Over the past decade, the focus on quality has increased. During this time, measures have been more clearly defined so that we have a standard way to communicate when discussing quality. Although more computerized penetration has meant access to more data, much remains to be accomplished. We have services that provide data, and often we have dedicated positions to collect and coordinate data. We are a data-driven society. Nursing also has collected data and taken action based on data analyses.

Words such as transparency and measurement accountability entered our vocabulary and conveyed the importance of what we learned and what we needed to do. For years we talked about cost-effectiveness. Although we had substantive data about cost, the effectiveness part was not so clear. Now effectiveness, or quality, is spelled out as a formula so that data ratios can be compared across days or months or across units or organizations. In other words, our language has become standardized.

This month’s continuing education offering, “What Do Nurses Need to Know About the Quality Enterprise?”, defines the various elements and players in quality. To the best of our knowledge, no other article has done so this clearly. It comprehensively and directly presents the quality enterprise. In other words, this article answers the question about what nurses need to know.

As you read and ponder this article, know that you are entering a new level of comprehension of the entire enterprise known as quality. And who among us opposes quality? Our opportunity about quality has always been great. Layer on top of that opportunity the implications of the current health care reform. This is an opportunity we cannot pass up!

Patricia S. Yoder-Wise, RN, EdD, NEA-BC, ANEF, FAAN
Editor-in-Chief
psywjcen@aol.com

The author discloses that she has no significant financial interests in any product or class of products discussed directly or indirectly in this activity, including research support.
doi:10.3928/00220124-20100525-03