



Required Quality Maintenance Guidelines
Adopted 2/16/2010: Updated 4/2020

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 values that are statistically outside the expected range may be required to complete quality maintenance activities.*

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

Information about interpreting the monitoring reports may be found on the website.

<http://ntqr.perinatalquality.org>

Participants with Less than 30 NT data sets submitted annually:

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

Participants with fewer than 30 NT / CRL measurement pairs may be required to submit a minimum of three images to demonstrate continued competency to produce NT images meeting the standard criteria for measurement. 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 have been successfully demonstrated.

Report Generation and Distribution:

If more than the requisite 30 NT / CRL measurement sets per year are submitted either from a laboratory or from a practice or individual, 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 laboratory requisition slips or in data submitted to NTQR by a practice or individual, 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 feedback on their NT measurements. If the individual sonographer's / sonologist's measurements are reported to be outside of the expected range for two or more reporting periods encompassing a minimum of 30 NT measurements, the individual sonographer / sonologist will be required to complete quality maintenance activities.

The participants outside the range on two or more reports will be targeted for required quality maintenance (RQM). Those targeted will be notified and must complete the activities specified within their account under *Required Quality Maintenance*.

It is recommended that all participants outside the range 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 within their practice 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 of the practice 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. These tasks may include the following:

1. Monitoring of the individual's NT measurements within the practice.
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. These suggestions are available in the *NT Examiner* newsletter and on the website.
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.

If multiple participants within the same practice are reported to be outside the expected range, the practice may choose to service and calibrate the relevant equipment.

Required Quality Maintenance (RQM):

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 lectures,
4. Complete the image review self-test available on-line.
5. Submit for review five images from five separate fetuses taken within six months of submission and not previously submitted to NTQR; and submit additional images as directed until image review is complete.
6. Sonographers will be required to name an NT credentialed physician supervisor.

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 successfully demonstrated.

Required quality maintenance (RQM) must be completed within 3 months of the date of notification. A single extension of 3 months may be provided. If RQM is not completed within the time frames provided, the relevant laboratories will be notified that the NTQR credential number is invalid until RQM is completed.

A participant whose account is inactivated for failure to complete RQM will not be able to access their NTQR account and will not be able to use their NTQR number to submit NT / CRL data to laboratories. These participants may request that their accounts be re-opened for a one-month period of time in which they will have to complete the RQM process in order to remain in good standing. A participant who does not complete the RQM process during this one-month time frame will have their account inactivated again and will not be able to request another one-month extension for six months after the closure.

NTQR participants who complete RQM may be placed in RQM again if they have two or more statistical reports out of range. RQM will not be required for a given provider more frequently than once per year. NTQR will continue to monitor and may require additional activities from participants whose statistics continue to fall out of the expected range.

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 targeted 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 to NTQR offering objective information to explain why their patient population may justify a median NT significantly outside of the expected range. Appeals are reviewed by the MFMF Board of Directors and if sustained may substitute for required quality maintenance.