



BUYER'S GUIDE

Your Digital HEDIS® Transition

Your roadmap to readiness by 2030 –
and how to evaluate a dQM partner
who can get you there.

OVERVIEW

A Smarter Path to Digital HEDIS®

By 2030, NCQA will require every HEDIS® measure to be reported as a digital quality measure (dQM). Done well, the transition to dQMs will give your team faster measure runs, richer clinical signals, and a more defensible quality program. Done poorly, it will put your current CMS Star Ratings and quality bonus payments at risk, just as shifting methodologies are already making those ratings harder to maintain.

Most of the dQM conversations in the market today are about engines: which one runs clinical quality language (CQL) natively, which supports the HL7® FHIR® (Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources) standard, which vendor was first through NCQA's door. Those questions are real, but they are not the questions that keep Quality and CMS Stars leaders up at night.

What keeps them up is the shift from processes they know to something very different. How much harder will things be when chart-abstracted hybrid measures go away and are replaced with clinical data sourced through the FHIR standard. A multi-point drop on a single measure can mean millions of dollars in lost quality bonus payments, and once it appears in a public submission, you cannot take it back.

The four risks that matter most

- 1 Submission risk:** a vendor that has never done this before and is figuring it out, but your audit and submission deadlines do not move.
- 2 Accreditation and CMS Star Ratings risk:** rate variance during the traditional-to-digital shift compresses your composite score when the pressure to sustain your ratings is already high.
- 3 Audit risk:** your data mappings to the FHIR standard and ability to track data across systems cannot stand up to scrutiny from an NCQA-Certified HEDIS Compliance Auditor.
- 4 Operational risk:** a vendor without deep HEDIS operating experience leaves your team to absorb the work that software alone cannot do.



The plans that succeed in the dQM transition won't be the ones that were thoughtful and pragmatic in their approach. They'll be the ones that prepared not only for a dQM engine, but also the retirement of the hybrid methodology and were incrementally planning ahead to treat 2026-2029 as an opportunity for operating model redesign. Protecting current performance while their data, people, and processes evolve toward digital."

Courtney Breece, Vice President, Product Management, Converged Quality, Inovalon

HOW TO EVALUATE

Three Things a dQM Partner Must Get Right

Health plans evaluating dQM partners are facing three structural choices. The vendors who answer all three credibly are very different from the vendors who can only answer one. Use these pillars as a lens for the questions on the next page.

1 **Production-safe testing, not rip-and-replace**

You should be able to test digital measures in a sandbox while your existing HEDIS production workflow continues uninterrupted, with no risk to current submissions, Accreditation, CMS Star Ratings, or quality bonus payments.

Vendors without a traditional HEDIS engine cannot offer this safety. The only path they can offer is a hard cutover, one that asks you to validate their work against your live program.

2 **Single-vendor consolidation, not a multi-vendor stack**

One contract should cover digital measurement, ingestion of FHIR®-formatted data, medical record review, member outreach, and CMS Stars analytics — with a single team accountable when something goes wrong.

If a vendor only sells the engine, you will be the one integrating and supporting the rest of the stack, with all the finger-pointing and audit complexity that comes with managing four contracts where there should be one.

3 **The operator's path, not engine-only**

dQM readiness is an operating model redesign, not a software swap. Your partner should help you reshape the people, process, and data work alongside the technology.

Ask whether the people across the table have ever sat in your seat or supported an NCQA Compliance Audit. Engine-first vendors rarely have.



THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Five Questions to Ask Any dQM Partner

Based on decades of guiding health plans through every major HEDIS change, these are the questions that separate a partner who will protect your program from a vendor who will hand you the risk.

1 Can we test digital measures without putting our current CMS Star Ratings at risk?

A true partner can run dQMs in parallel with your production HEDIS workflow through the 2026–2029 comparative testing window. An engine-only vendor can only ask you to cut over to their platform before you have seen their results.

2 Who absorbs the operational work: our team, or the vendor's?

Mapping data to the FHIR® standard, sandbox testing, measure validation, and audit preparation are where transitions succeed or fail. Ask for specifics around support hours, staff, and experience supporting NCQA Compliance Audits, not just access to software.

