

Measure Background

There are many aspects of an ambulatory surgery center's (ASC) operations that contribute to overall quality and safety of care. To recognize a more expansive set of ASC practices, and bring information to consumers about the level of safety they can expect, The Leapfrog Group based this set of measures on the National Quality Forum's (NQF) *Safe Practices for Better Healthcare: A Consensus Report – Updated 2010*.¹

The National Quality Forum is a not-for-profit organization created to develop and implement a national strategy for health care quality measurement and reporting. It makes recommendations for improving health care quality through a rigorous consensus development process. The NQF published *Safe Practices for Better Healthcare: A Consensus Report* in May 2003 and updated the report several times since then. The most recent version of the report endorsed 34 practices that should be used universally in applicable clinical care settings to reduce the risk of harm to patients. For the Leapfrog ASC Survey, an ASC's progress on three of the 34 NQF safe practices is assessed.

What are the NQF Safe Practices?

The National Quality Forum-endorsed Safe Practices cover a range of practices that, if utilized, would reduce the risk of harm in certain processes, systems, or environments of care. There are practices aimed at: leadership and teamwork; preventing illness and infections; creating and sustaining a culture of safety; matching care needs to service capability; improving information transfer and communication; improving medication management; healthcare associated infections; and specific care processes.

On the Leapfrog ASC Survey, ASCs are asked to report on three Safe Practices including:

- 1) Safe Practice 1: Culture of Safety Leadership Structures and Systems
- 2) Safe Practice 2: Culture Measurement, Feedback, and Intervention
- 3) Safe Practice 4: Risks and Hazards

NQF Safe Practices Standard

ASCs meeting the NQF Safe Practice Standards have:

- Earned 100% of the points for Safe Practice 1 by implementing all 11 practice elements in the past 12 months.
- Earned 100% of the points for Safe Practice 2 by administering a culture of safety survey in the last 24 months and implementing 9 additional practice elements in the past 12 months.
- Earned 100% of possible points for Safe Practice 4 by implementing all 6 practice elements in the past 12 months.

Download the complete Leapfrog ASC Survey scoring algorithms document at [ASC Scoring and Results webpage](#).

Why Purchasers Need to Get Involved

Using their leverage as purchasers, Leapfrog members can recognize and reward ASCs that meet NQF-endorsed Safe Practices standards. Purchasers and health plans can educate employees and consumers and call attention to the importance of choosing an ASC that has recommended structures and processes in place to support the safest care. Purchasers, through their community involvement in health care settings (as board members, volunteers, donors), can also be persuasive with health care providers about the need to adopt recommended safety structures, such as engaging leadership and measuring and improving the culture of safety. Purchasers should continue to push on ASCs to make sure they are doing all they can to provide consistently safe care for every patient.

References

1. National Quality Forum. *Safe Practices for Better Healthcare: A Consensus Report- Updated*. 2010.