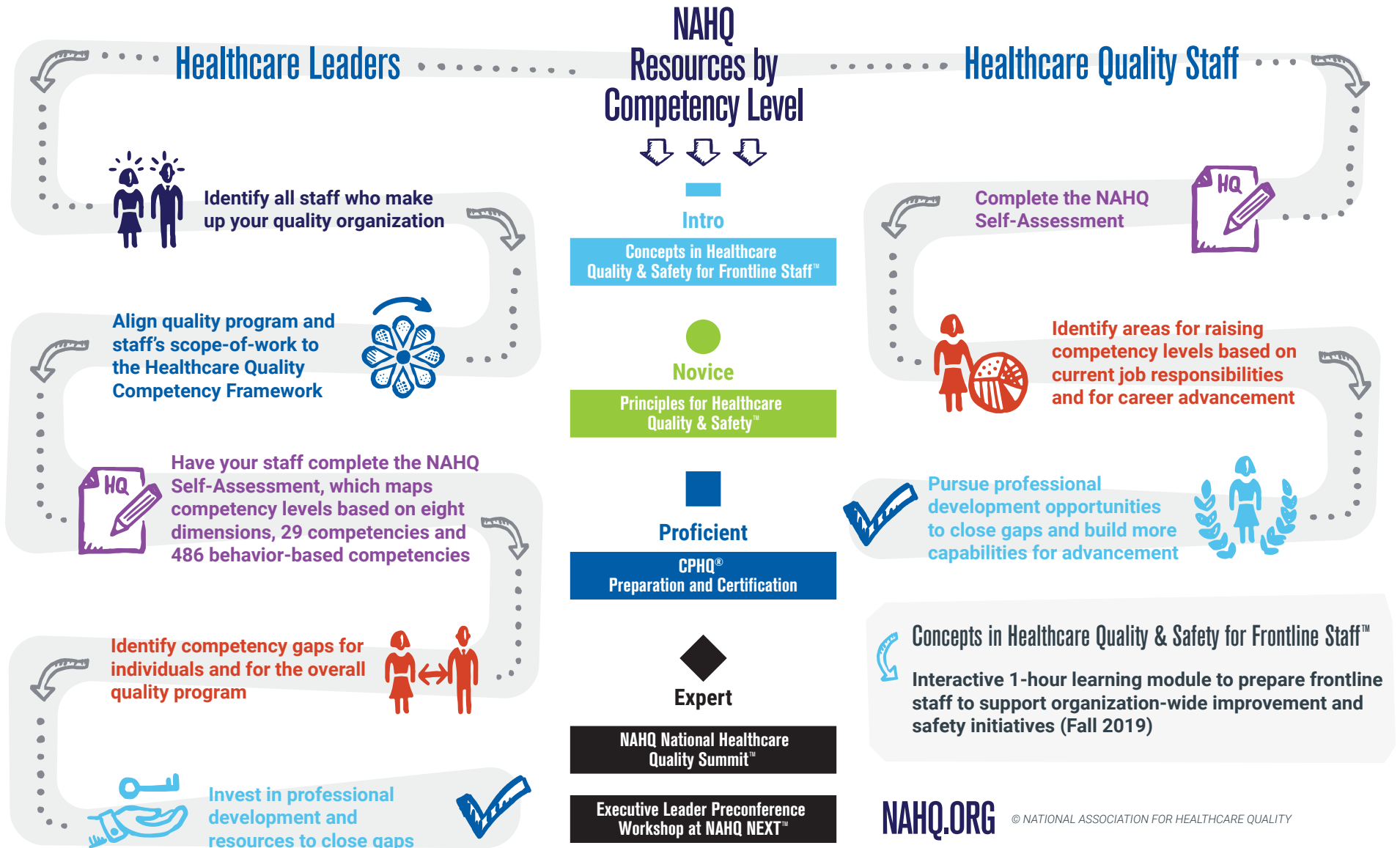|				
Adapting the NAHQ Self-Assessment workforce survey tool for individual use so healthcare quality professionals can identify their individual development needs and benchmark current self-assessed performance against their peers.	**Expanding** training and development on the Competency Framework for all levels of quality professionals and other healthcare employees. While other organizations may train on specific topics in healthcare quality, NAHQ will teach competencies.	**Updating** the industry-standard Healthcare Quality Competency Framework to meet the evolving needs of the quality profession and of healthcare organizations.	**Developing** strategic partnerships to advance competency-based training between and among academic organizations and other associations.	**Forming** strategic partnerships to advance quality objectives across disciplines.

