

- Interventions identified to meet the patient's nursing care needs
- Nursing care provided
- Patient's response to, and the outcomes of, the care provided
- Abilities of patient and/or, as appropriate, significant other(s) to manage continuing care needs after discharge

Quality Outcome Measures

Quality of care refers to the degree to which health services for individuals and populations increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes and are consistent with current professional knowledge ([Institute of Medicine, 2000](#)).

To provide a perspective on the importance of quality in health care, in March 2011, the US Department of Health and Human Services released the inaugural report to Congress on the National Strategy for Quality Improvement in Health Care ([National Strategy for Quality Improvement in Health Care, 2012](#)). The National Quality Strategy⁺ focuses on six domains that establish the priorities for health care quality improvement. These domains are:

- Patient and family engagement
- Patient safety
- Care coordination
- Population/public health
- Efficient use of health care resources
- Clinical process/effectiveness

A 2013 Hastings Center Report stresses the importance of viewing health care institutions as learning health care systems committed to carrying out quality patient care activities. As health care systems continue to evolve, it is evident that clinical practice cannot be of the highest quality if it is independent of its connection with ongoing, systematic learning ([Kass, Faden, and Goodman, 2013](#)). Learning health care systems, described in the Hastings Center Report, view clinical practice as an ongoing source of data to be used for continuously changing and improving patient care. Because nurses are the principal caregivers within health care