



Conference Call Summary

'Planning a National Nursing Quality and Safety Alliance' National Nursing Convener Organizations

June 10, 2009

A conference call involving the members of the Nursing Quality and Safety Alliance was held on Wednesday, June 10, 2009 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Eastern Time).

Nursing Quality and Safety Alliance members present: Linda R. Cronenwett, PhD, RN, FAAN, Beverly Malone, PhD, RN, FAAN, Isis Montalvo, RN, MS, MBA, Laura Rhodes, MSN, RN, Diane "Dee" Swanson, MSN, NP-C, FAANP, M. Elaine Tagliareni, EdD, RN, Pamela Thompson, MS, RN, FAAN, Jan Towers, PhD, NP-C, CRNP, FAANP, FAAN and Kitty Werner.

GW staff present: Debra Churos, Ellen M. Dawson, PhD, ANP, Ellen T. Kurtzman, RN, MPH, Jean E. Johnson, PhD, RN, FAAN, and Brenda Sheingold, PhD, RN.

Others present: Sue Hassmiller (RWJF), Nancy Short, DrPH, MBA, RN (GW consultant).

Welcome and Overview

Dr. Dawson welcomed the participants on the conference call. She summarized the aim of the call, which was to discuss outstanding issues related to the submission of the implementation grant proposal to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). She thanked everyone for their ongoing contributions and reminded everyone that the next NQSA meeting would be held at The George Washington University (GW) on Monday, July 20, 2009.

Following Dr. Dawson's welcome, Ms. Kurtzman reviewed the agenda and meeting objectives including:

- finalizing the NQSA's operating structures; and
- discussing potential candidates and nominees to serve on Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) Nursing Steering Committee and the National Quality Forum's (NQF) Board of Directors.

Following these introductory comments, the group reviewed the summary from its May 14, 2009 conference call. It was noted that Jan Towers participated on the call but was not included, which would be corrected by project staff. No additional comments or amendments were made.

NQSA's Organizing Structures

Dr. Nancy Short led the discussion regarding NQSA's organizing structures and the impact that RWJF's anticipated funding support (i.e., \$900,000 over two years) might have on decisions related to NQSA's operations. In her comments, Dr. Short emphasized that several key decisions had already been made by the conveners including NQSA's:

- mission, purposes, and priorities;
- focus as a nursing-oriented and nursing-driven collaborative with involvement by patient and consumer groups as well as other key stakeholders;
- oversight and management as an affiliate of an established host organization; and
- leadership by a single steering committee chair.

The group was asked to focus on outstanding issues related to the impact of anticipated funding and operational issues including NQSA's host organization, governance structure, membership benefits and dues, and personnel.

Impact of Funding

Dr. Short noted that the funding level would likely prohibit NQSA from pursuing its full mission and range of activities unless additional funding could be obtained. In this regard, three recommendations regarding NQSA's mission and activities were supported by the conveners in light of the lower level of anticipated funding:

- retain the envisioned mission, purpose and priorities but concentrate on the policy-related agenda;
- recognize that initial support will limit the quality improvement and scholarship activities; and
- engage a grant writer and/or development professional to assist with obtaining funding to support the full mission and NQSA's growth and sustainability.

In response, the conveners asked about major expenses as well as the necessary funding levels to sustain NQSA beyond years 1 and 2. Ms. Kurtzman answered that the primary expense lines would be for personnel and that, although projections had not extended beyond its first phase of implementation, NQSA would likely require \$550,000 to \$600,000 annually to operate.

Dr. Short made the following additional points:

- RWJF did not prohibit the group from requesting additional funding from it beyond the 2-year implementation grant.
- NQSA would be proactive about soliciting other sources of funding.
- There will be a modest amount of revenue from member dues, which will grow as NQSA's membership grows.

The group also discussed the need for a content expert/thought leader as a substitute or addition to the grant writer/development expert noting that generating programmatic ideas and soliciting support for them was a higher-level function.

Host Organizations

Dr. Short referred the group to the criteria the group had established for screening and selecting possible host organizations as well as staff's application of these criteria to potential organizations. Following presentation of these tools, the group discussed its concerns, questions, and preferences:

- The term "neutral" was debated with a shared concern that neutrality is unlikely. Instead the group preferred the terms "impartial" and "objective."
- The group asked GW whether it would be willing to continue to serve as convener under the implementation grant. Dr. Johnson stressed GW's commitment to the Alliance and willingness to assume that role but noted that GW was not advocating for that responsibility.
- The group generally agreed that during its first two years, NQSA would be nascent and emerging - not stable nor mature enough to operate on its own.
- In the end, the group unanimously voted to house NQSA at GW during its first two years of operation and revisit this arrangement for years 3 and beyond.
- It was suggested that it would be appropriate for the Steering Committee to make the decision as to what to do after the initial two year period.

