Removal of HHS’s Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Clearinghouse Websites

Content Change Report
July 12, 2018 (Updated: March 8, 2019)

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See WIP’s Report Production Protocol for details of our review process

Classification of Web content alterations and changes in access to Web resources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Changed in this report?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Altering or removing text and non-text content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Altering or removing links</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Moving an entire webpage or collection of webpages or establishing redirects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Altering or removing an entire pertinent section of a webpage or collection of webpages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Removing an entire webpage or document</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Overhauling or removing an entire website</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Altering or removing search engines and open data platforms</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Altering, removing, or deleting datasets</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This table was completed prior to the removal of the websites referenced in this report, and will be updated if removals are not carried out as HHS has planned. The removals themselves are not detailed in this report; it instead focuses on documenting the addition of the notice of the forthcoming removals.

The Sunlight Foundation’s Web Integrity Project does not intend to assess any government agency’s intentions in presenting the changes to webpages or other Web content that appear in this report.
Notice of Removal on HHS’s Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Clearinghouse Websites

Overview
Between April and May 2018, HHS’s Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) added a notice of removal on its National Guideline Clearinghouse and National Quality Measures Clearinghouse websites, stating that the websites “will not be available after July 16, 2018.” AHRQ’s archives for the National Guideline Clearinghouse website, hosted at “guideline.gov,” are incomplete and interactive features such as search do not function; the National Quality Measures Clearinghouse website, hosted at “qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov,” does not appear to have a corresponding archive.

Update March 8, 2019: After July 16, 2018, AHRQ removed the National Guideline Clearinghouse and National Quality Measures Clearinghouse websites. All URLs from guideline.gov and qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov redirect to a “Guidelines and Measures” page on the AHRQ website (Report Update).

Background
Agency details: The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality’s (AHRQ) mission is to "produce evidence to make health care safer, higher quality, more accessible, equitable, and affordable." AHRQ has been operating both the National Quality Measures Clearinghouse and the National Guideline Clearinghouse websites.
Communications about changes: The agency has proactively announced the removal of its clearinghouse websites (See Webpage 1 and Webpage 2).
Known archives: Some, but not all, “guideline.gov” content can be found within the AHRQ archive, which only preserves webpages, but not interactive features. The “qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov” website does not appear to have a corresponding archive.

Description of Most Notable Changes
1. A notice was posted on the National Guideline Clearinghouse website between April 13, 2018 and May 18, 2018 at the URL www.guideline.gov.
   a. The notice stated: “This Web site, AHRQ’s National Guideline Clearinghouse, will not be available after July 16, 2018. Federal funding through AHRQ will no longer be available to support the NGC as of that date. For additional information, read our full announcement. We will continue to post summaries of new and updated evidence-based clinical practice guidelines until July 2, 2018. For any questions, please contact Mary Nix, mary.nix@ahrq.hhs.gov.”
   b. The archive for the “guideline.gov” website is significantly incomplete. Some pages are stored, but search functionality and interactive features are not preserved, making archived content much more difficult to access and, in many cases, completely unavailable. A comprehensive assessment has not been conducted cross-referencing this archive and the live website.
2. A notice was posted on the National Quality Measures Clearinghouse website between April 13, 2018 and May 1, 2018 at the URL https://qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov/.
   a. The notice is the same as the one for “guideline.gov,” but with this website’s name substituted in.
   b. No archive has been identified for the “qualitymesures.ahrq.gov” website.
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<td>National Guideline Clearinghouse</td>
<td><a href="https://www.guideline.gov/">https://www.guideline.gov/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report Update</td>
<td>Removal of HHS’s Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Clearinghouse Websites</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Detailed Description of Changes in Access

Note: Throughout the entire report, links to the Internet Archive’s Wayback Machine’s (IAWM) versions of corresponding pages are provided for reference. IAWM displays time in GMT.

Webpage 1: National Guideline Clearinghouse
- URL: https://www.guideline.gov/
- Notice added between April 13, 2018 and May 18, 2018. Note: The large date range is due to sporadic captures of IAWM snapshots.
- The National Guideline Clearinghouse Archive: a version of the homepage from April 13, 2018 is available in the archive.

