Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., M.P.H., President and Chief Executive Officer National Quality Forum

Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., M.P.H., is a passionate advocate for performance improvement, public reporting of performance, and measurement as a means to improve the quality of health care. This was well demonstrated during his leadership of the transformation of the veterans’ health care system.

As the Under Secretary for Health in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) from 1994 through 1999, Dr. Kizer was the highest ranking physician in the federal government and the chief executive officer of the veterans health care system, the largest integrated health care system in the United States with a budget of more than $22 billion, approximately 200,000 staff, and more than 1,100 sites of care delivery. During his tenure, Dr. Kizer was the chief architect and driving force behind the greatest transformation of VA health care since the system was created in 1946. Today, the VA is a model of excellence in health care—due to Dr. Kizer’s forceful leadership and aggressive approach to quality improvement.

Dr. Kizer first used performance measurement as a change strategy in his efforts to improve local public health departments in California in the 1980s by implementing Model Standards and negotiated performance metrics. In his current role as president and chief executive officer of the National Quality Forum (NQF), Dr. Kizer is leading efforts to establish consensus-based national standards for the public reporting of health care data that will be meaningful in making determinations about safety and quality which can be used to drive quality improvement.

Dr. Kizer serves on numerous national and international advisory boards and panels, and he sits on the governing boards of a number of organizations and institutions. He is often asked to consult with foreign countries about public health and health care matters, and he is frequently quoted in the press.

Dr. Kizer is an honors graduate of Stanford University and the University of California, Los Angeles. He is board certified in six medical specialties or subspecialties, and has authored more than 400 original articles, book chapters and other reports in the medical literature.