Launch of ASQ Initiative to Strengthen and Standardize Abortion Service Quality Measurement

Metrics for Management, Ibis Reproductive Health, and Ipas have joined forces to launch the Abortion Service Quality (ASQ) Initiative. Launched in April 2018, this three-year project will develop, validate, disseminate, and champion the widespread adoption of a common measure of abortion service quality for use in and out of facilities. The resulting measures will be used by governments, policy makers, and healthcare providers to strengthen healthcare quality, as well as by donors to assess and support evidence-based interventions in abortion care.

Metrics for Management Chief Operating Officer Andrea Sprockett emphasized the importance of the initiative: “ASQ is groundbreaking—not only because there has never been a valid, reliable, global standard to measure quality in abortion care, but also for its emphasis on client-centered care. This landmark initiative reflects the growing desire across the health sector for a common suite of indicators that integrates women’s experiences to evaluate and improve quality of care.”

Caitlin Gerdts, Vice President for Research at Ibis Reproductive Health, said, “the initiative is meeting a real need in the reproductive health sector. A common measure of abortion quality that applies to both in-facility and out-of-facility services will be particularly useful given the evolving landscape of abortion care around the world.”

The ASQ Initiative will begin by collecting and simplifying existing indicators of abortion quality in the first phase of the project. Partners will then focus on creating a measure of client-centered quality through formative research in Argentina, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Bangladesh, and field testing the composite metric in Ethiopia and Bangladesh.

“Abortion care may be safe and accessible, but if women experience stigmatization or discrimination while seeking an abortion, the services they have received are not the highest quality. It’s important that measurement focus on client experience, as well as on safety and accessibility,” explained Kathryn Andersen, Chief Scientific and Technical Officer at Ipas.

Once the validity and accuracy of the composite measure is confirmed, ASQ will refine, shorten and test for feasibility including ease of data collection, ease of interpretation, accuracy, and management utility. Results will be reviewed and refined by experts to assure global applicability, and then disseminated and actively promoted to stakeholders worldwide.

For more information on the ASQ Initiative, email communications@m4mgmt.org.