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# *QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS*

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## *Developing and Implementing Plans to Achieve the Quality Edge*

*Fran Jaeger, DrPH  
Project Leader,  
AIHA WWC Evaluation Project  
Summer 2001*

# *What's a Quality Improvement Plan?*

- *An essential management tool to achieve the WWC's mission, goals and objectives in a manner that meets and even exceeds EXPECTATIONS for QUALITY*
- *A road map for rational problem-solving and improving quality*
- *A means for a WWC to achieve and maintain a QUALITY EDGE--an edge that increases the probability of thriving and surviving into the future*

# *A Quality Improvement Plan Should --*

- *Reflect your WWC's unique mission, values, philosophy, goals and objectives*
- *Take into consideration needs of patients and expectations of key stakeholders*  
*(Stakeholder = an individual or organization that has an interest in and can influence your WWC -- in a positive or a negative way)*
- *Be feasible in terms of resources and capabilities*
- *Be built on your WWC's strengths while addressing perceived weaknesses (to help your WWC avoid threats to its future)*

# *Reasons for Preparing a Quality Improvement Plan*

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- *To meet the requirements*
- *To improve clinical outcomes*
- *To increase satisfaction with non-clinical aspects of care (e.g., timeliness)*
- *To solve organizational problems*
- *To maintain strengths and promote organizational wellness*
- *To build teamwork and staff expertise*

## *Who Should Provide Input into the Preparation of the Plan?*

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- *Someone with expertise, leadership, and the ability to facilitate implementation (the WWC Director or his/her designee)*
- *Those on the “front line” and close to the patient and those who have to carry out the changes necessary to improve quality*
- *Representatives of stakeholders -- e.g., a primary funding source (“the government”), an NGO, an employer contracting for employee benefits*
- *Other individuals who can ensure success in implementation*

# *HOW to Get Input Necessary for the Plan?*

- *Use the results of a formal evaluation*
- *Analyze your WWC's data and ask: What does it tell us?*
- *Use benchmarking and compare your WWC to others (Ask: How does our WWC compare? How did another WWC get better results?)*
- *Do a self-assessment or a quality audit*
- *Perform a SWOT analysis--reach consensus about strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats*

# *Start with Your WWC's Mission Statement*

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*A mission statement should:*

- *Identify the organization*
- *Indicate the population targeted for services*
- *Specify the health-related needs or problems to be addressed*
- *Present what will be done to respond to needs and problems*
- *Capture the organization's philosophy and the values to be promoted in stakeholder relationships*
- *Identify distinguishing features of the organization and its services*

# *Aids for Developing the Mission Statement --*

- *The WWC model originally developed by AIHA and “tailored” through the partnership process.  
Ask: Is this model still applicable? Is some modification warranted?*
- *Think about the challenges specific to your WWC’s environment.  
Is it self-sustaining or reliant on a larger system?  
Are there local regulations, other expectations or constraints that are unique? What are the implications?*
- *Who is your WWC serving now? But, who should it be serving in the future and with what services?*

## *Define your WWC's Spheres of Activities & Specific Focus*

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- *Clinical activities reflected in preventive and problem-oriented patient visits*
- *Educational offerings -- types and number of women (partners, parents, others) expected to benefit*
- *Health promotional activities such as health fairs, public service announcements*
- *Advocacy and other efforts designed to improve the health system*

# *Determine Your WWC's Goals and Objectives*

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*Ask: What short-term and longer-term impact will our WWC have on health status and the determinants of health?*

*Understand your area's*

- *Incidence rates*
- *Prevalence rates*
- *Mortality rates*
- *Disability rates*
- *Health hazards/risks (personal-lifestyle, environmental)*
- *Disease determinants*

*Ask: How will our WWC make a difference?*

# *What is a Goal?*

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*A goal is a broad statement indicating the general direction toward a desired future state.*

*Examples:*

- To decrease the number of abortions relative to the number of live births by increasing the use of highly effective forms of contraceptives.*
- To increase the percentage of women between 35 and 45 who have had at least one cervical cancer screening test or procedure.*

# *What is an Objective?*

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*An objective is a specific statement that indicates in measurable terms what an organization intends to accomplish and when in order to progress toward fulfillment of a goal.*

*Example:*

- To decrease unintended pregnancies among users of free contraceptives distributed at our WWC from 5% to no more than 3% by January 2003.*

## *Are You Ready to Write a Quality Improvement Plan?*

- *If your WWC has a clear mission statement, clear goals and objectives, then you can focus on development of specific quality objectives.*
- *Quality objectives should be the building blocks of the Quality Improvement Plan.*
- *But how do you select quality objectives?*

# *Do a Quality Audit -- Consider:*

- *What quality means to: Staff, Sponsors, Patients*
- *Components of quality*  
*(Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations)*
  - *Accessibility of care*
  - *Appropriateness of care*
  - *Continuity of care*
  - *Effectiveness and efficacy of care*
  - *Patient-perspective issues*
  - *Safety of the care environment*
  - *Timeliness of care*
- *Practices versus clinical guidelines*
- *Organizational structure and processes for ensuring quality*

# *Consider the Findings of the WWC Evaluation Process?*

*The findings are organized into specific categories. WWCs have both strengths and weaknesses in each. Consider how your WWC rates.*

## *Personnel* -- *Examples of Strengths*

- *The best doctors*
- *Better trained and more caring staff*
- *Nurses and midwives working in expanded roles*

## *Personnel -- Is There Room for Improvement?*

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- *Does the WWC have all the positions necessary to deliver all needed or desirable services?*
- *Is a piece of equipment underutilized because your WWC has no one with the training to use it?*
- *Is the WWC meeting productivity standards?*
- *Does the WWC have well-reasoned productivity standards for clinical activities, educational offerings, outreach?*