3 How will you protect our rates through the hybrid-to-digital shift?

The biggest risk isn't the engine, it's the rate movement that can happen when you replace chart-abstracted data with FHIR-formatted clinical data. Ask specifically how the vendor closes that gap and what their track record is with CMS Stars-sensitive plans.

4 What happens when something breaks mid-measurement year?

Digital transitions introduce new failure modes. Confirm escalation paths, 24/7 monitoring, response SLAs, and the depth of the support team, specifically their experience troubleshooting live digital measure runs (not just answering ticket queues.)

5 Can one partner cover the full quality lifecycle, or are we assembling a stack?

Measurement, ingestion of FHIR-formatted data, medical record review, outreach, and CMS Stars analytics are connected. Aim to have one contract and one accountable team, otherwise you'll be responsible for troubleshooting and repair when things break.



Our Approach to Digital Measure Readiness

We built our Digital Measure Readiness package around one belief: the dQM transition is a multi-year operating model change, not a software upgrade. The package lets you safely evaluate digital measurement readiness without interrupting your current HEDIS production workflow.

What's included

- **Standards-Based Data Conversion:** normalize your existing Inovalon data feeds to align with the HL7® FHIR® standard, without forcing your source systems to change.
- **Sandbox Testing:** a sandbox test environment where you can run NCQA digital measure packages and review early results alongside your production HEDIS program.
- **Digital Measure Testing:** test against NCQA's published digital measure packages as they become available, using the measure logic NCQA distributes.
- **Customer Support Hours:** expert guidance from Inovalon teams with deep experience implementing HEDIS engines and supporting plans through every major NCQA change of the last two decades.



The dual-track architecture – production stays production

Your existing HEDIS workflow continues exactly as it does today, with the same data feeds, the same NCQA-Certified HEDIS measures, the same IDSS and Medicare PLD submissions, and the same regulatory submission path through the comparative testing years.

In parallel, your team builds confidence with digital measures in a sandbox environment using FHIR®-formatted data — voluntary comparative testing, no risk to current Accreditation status, CMS Star Ratings or quality bonuses. When you are ready to cut over, you cut over on your timeline, not ours.

THE VOICE BEHIND THE APPROACH

Led by Quality Leaders Who Helped Write the Standards

Inovalon's digital measure strategy is led by people who built their careers inside NCQA itself, not just implementing the standards, but writing and validating them.

Backed by a Professional Services Team Who's Sat in Your Seat

Every Inovalon Quality customer is assigned a dedicated Professional Services Manager (PSM) to guide and support their quality program, from measure season planning and audit readiness to dQM transition strategy.

Inovalon Professional Services

Dedicated PSM support for every Quality customer



15 years average HEDIS and CMS Stars experience across the team



Former health plan quality leaders who have sat in your seat



Former NCQA-Certified HEDIS Compliance Auditors on staff



A dedicated PSM assigned to every Quality customer to guide measure season, audit prep, and dQM readiness



Courtney Breece
Vice President, Product Management – Converged Quality

- Former Assistant Director, NCQA Measure Validation
- Managed the NCQA Certified HEDIS Compliance Audit (CHCA) Program
- Leads Inovalon's Converged Quality product management and policy oversight
- Active participant in the Digital Quality Implementers Community (DQIC)

Your readiness work is shaped by leaders who know what NCQA expects of you, because they helped build the programs that will measure you.

WHY INOVALON

The Numbers Behind the Approach

Inovalon has spent more than two decades scaling quality measurement for the largest, most complex health plans in the country. The dQM transition is not the first sweeping NCQA change we have helped customers navigate, and we have been their partner through every one of them.

What this means for your dQM transition

- **Production-safe by design:** Test the future without risking the present, a structural advantage no engine-only vendor can offer.
- **One accountable partner:** Inovalon brings digital measurement, ingestion of FHIR®-formatted data, medical record review, member outreach, and CMS Stars analytics together, so when something breaks, there is one team to call.
- **The operator's path:** Our product and customer teams include former NCQA staff and people who have sat in your seat, at payer quality organizations, audit firms, and NCQA itself.
- **Member-level explainability:** See exactly why each member was included, excluded, or flagged with a gap, traced back to the source data element. That is what your auditors will ask to see.