Webpage 1 Details:
1. Notice was added on the www.guideline.gov page between April 13, 2018 and May 18, 2018, stating: “TAKE NOTICE: This Web site, AHRQ’s National Guideline Clearinghouse, will not be available after July 16, 2018. Federal funding through AHRQ will no longer be available to support the NGC as of that date. For additional information, read our full announcement. We will continue to post summaries of new and updated evidence-based clinical practice guidelines until July 2, 2018. For any questions, please contact Mary Nix, mary.nix@ahrq.hhs.gov.”
   b. A similar notice, as seen here, was added to other pages throughout the website
2. The “guideline.gov” archive is incomplete and interactive features do not function, making archived content much more difficult to access and, in many cases, completely unavailable. Below is a sample assessment, which is not comprehensive, based on the April 13, 2018 archive:
   a. Stored content:
      i. “Guideline Synthesis” page is stored
      ii. Search term “Cardiology,” linked from the home page, is stored.
   b. Missing content or features not functioning:
      i. Search from the homepage does not function.
      ii. Search term “Psychiatry,” linked from the homepage, does not load.
      iii. “Matrix Tool” interactive features do not load.
Screenshot 1.1: Homepage of the “guideline.gov” website as captured on July 11, 2018 by the Internet Archive’s Wayback Machine.
Webpage 2: National Quality Measures Clearinghouse

- URL: https://qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov/
- Changes occurred between April 13, 2018 and May 1, 2018.
- No archive has been identified.

**Webpage 2 Details:**
1. Notice was added on the https://qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov/ page between April 13, 2018 and May 1, 2018, stating: “TAKE NOTICE: This Web site, AHRQ’s National Quality Measures Clearinghouse, will not be available after July 16, 2018. Federal funding through AHRQ will no longer be available to support the NQMC as of that date. For additional information, read our full announcement. For any questions, please contact Mary Nix, mary.nix@ahrq.hhs.gov.”
   b. A similar notice, as seen here, was added to other pages throughout the website
Screenshot 2.1: Homepage of the “qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov” website as captured on July 11, 2018 by the Internet Archive’s Wayback Machine.

TAKE NOTICE: This Web site, AHRQ’s National Quality Measures Clearinghouse, will not be available after July 16, 2018.

Federal funding through AHRQ will no longer be available to support the NQMC as of that date. For additional information, read our full announcement. For any questions, please contact Mary Nix, mary.nix@ahrq.hhs.gov.
Report Update: Removal of HHS’s Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Clearinghouse Websites

On July 16, 2018, AHRQ removed the National Guideline Clearinghouse website, hosted at guideline.gov, and the National Quality Measures Clearinghouse website, hosted at qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov. All URLs from the guideline.gov domain and the qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov domain redirect to the “Guidelines and Measures” page on the AHRQ website.

Webpage 1: National Guideline Clearinghouse
1. URL: https://www.guideline.gov/
2. Changes occurred between July 16, 2018 12:09 PM ET and July 16, 2018 7:46 PM ET.
   b. According to the notice previously posted on the National Guideline Clearinghouse website (Screenshot 1.1), all subpages within the https://www.guideline.gov domain were likely removed on July 16, 2018 at the same time as the homepage.

Webpage 2: National Quality Measures Clearinghouse
1. URL: https://qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov/
2. Changes occurred between July 16, 2018 1:24 AM EDT and July 20, 2018 7:30 PM EDT.
   b. According to the notice posted on the National Quality Measures Clearinghouse website (Screenshot 2.1), the homepage and all subpages within the https://qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov/ domain were likely removed on or soon after July 16, 2018.
   c. All pages within the https://qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov/ domain redirect to the “Guidelines and Measures” page on the AHRQ website at the URL https://www.ahrq.gov/gam/index.html (Screenshot A1), which links to pages
providing information on the National Quality Measures Clearinghouse and its removal.

**Additional Webpage:** Guidelines and Measures

1. URL: [https://www.ahrq.gov/gam/index.html](https://www.ahrq.gov/gam/index.html)
2. The page was live as early as **July 16, 2018, 6:43 PM EDT**
   a. The page contains links to pages providing information about the status of the National Guideline Clearinghouse website, the domain framework used to classify guidelines, and the criteria for inclusion into the two clearinghouses ([Screenshot A1](https://www.ahrq.gov/gam/index.html)).
   b. The page was first captured by IAWM on **July 16, 2018, 6:43 PM EDT**.
   c. All URLs from the guideline.gov domain and the qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov domain redirect to this page.