# *Facilities/Equipment*

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- *Our WWC is beautiful; it provides a comfortable, clean environment. Patients prefer to come here.*
- *Our WWC is too small and we can't move patients through quickly enough even though we have the staff here to serve them.*
- *Our WWC has great equipment now, but when it wears out, we're in trouble.*

# *Sustainability and Resource Issues*

## *Strengths vs. Weaknesses?*

- *The WWC gets support from the City Health Health Administration (it covers...).*
- *But the city can't provide enough to cover...(repair of equipment, purchase of new equipment, all the staff needed...).*
- *Our WWC can charge/not charge fees.*
- *Our WWC is great but do our stakeholders know it?*

## *More Sustainability Issues*

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- *Employers contract with our WWC to provide higher quality services to their employees.*
- *But other health centers are developing and competing for the same business.*
- *As the larger health system improves, what will our WWC do to maintain its distinction?*
- *Does our WWC provide the evidence that the WWC model is working? Does outcome and health status data confirm the benefits?*

# *Service Issues and Quality...*

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- *Are we providing the right services to the right people?*
- *Do the services we deliver have the desired impact (e.g., decrease unwanted pregnancies)?*
- *Do services compare favorable to quality requirements?*
  - *Appropriate and patient-centered*
  - *Accessible*
  - *Coordinated (consistent with continuity of care)*
  - *Effective and efficient*
  - *Safe*
  - *Timely*

*AND are patients satisfied???*

## *Clinical Services and Clinical Practice Guidelines -- ACOG Recommends:*

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- 1. Establish the right guidelines*
  - addressing important areas*
  - credible and customized*
  - defined in term of simplest/most important components and focused on key decision points*
  - directed at those who are necessary to put the guidelines into practice*
- 2. Enlist champions to promote the guidelines*
- 3. Make it easy to follow the guidelines (remove barriers)*

## *ACOG Recommends, continued:*

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- 4. Make quality--not compliance--the basis for accountability*
- 5. Monitor practices to assess what is really happening*
- 6. Measure improvement and share the data*
- 7. Align incentives with quality improvement goals*

*Adapted from: Quality Improvement in Women's Health Care,  
Washington, DC: American College of Obstetricians and  
Gynecologists, 2000*

# *Management and Quality Control Issues*

- *Finding time for staff to think and plan together, finding time to COMMUNICATE*
- *Staff turnover versus staff stability*
- *Writing plans and then forgetting them*
- *Collecting and reporting numbers that don't make sense or don't get used*
- *Thinking we satisfy our patients but never asking their opinions*

# *Management and Quality Control -- More*

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- *Our WWC has its own lab and we can provide speedy test results.*
- *Our WWC is the only place to get this screening test.*
- *But how can we be sure the results are accurate, the interpretation correct?*
- *Do we have adequate means for quality control?*

# *Recommendations for Your Quality Improvement Plan*

- Create a **POSITIVE** and shared vision of your WWC. Remember: a positive vision motivates, a negative one can't.
- **FOCUS** on strengths.
- **RECOGNIZE** --
  - what can be fixed
  - what must be tolerated (for a while at least).
- **PRIORITIZE** -- don't try to tackle too much at once.
- **BUILD** the plan on appropriate **OBJECTIVES**.

# *Recommendations for Objectives....*

## *Characteristics of GOOD objectives:*

- *Realistic*
- *Politically feasible*
- *Ambitious yet practical*
- *Measurable*
- *Time-specific*
- *Important -- really significant to gaining that quality edge*

# *Define Actions for Achieving Your WWC's Quality Objectives*

- ***Action implies CHANGE --***
  - *change in a process*
  - *change in organizational structure*
  - *change in behavior*
  - *or any combination of these*
  
- *If resources are adequate, each objective can have multiple actions.*

*When resources are scarce, then prioritize and select actions that have the greatest impact within the limits of available resources.*

# *Keys to Implementation Success*

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- *Get the right people involved*
- *Build consensus*
  - *on the definition of the problem (or quality challenge)*
  - *the actions necessary to improve quality*
- *Understand and apply an appropriate change process*

## *Apply the PDCA Cycle*

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- **PLAN:** Question, hypothesize, apply theories to predict the impact of actions, define actions.
- **DO:** Experiment--carry out your actions, test as you proceed. Ask: Are we moving in the right direction?
- **CHECK:** Compare your results to those you expected.
- **ACT:** Either stabilize the improvement that occurred or analyze why the action(s) didn't work to achieve your objective. **Start over.**

## *Or Use Structured Problem-solving -- The ROADMAP Approach*

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*R -- Recognize the process*

*O -- Organize the data*

*A -- Analyze the causes*

*D -- Determine options*

*M -- Measure the change*

*A -- Apply to the workplace*

*P -- Plan for the future*

# *Apply Good Management Principles in the Effort*

- *Use TEAMWORK*

*T* ogether

*E* veryone

*A* chieves

*M* ore

- *And a style of leadership*

*that works --*

*Participatory & Empowering*

- *Keep the process going: quality leads to  
more quality.*

# *Minimum Components of a Quality Improvement Plan*

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- 1. Statement of the quality objective -- including*
  - time frame*
  - description of expected change*
- 2. The action(s) to be carried out -- with WHEN and BY WHOM clearly specified*

***Remember: An action with responsibility assigned to no one gets done by no one.***
- 3. Resources needed to carry out the action(s)*
- 4. Means for monitoring and reporting progress, including reporting intervals (within weeks, quarterly, every 6 months?)*

# *Additional Plan Components*

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- *Rationale for selected actions*
- *Data and analyses relevant to the process, structure, or behavior to be changed*
- *Benchmarking information*
- *Information that facilitates implementation*

*Recommendation:*

*Keep it simple but adequate!*