Achieving Quality-Driven Healthcare

Achieving true quality-driven healthcare, as soon as possible, requires higher performance from quality professionals and from the entire healthcare workforce.

Quality-driven healthcare requires collective intention, shared competency standards, collaborative effort, and sustained commitment. Education and training should not be considered a just-in-time remedy to the problems that arise from an untrained workforce. Instead, competency-based training should be leveraged as a business and growth strategy.

Healthcare leaders need to commit now to training their workforce to meet the new demands of healthcare quality so they can leverage these professionals as key drivers of greater value.

Healthcare Quality Competency Implementation Roadmap

Healthcare Leaders

Identify all staff who make up your quality organization

Align quality program and staff's scope-of-work to the Healthcare Quality Competency Framework

Have your staff complete the NAHQ Self-Assessment, which maps competency levels based on eight dimensions, 29 competencies and 486 behavior-based competencies

Identify competency gaps for individuals and for the overall quality program

Invest in professional development and resources to close gaps

NAHQ Resources by Competency Level

Intro
Concepts in Healthcare Quality & Safety for Frontline Staff™

Novice
Principles for Healthcare Quality & Safety™

Proficient
CPHQ®
Preparation and Certification

Expert
NAHQ National Healthcare Quality Summit™

Executive Leader Preconference Workshop at NAHQ NEXT™

Healthcare Quality Staff

Complete the NAHQ Self-Assessment

Identify areas for raising competency levels based on current job responsibilities and for career advancement

Pursue professional development opportunities to close gaps and build more capabilities for advancement

Concepts in Healthcare Quality & Safety for Frontline Staff™

Interactive 1-hour learning module to prepare frontline staff to support organization-wide improvement and safety initiatives (Fall 2019)

NAHQ.ORG © NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTHCARE QUALITY

Appendix

Understanding NAHQ's Healthcare Quality Competency Framework

NAHQ's Healthcare Quality Competency Framework sets specific job requirements and capabilities across eight dimensions, 29 competencies, and 486 behavior-based competencies, stratified against novice, proficient, and expert levels.

1. PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Engage in the healthcare quality profession with a commitment to practicing ethically, enhancing one's competence, and advancing the field.

1. Integrate ethical standards into healthcare quality practice.

2. Engage in lifelong learning as a healthcare quality professional.

3. Participate in activities that advance the healthcare quality profession.

2. QUALITY LEADERSHIP AND INTEGRATION

Advance the organization's commitment to healthcare quality through collaboration, learning opportunities, and communication. Lead the integration of quality into the fabric of the organization through a coordinated infrastructure to achieve organizational objectives.

1. Direct the quality infrastructure to achieve organizational objectives.

2. Apply procedures to regulate the use of privileged or confidential information.

3. Implement processes to promote stakeholder engagement and interprofessional teamwork.

4. Create learning opportunities to advance healthcare quality throughout the organization.

5. Communicate effectively with different audiences to achieve quality goals.

3. PERFORMANCE AND PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

Use performance and process improvement (PPI), project management, and change management methods to support operational and clinical quality initiatives, improve performance, and achieve organizational goals.

1. Implement standard performance and process improvement (PPI) methods.

2. Apply project management methods.

3. Use change management principles and tools.

4. POPULATION HEALTH AND CARE TRANSITIONS

Evaluate and improve healthcare processes and care transitions to advance the efficient, effective, and safe care of defined populations.

1. Integrate population health management strategies into quality work.

2. Apply a holistic approach to improvement.

3. Collaborate with stakeholders to improve care processes and transitions.

Understanding NAHQ's Healthcare Quality Competency Framework (Continued)

5. HEALTH DATA ANALYTICS

Leverage the organization's analytic environment to help guide data-driven decision making and inform quality improvement initiatives.

