What is Quality Spiritual Care and How Do You Measure It?

Chaplain George F Handzo, APBCC, CSSBB
Director, Health Services Research & Quality
HealthCare Chaplaincy Network

Learning Objectives
- Discuss the evidence-based indicators for a program of quality spiritual care in health care.
- Choose indicators, metrics and measures appropriate for quality improvement in their institution.

Background/Objectives
This statement provides guidance to advocacy groups, professional health care associations, health care administrators, clinical teams, clients, funders, spiritual care professionals and other stakeholders internationally on the indicators of quality spiritual care in health care, the metrics that indicate the care is present, and evidence-based tools that can measure that quality.

Method
There is a paucity of quality indicators, valid and reliable measures, and metrics for determining the quality of spiritual care. In response to this need a panel of international, multidisciplinary experts reviewed measures, instruments, and tools that have been either guideline-based, or empirically developed and tested.

Results
This review led to the development of structure, process and outcome indicators that demonstrate the impact of spiritual care on health and health outcomes. In the original 2016 iteration, the panel identified 18 indicators with enough evidence to be included (5 structure, 7 process, 6 outcome). In 2020, the panel reviewed and updated the indicators and added several new references and one additional process indicator.

Conclusions
This project demonstrates that the evidence does support a set of quality indicators for spiritual care and suggestions for metrics and measures to track them.