25 yrs

as an NCQA-Certified
HEDIS® vendor¹

12 of 15

top U.S. health plans trust Converged
Quality for quality measurement²

70%

of MA enrollees in 4+ Star plans
run on our platform³

¹"Inovalon's Converged Quality Achieves 25th Consecutive NCQA HEDIS® Certification," Inovalon, July 31, 2025, <https://www.inovalon.com/news/inovalons-converged-quality-achieves-25th-consecutive-ncqa-hedis-measure-certification/>

²Top 15 U.S. health plans based on AIS enrollment data, May 2026. Converged Quality customer count reflects parent companies and/or subsidiary organizations represented in the top 15, based on Inovalon internal customer/account mapping, May 2026.

³"Inovalon Powers 70% of Medicare Advantage Enrollees in 4+ Star Plans, Continuing to Outperform National Averages in 2026 CMS Star Ratings," Inovalon, October 30, 2025, <https://www.inovalon.com/news/inovalon-powers-70-of-medicare-advantage-enrollees-in-4-star-plans-continuing-to-outperform-national-averages-in-2026-cms-star-ratings/>

When It Comes to dQM, Experience Isn't Optional

The criteria below separate partners who have operated at HEDIS production scale from those still building their first program.

The dQM Readiness Criteria	Inovalon	Other Vendors
Best in KLAS for Quality – #1 rated ¹	✓	_____
Processes 200M+ HEDIS covered lives annually ²	✓	_____
Trusted by the top 12 U.S. health plans ³ & 70% of 4-Star MA plans ⁴	✓	_____
25 years of HEDIS submission experience ⁵	✓	_____
Thousands of NCQA HEDIS audits successfully supported	✓	_____
dQM built on 25 years of production HEDIS infrastructure	✓	_____
Test digital measures without risking your current HEDIS submission	✓	_____
Traditional HEDIS and dQM from one trusted vendor	✓	_____
Choose the partner with proven experience navigating these regulations, not the one still finding their footing.		

¹"Inovalon's Converged Quality Solution Achieves Best in KLAS For Quality Measurement and Reporting Analytics," Inovalon, February 4, 2026, <https://www.inovalon.com/news/inovalons-converged-quality-solution-achieves-best-in-klas-for-quality-measurement-and-reporting-analytics/>

²Inovalon internal reporting, July 2025. Based on Measure Year 2024 population counts and U.S. Census Data as of December 2024 - <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-national-total.html>

³Top 15 U.S. health plans based on AIS enrollment data, May 2026. Converged Quality customer count reflects parent companies and/or subsidiary organizations represented in the top 15, based on Inovalon internal customer/account mapping, May 2026.

⁴"Inovalon Powers 70% of Medicare Advantage Enrollees in 4+ Star Plans, Continuing to Outperform National Averages in 2026 CMS Star Ratings," Inovalon, October 30, 2025, <https://www.inovalon.com/news/inovalon-powers-70-of-medicare-advantage-enrollees-in-4-star-plans-continuing-to-outperform-national-averages-in-2026-cms-star-ratings/>

⁵"Inovalon's Converged Quality Achieves 25th Consecutive NCQA HEDIS® Certification," Inovalon, July 31, 2025, <https://www.inovalon.com/news/inovalons-converged-quality-achieves-25th-consecutive-ncqa-hedis-measure-certification/>

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

Three Practical Next Steps

Whatever vendor you choose, the health plans that arrive at 2030 in the strongest position will be the ones who start the operational work now. Here is where to begin.

1

Use these five questions in your next vendor conversation

They are vendor-agnostic by design. The answers – and the gaps – will tell you everything you need to know about each partner's real readiness.

2

Build your internal business case for a comparative testing program

Frame dQM as an operating model redesign across 2026-2029, not a single technology purchase. Your CFO will respond better to a multi-year transition plan than to a one-time bet.

3

Talk to us about the Digital Measure Readiness Package

If you are an existing Inovalon customer, the readiness package is a low-friction expansion of work we already do for you. If you are not, this is the easiest way to evaluate Inovalon side-by-side with any other vendor on your shortlist.

You can also join our Digital Quality Customer Committee: two hours per quarter to shape Inovalon's vision, share your perspective, and showcase your transformation.

Let's talk about your dQM strategy.

Visit www.inovalon.com to start the conversation, or contact your Inovalon account team.

[Connect With an Expert](#)