1. Apply procedures for the governance of data assets.

2. Design data collection plans for key metrics and performance indicators.

3. Acquire data from source systems.

4. Integrate data from internal and external electronic data systems.

5. Use statistical and visualization methods.

6. PATIENT SAFETY

Cultivate a safe healthcare environment by promoting safe practices, nurturing a just culture, and improving processes that detect, mitigate, or prevent harm.

1. Assess the organization's patient safety culture.

2. Apply safety science principles and methods in healthcare quality work.

3. Use organizational procedures to identify and report patient safety risks and events.

4. Collaborate with stakeholders to analyze patient safety risks and events.

7. REGULATORY AND ACCREDITATION

Direct organization-wide processes for evaluating, monitoring, and improving compliance with internal and external requirements. Lead the organization's processes to prepare for, participate in, and follow up on regulatory, accreditation, and certification surveys and activities.

1. Operationalize processes to support compliance with regulations and standards.

2. Facilitate continuous survey readiness activities.

3. Guide the organization through survey processes and findings.

8. QUALITY REVIEW AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Direct activities that support compliance with voluntary, mandatory, and contractual reporting requirements for data acquisition, analysis, reporting, and improvement.

1. Relate current and emerging payment models to healthcare quality work.

2. Conduct the activities to execute measure requirements.

3. Implement processes to facilitate practitioner performance review activities.

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Who Are Healthcare Quality Professionals?

NAHQ is frequently asked, who are healthcare quality professionals? The question simply answered is that they are a diverse mix of healthcare professionals. Pulling back the curtain on that diversity, a healthcare quality workforce composed of a wide variety of professionals is revealed. Healthcare quality professionals represent many healthcare disciplines, come from different educational backgrounds, are clinical and non-clinical, work in different healthcare settings and sometimes outside of care settings for other types of healthcare organizations. They hold different positions and primary jobs and vary in their years of experience as well as in their assigned levels within their organizations. They are predominantly female.

Gender

Male	12.4%
Female	86.9%
Prefer Not to Answer	0.7%

Education

Some college but no degree	2.1%
Associate degree in college (2-year)	4.2%
Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)	24.0%
Master's degree	59.8%
Doctoral degree	7.4%
Professional degree (e.g., JD, MD)	2.5%

Country

95% of respondents practice in the United States primarily

Job Title

President or CEO	1.8%
C-Level Executive (Excluding CEO)	4.6%
Vice President	2.5%
Director	24.0%
Manager/Supervisor	20.1%
Specialist/Analyst	21.6%
Staff	4.9%
Consultant	11.0%
Other	9.5%

Type of Work

Clinical	20.1%
Non-Clinical	79.9%

Licensure

|	
Nurse (e.g., RN, APN)	64.0%
MD or DO	3.2%
Other clinical license (e.g., PA, PT, OT, RT. LCSW, PharmD)	7.4%
Non-Clinical License (e.g., engineer, attorney)	4.6%
No License	20.8%

Percent of Time in Quality Role

10%	1.1%
20%	4.2%
30%	2.8%
40%	3.2%
50%	6.7%
60%	4.6%
70%	4.9%
80%	9.9%
90%	7.1%
100%	55.5%

Quality Function Centralization

Quality is a centralized function/department within your facility.	76.6%
Quality function is decentralized within your facility.	23.4%

Years of Healthcare Quality Work Experience
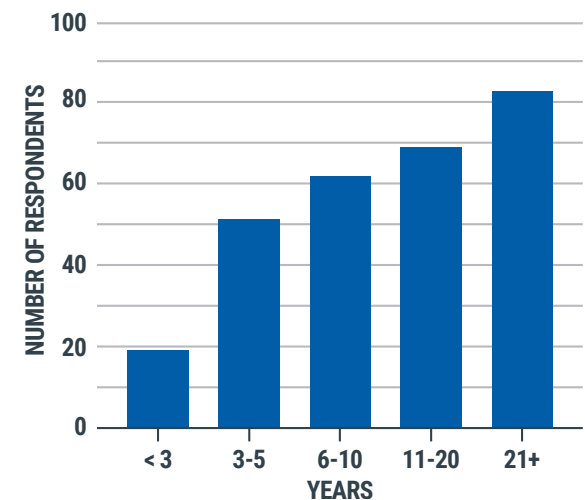
Data from NAHQ Healthcare Quality Workforce Survey November/December 2018.

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