

National Quality Forum
1030 15th Street NW, Suite 800
Washington DC 20005

RE: Comments on the Fixed-dose Combination of Hydralazine and Isosorbide Dinitrate (F-ISDN/HYN) Therapy for Self-identified Black or African American Patients with Heart Failure and Left Ventricular Ejection Fraction (LVEF) <40% on Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme Inhibitors (ACEIs) and Beta Blocker Therapy

The Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC) is writing to express its support for the National Minority Quality Forum's (NMQF) heart failure performance eMeasure, #2764.

HLC, a coalition of chief executives from all disciplines within American healthcare, is the exclusive forum for the nation's healthcare leaders to jointly develop policies, plans, and programs to achieve their vision of a 21st century system that makes affordable, high-quality care accessible to all Americans. Members of HLC – hospitals, academic health centers, health plans, pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, biotech firms, health product distributors, pharmacies, and information technology companies – envision a quality-driven system that fosters innovation. HLC members advocate measures to increase the quality and efficiency of American healthcare by emphasizing wellness and prevention, care coordination, and the use of evidence-based medicine, while utilizing consumer choice and competition to elevate value.

HLC strongly believes that F-ISDN/HYN accomplishes these goals. In African Americans with heart failure, this therapy is proven to reduce mortality by 43% and first-time hospitalizations for heart failure by 38%, while improving quality of life. However, patients are not receiving this life-saving therapy. NMQF's testing showed that only 1.1% of all eligible patients were receiving the therapy across more than 300 practices in the Southeast. Less than 1% of all eligible patients were prescribed the medication in the test sample's federally qualified and community health centers, and 0% of eligible patients received the medication at an integrated delivery system in the South. This lack of access is causing the deaths of thousands of African Americans every year.

When NQF reviews this testing data during its Cardiovascular Standing Committee Meeting on February 2, HLC strongly urges you to support the heart failure performance measure. This measure would fill a significant gap in the provision of quality care and there are no significant obstacles to its implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue. HLC feels there is tremendous potential for the healthcare industry as a whole to encourage robust collaboration and quality improvement in order to achieve our shared goal of improving the value of healthcare delivery for all.