Steering Committee Composition

Project staff shared updated plans for NQSA's Steering Committee noting specific changes that were made in response to the group's first review in May. The group asked for clarification about how consumer representatives would be selected for the designated Steering Committee seats and suggested that project staff solicit feedback from the consumer representatives on this matter.

Work Group Structure

Dr. Short provided a brief description of the work group structure that had been refined and elaborated on since the convener's first review of it. No additional questions or comments were raised about this proposal.

Membership Benefits/Dues Structure

Project staff summarized its recommendations regarding NQSA dues, which were discussed during the May conference call. Previously, the group supported the idea of a significant differential between Principal organizations and non-Principal organizations. The group reviewed staff's recommendation of \$2,500 and \$750 annually respectively for Principal organizations and non-Principal organizations.

In response, the group raised concerns about small organizations that would be unable to support NQSA at the \$2,500 level. In response, the following options were proposed:

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- The organization could opt to be a non-Principal at the lower dues level;
- A sliding scale, based on organizational size or budget, could be created; or
- Case-by-case exceptions could be made for need.

The group supported the policy of entertaining case-by-case exceptions based on need.

In addition to dues, project staff asked the conveners whether additional support from them would be possible including space in relevant publications and complimentary registrations at key meetings and conferences. The group generally agreed this would be practical and advisable.

Personnel and Staffing

The group discussed personnel and staffing issues. Ms. Kurtzman noted that staff would be drawn from the project team already established and working on the planning grant (e.g., Drs. Johnson, Dawson, Short, Sheingold). The group advocated for project staff being Washington, DC-based to effectively fulfill the policy functions. GW project staff guaranteed staffing would be adjusted to fulfill this role.

NQSA Candidates and Nominees

Dr. Brenda Sheingold introduced the group's discussion of potential nominees to serve as representatives on CMS's Nursing Steering Committee and on NQF's Governing Board with an overview of each role, candidate qualifications, and potential nominees.

The group quickly arrived at a nominee for the CMS Steering Committee – Julie Sochalski, PhD, RN, FAAN. Additionally, the group agreed that should Julie be unable or unwilling to serve, Eileen Sullivan-Marx, PhD, CRNP, FAAN, RN would be approached to serve.

Following the group's discussion of the CMS Steering Committee, it turned its attention to the NQF Board slate. In its conversation, the group raised the following key points:

- The "call" for nominees had not yet been posted but project staff was under the impression that nominations would be due over the summer.
- Based on discussions with Dr. Janet Corrigan, it was recommended that multiple, qualified nominations be made.
- Support for and clarification about whether Dr. Norma Lang could be reappointed was shared. GW project staff indicated that it would follow up with NQF about its policy regarding reappointments.
- Interest among conveners in providing additional names of candidates.
- Concern that a formal and precise process for nominations did not yet exist and urging by the conveners to agree to a more structured process.

In the end, no decision was made about nominees. Project staff agreed to gather some additional information and propose a more formal process for deliberation by the conveners.

Other Business and Next Steps

Ms. Kurtzman briefed the group on the status of the NQF consensus standards for nursing-sensitive care (i.e., “NQF15”) and the maintenance review that was currently being conducted. In her comments, she noted that the Committee charged with this maintenance review was viewing some of the measures problematically and may recommend that endorsement be suspended. Ms. Kurtzman suggested that the group act together and share its concerns about the process and possible outcome. The group agreed to:

- Review a letter to Dr. Corrigan drafted by project staff for this purpose;
- Ask project staff to collaborate with ANA – a key measure developer – in crafting key messages; and
- Use the letter’s key points to discuss with colleagues and NQF leadership its concerns.

The following, additional next steps were outlined:

- By June 22nd, project staff would be sharing a draft implementation grant proposal with the conveners for review and feedback. Suggestions and revisions would be needed from the conveners no later than noon, June 26th.
- Conveners were invited to share letters of support for the implementation grant proposal. Project staff would provide a template by June 22nd and letters would be due no later than noon, June 26th.
- Project staff reminded the conveners that its next meeting would be on Monday, July 20th at GW.