

# NQF Releases Free Implementation Guide to Improve Healthcare Quality and Increase Health Equity

*More than 40 healthcare leaders contribute to the latest resource from NQF to help healthcare stakeholders overcome transportation insecurity*

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*Kathleen Giblin, RN, Senior Vice President, Quality Innovation, NQF*

Forum (NQF) has released Driving Towards Change: Overcoming Transportation Insecurity Through Healthcare Based Interventions. This [implementation guide](#) will help organizations implement routine transportation insecurity screening—including screening for both medical and non-medical transportation needs—and measure change in rates of transportation insecurity within their population. It builds on current efforts to provide practical and action-oriented strategies toward achieving health equity. It is unique in that it provides guidance on driving improvement through measurable change, and it is available for download at no cost.

Transportation insecurity occurs when a person has

uncertain, limited, or no access to safe, reliable, accessible, affordable, and socially acceptable transportation infrastructure and modalities necessary for maintaining health, well-being, or livelihood. It is a key contributor to improved health and achieving health equity. An estimated 3.6 million people in the United States do not obtain medical care due to transportation issues each year, and transportation is the third most cited barrier to accessing health services for older adults.

Healthcare organizations can improve healthcare quality and increase health equity by [addressing their patients' transportation barriers](#). Barriers to transportation can result in missed or delayed clinical appointments, lower prescription refill rates, and decreased medication adherence. Studies have found that patients with higher rates of missed appointments are more likely to miss cancer screenings, have worse chronic disease control, and are more than twice as likely to report emergency room visits or an inpatient stay over a 12-month period. While this guide is intended primarily for healthcare organizations—specifically healthcare delivery

systems, clinician groups, and health plans—a broad set of stakeholders, including patient advocates, community-based organizations (CBOs), and policy and regulatory bodies may find it valuable.

“Missed appointments cost the healthcare industry \$150 billion dollars annually. It is clear that adequate and reliable transportation services are fundamental to achieving health equity. Understanding the relationship between the barriers to accessing transportation and achieving health equity is critical to understanding healthcare’s role in addressing transportation insecurity, and developing affordable and appropriate options to improve health, enhance care, and lower costs. We are grateful for the support from CyncHealth and our diverse multistakeholder contributors for making this guide a reality and getting it in the hands of the broader healthcare ecosystem,” said Kathleen Giblin, RN, Senior Vice President, Quality Innovation, National Quality Forum.

Transportation insecurity is a complex problem that does not exist in isolation, and often overlaps with housing instability, unemployment, poverty, and other sociodemographic factors with far reaching consequences, especially for health. This work builds on NQF’s history on tackling social determinants of health, such as [Food Insecurity](#). Driving Towards Change: Overcoming Transportation Insecurity Through Healthcare Based Interventions incorporates multistakeholder input from patients, practitioners, healthcare administrators, payers, and community partners to ensure strategies are practicable and feasible. It addresses three fundamental action areas to overcoming transportation insecurity: screening and assessment, intervention and referral, and tracking and follow-up strategies. For each fundamental action area, the guide provides a brief description and then presents the strategies for success, potential barriers and suggested solutions, and curated tools and resources that offer more in-depth guidance.

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#### About National Quality Forum

The National Quality Forum (NQF) works with members of the healthcare community to drive measurable health improvements together. NQF is a not-for-profit, membership-based organization that gives all healthcare stakeholders a voice in advancing quality measures and improvement strategies that lead to better outcomes and greater value. Learn more at [www.qualityforum.org](http://www.qualityforum.org).

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