



1717 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20006 Phone: 202.827.2100 Fax: 202.827.0314 Web: [www.npcnow.org](http://www.npcnow.org)

For Immediate Release

Contact: Andrea Hofelich, [ahofelich@npcnow.org](mailto:ahofelich@npcnow.org), 202-827-2078

## **National Pharmaceutical Council and Discern Health Outline Strategies For Improving Patient-Reported Measures in Oncology**

*Comprehensive Study Conducted with Experts from Duke Margolis Center for Health Policy and  
UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center Released Today*

(Washington, DC, February 21, 2019) — The National Pharmaceutical Council (NPC) and Discern Health today released a study that analyzes the landscape of available patient-reported measures (PRMs) and patient-reported performance measures (PR-PMs) in oncology and offers recommendations for filling gaps in measures and removing barriers to measure implementation. The study, "[Improving Patient-reported Measures in Oncology](#)," builds on previous work to close gaps in quality measurement and focuses on the importance of patient input in accountable care.

PRMs are tools, such as surveys, that capture patients' voices related to their care experiences and outcomes. PR-PMs translate PRM responses into metrics that may be used to assess healthcare performance, compare entities and measure changes over time.

Including patients' voices in improvement and accountability efforts is particularly important for oncology, as cancer diagnosis and treatment create significant psychological distress, physical functioning deficits, and quality of life burdens for patients and their families. However, the difficulties in developing methodologically sound PRMs and implementing meaningful PR-PMs in accountability programs have led to gaps in the availability and use of PR-PMs.

"The challenges for improving patient-reported measurement are significant. We understood the need to develop actionable strategies while recognizing the nuances in oncology care and value-based payment," said Kimberly Westrich, MA, NPC Vice President of Health Services Research and study co-author.

NPC and Discern Health collaborated with Dr. Mark McClellan, Director, Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy, and Dr. Ethan Basch, Director, Cancer Outcomes Research Program, UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center to research the current state of patient-reported measurement in oncology and chart a path to a more patient-centered state.

Drawing on these research findings and multi-stakeholder input, the study recommends strategies and action steps policymakers and measure developers can use to improve patient-reported measures in oncology. Key strategies include:

- Involving patients and caregivers throughout all aspects of the measures life cycle to ensure measures capture value
- Filling care phase and domain gaps in PRMs and PR-PMs
- Addressing methodological challenges
- Reducing provider and patient burden by standardizing and aligning use of PRMs and PR-PMs
- Supporting providers in PRM and PR-PM implementation

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“Including PR-PMs in value-based payment programs is intended to make cancer care more patient-centered,” noted study co-author and Discern Health Partner Tom Valuck, MD, JD. “Policymakers must ensure that measures tied to provider incentives are meaningful to patients, methodologically sound, and truly capture ‘value.’”

NPC and Discern Health are hosting a webinar on February 28 from 2-3:30 pm EDT to discuss the study findings and recommendations from multiple perspectives. The webinar is co-chaired by Drs. McClellan and Basch and features several other expert stakeholders to share their insights on this important topic. [Registration is available via NPC’s website.](#)

The study and webinar build on prior NPC-supported work, including the “[Improving Oncology Quality Measurement in Accountable Care](#)” and “[Accountable Care Measures for High-Cost Specialty Care and Innovative Treatment](#)” white papers, two [peer-reviewed publications](#), and a [conference](#) that explored challenges and solutions for closing gaps in health care quality measures.

### **About the National Pharmaceutical Council**

The [National Pharmaceutical Council](#) is a health policy research organization dedicated to the advancement of good evidence and science, and to fostering an environment in the United States that supports medical innovation. Founded in 1953 and supported by the nation’s major research-based biopharmaceutical companies, NPC focuses on research development, information dissemination, and education on the critical issues of evidence, innovation, and the value of medicines for patients. For more information, visit [www.npcnow.org](http://www.npcnow.org) and follow NPC on Twitter @npcnow.

### **About Discern Health**

[Discern Health](#) is a consulting firm that works with clients across the private and public sectors to improve health and health care. Our focus is enhancing the value of health care services through quality-based payment and delivery models. These models align performance with incentives by rewarding doctors, hospitals, insurers, suppliers, and patients for working together to improve health outcomes and health care processes while lowering total costs. Discern has been involved in value-based payment projects since its founding in 2004. Discern’s clients include a range of organizations — pharmaceutical companies, providers, payers, policymakers, purchasers, and national thought leadership organizations — that are driving the agenda for change in health care. More information on Discern is available at [www.discernhealth.com](http://www.discernhealth.com).

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