



PQF Board of
Directors Approved
February 16, 2010

Nuchal Translucency Quality Review Program *Required Quality Maintenance Process*

NTQR strongly recommends nuchal translucency credentialing for both physician sonologists and sonographers involved in first trimester risk assessment.

Criteria for Continued Participation in the NTQR Program:

In order for a participating provider to remain in good standing, (s)he must:

1. Meet ongoing statistical monitoring requirements by submitting a minimum of 30 NT measurements annually.
2. When required to do so, participate in quality maintenance activities and complete these successfully.
3. Pay all fees to NTQR in a timely fashion.

Data Collection:

Participants' NT data may be received electronically from participating laboratories or can be directly submitted from participating sonologists and sonographers. Data for an individual can only be collected from participating laboratories if the NTQR number is appropriately entered.

If both a sonologist and sonographer want their measurements used for monitoring, then the NTQR number for each must be entered on the laboratory requisition form that accompanies the patients' serum sample.

Epidemiologic Analysis:

NTQR quality monitoring is based on epidemiologic analysis of individual participants' NT case data. Epidemiologic analysis commences when an individual submits at least 30 NT measurements to the NTQR program. .

NT review is based on a comparison of the practitioners' measurements to those of a standard referent curve. *For review purposes, NT measurements are converted to multiples of the gestational age specific referent median (MOMs). The ideal practitioner's median NT should be 1.0 MOM with an expected 90th percentile range from 0.9 to 1.1 MoMs.* Practitioners with NT median MOMs or standard deviation values that are statistically outside the expected range may be required to complete quality maintenance activities.

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In evaluating a practitioners' performance both long-term cumulative results as well as those from the most recent interval are evaluated.

Examples of monitoring reports may be found on the <http://ntqr.perinatalquality.org> website.

Participants with Less than 30 NT data sets submitted annually:

30 NT measurements are required to project an individual's measurement trend. If there are fewer than 30 NT measurements submitted a report will be generated but results of statistical testing will be stated as invalid due to low numbers.

Participants with fewer than 30 NT measurements will be required to submit a minimum of three images per year to demonstrate continued competency to produce NT images meeting the standard criteria for measurement. There will be no additional cost to NTQR participants for digital submission of images. The images may be submitted through the "Image Refresher" link that is found under "Performance Improvement" upon login to the NTQR website.

If the submitted images do not pass the image review process, additional images will be required until the standard criteria for NT image acquisition and measurement have been fulfilled.

Report Generation and Distribution:

If more than the requisite 30 NT measurements are submitted, a report will be generated, and results of statistical testing will be stated.

The results of epidemiologic monitoring will be reported directly to:

1. The individual participant,
2. The individual's supervising physician if indicated by a recorded NTQR number on the requisition slips and
3. The designated practice administrator upon request.

Participating laboratories have access to reports of participants who submit NT data to their laboratory.

The NTQR epidemiologic monitoring reports provide participants quarterly feedback on their NT measurements.



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A number of participants who are the farthest outside the range will be required to undergo quality maintenance. Those selected will be notified and must complete the activities specified under *Required Quality Maintenance*.

The NTQR Quality Assessment (QA) committee will determine on a regular basis the participants who are required to complete quality maintenance. Selection is based on NT Median MOM and standard deviations.

All participants outside the range are encouraged to engage in *Preliminary Performance Improvement*.

Preliminary Performance Improvement:

When a provider is first notified that analysis of their NT measurements is outside the expected range, they should seek out credentialed colleagues whose values fall within the expected range to observe NT image acquisition and measurement and offer constructive critiques to the participant.

It will be the responsibility of the NT credentialed medical director or their designee to monitor progress of these individuals.

NTQR recommends targeted performance improvement activities for individuals whose NT values are reported to be outside the expected range. All performance improvement activities are available at no cost to NTQR participants. The tasks chosen may include any combination of the following:

1. Review of the individual's NT measurements.
2. Review of the technical lectures within the NTQR online course. The lectures may be found under "Education" upon login to the NTQR website.
3. Review of specific suggestions related to measuring high or low that are provided.
4. Voluntary submission and review of NT images through the "Image Refresher" link that is found under "Performance Improvement" upon login to the NTQR website.
5. Monitoring NT measurement analysis by review of quarterly NTQR epidemiologic reports.
6. Completion of the image review self-test available on-line.

Required Quality Maintenance:

If a provider is notified of required quality maintenance, the provider will be required to complete the following:

1. Update practice and supervision information.
2. Review specific suggestions related to measuring high or low that are provided.
3. Document completion of review of the technical image lecture,

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4. Complete the image review self-test available on-line.
5. Submit for review five new images from five separate fetuses.

If the submitted images do not pass the image review process, additional images will be required until the standard criteria for NT image acquisition and measurement have been fulfilled.

Sonographers will be required to document supervision by an NT credentialed physician. Statements signed by NT credentialed physician (s) verifying supervision of NT measurement scans performed by the sonographer are mandatory.

Required quality maintenance must be completed within 3 months of the date of notification. If remediation is not completed within 3 months, the relevant laboratories will be notified that the NTQR credential number is invalid until remediation is completed.

Required quality maintenance will not occur for a given provider more frequently than once per year.

Laboratory Notification of Required Quality Maintenance:

Participating laboratories have ongoing access to quality monitoring reports of participants who submit data to their laboratory. A laboratory may request regular notification of participants selected for required quality maintenance. All laboratories receiving NT data from participants will be notified if quality maintenance activities required of individuals are unsuccessful. The credential status of such individuals will be reported to laboratories on a regular basis.

Appeal Process:

A participant who is required to participate in quality maintenance activities may write a letter of appeal to NTQR. Appeals are reviewed by a designated committee and if sustained may substitute for required quality maintenance.