Performance Measure Review

ACP does not support NQF measure #1664: “SUB-3a Alcohol & Other Drug Use Disorder Treatment Provided or Offered at Discharge and SUB-3a Alcohol & Other Drug Use Disorder.” This measure represents an important clinical concept; however, we note several suggestions for developers to consider when submitting the measure to NQF for re-endorsement. First, implementation may encourage overuse of medically assisted therapies while the best evidence for treating drug- and alcohol-use disorders includes pharmacotherapy coupled to counseling. Second, there is insufficient evidence to support the benefit of referring patients to counseling upon discharge from the inpatient setting on improvements in drug and alcohol consumption rates. Third, referrals to Alcoholics Anonymous or to the primary care clinician should fulfill the numerator requirements. Otherwise, implementation could unfairly penalize clinicians who practice in rural areas where patients have limited access to counseling services. Fourth, the numerator specifies FDA-approved medications as appropriate options for pharmacotherapy. There is limited evidence to support the benefit of all FDA-approved medications (e.g., disulfiram) on drug and alcohol consumption rates. Better data exists to support the benefit of off-label prescribing on improvements in drug and alcohol consumption rates (e.g., Topiramate).