PDSA: Plan Do Study Act

Testing Improvement ideas

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Reasons To Change/Improve

- To gain efficiencies
- To reduce complaints
- To improve service
- To accommodate a new mandate
- To prevent a sanction
- To solve a problem
- Many other reasons….

Reasons to Test Change/Improvement Ideas

- To increase your belief that the change will result in improvement.
- To decide which of several proposed changes will lead to the desired improvement.
- To evaluate how much improvement can be expected from the change.
- To decide whether the proposed change will work in the actual environment of interest.
- To evaluate cost, social impact, and side effects from a proposed change.
- To minimize resistance upon implementation.

Brainstorming!

- Take 5 minutes and write down three processes in your workplace that present an opportunity for improvement.
- We will come back to this later

Selecting an Effective Core Team

- **Team Leader-** Communicator, authority to delegate tasks and request for information, oversight of team's tasks, timelines, and follow-through.
- **Policy/Procedures Expert-** Complete knowledge of system and it's functions, understanding of the effects process improvement changes will have on the system, expertise and understanding of policy.
- **Data Expert-** Expertise and understanding of data systems and reports, access to data systems, oversight of the data collection for the team.

Characteristics of an Effective Core Team

- Expectations and responsibilities are defined and clarified or each team member.
- Cooperation and open, ongoing communication exists among team members.
- Team responsibility is assumed by the members, mistakes or "flops" are viewed as opportunities for learning.
- Pride and ownership in the outcomes/ achievements of the team effort exist among team members
- Success/achievements of the team are celebrated, recognizing the contribution each member makes to the total work of the team.

Clarify Responsibilities

- Who is in charge of tracking progress of plans?
- Who assures the tests of change are implemented?
- Who oversees the data collection?
- Who does the documenting and typing?

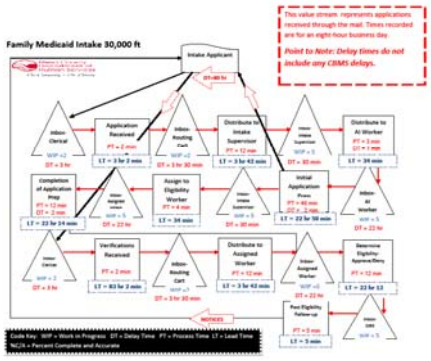
Choosing a Process for Improvement

- "Burning Platform"
- Settlement requirements
- Threat of Federal Sanctions due to lack of timeliness dating back to CBMS implementation.

Value Stream Mapping

- A value stream map is a picture of a service from end to end.
- It encompasses all of the steps in a process that add value to delivering a service and those that do not add value to delivering the service.
- It is about movement of people and information.
- The goal is to learn about your system from the customer's perspective and from the perspective of your colleagues. To see where you are at now.
- You will also be able to highlight problems to address. It is a learning tool.

Value Steam Map Prior to Testing



Definition of a Problem

- A problem is a gap between the way things are now and they way you want them to be

Analyzing a Value Stream- Indentifying Problems and Waste

- Bottlenecks
- Excessive wait time
- Frequent work arriving at a step "not ready to work" or with mistakes
- Too many hands touching the process
- Doing things we aren't required to do.
- Doing things that don't serve a purpose
- Areas that cause frustrations for staff or clients
- Too many entry points into the workflow
- Lack of accountability
- Push vs. Pull
- Lack of standardization

Additional types of problems and Waste to look for

- Waste of material transportation- unneeded steps, document/data travel distance.
- Waste of movement- unneeded data entry, extra steps
- Waste of overproduction- preparing unneeded reports, reports not read or acted on, multiple copes in storage
- Waste of processing- excessive sign-offs
- Waste of underutilized people
- Not meeting quality expectations
- Not meeting timeliness expectations
- Expectations are set too high
- Poorly defined work

Ready to analyze our process

- Post value stream on the wall
- Use post-its to mark problems/waste
- Core team each has a stack of sticky notes and each identifies the problems/waste they see
- Question the status quo

Why our process didn't work

- Twenty-two or more steps in the process.
- Too many dropped-off applications
- Up to eight different people touching one application.
- Unnecessary steps.
- Too many bottlenecks. We were in a push system.
- Too much wait time
- Only 9% of our applications came were "ready to work" at the time of interview.
- Client preference to submit documents directly to their worker.
- Process was chaotic, no structure.
- Clients were not getting the service they expected, nor when they needed it.
- Averaged 96 business hours to complete an application.
- We were 4-6 months out from date of app to date of processing

Where Can We Get Ideas for Change That Will Result in Improvement?

- Best or promising practices
- Ideas from Subject Matter Experts (maybe your customers, your clients, your staff, colleagues, or others)
- Insight from Research

Tools to Optimize Work Flow

- Standardize work
- Quality at the source
- Triage
- Visual controls and management
- People involvement
- Pull work

Next Step! Test your idea!

What is the PDSA?

- The PDSA is a methodology for improvement which utilizes cycles to incrementally test ideas for change.
- **PLAN:** Objective, predictions, and plan to carry out (who, what, when, where)
- **DO:** Carry out the plan, document problems and observations, begin analysis of the data.
- **STUDY:** Complete the analysis of the data, compare data to predictions, summarize what was learned.
- **ACT:** Make decisions on what was learned and make plan for next steps (modify for next test, discontinue, or implement).

The PDSA Cycle for Learning

Difference Between a PDSA and a Pilot

- A pilot is a large percentage of overall population, usually runs for months, outcomes are not evaluated until the pilot ends, and if the pilot is a failure, significant resources are lost.
- A PDSA test is smaller in scale (2-3 staff involved in testing), designed for rapid results (short period of time per test), outcomes are evaluated continuously for sequential learning, and if the test fails there are no major consequences.

Colorado Eligibility Process Improvement Collaborative
Plan, Do, Study, Act Cycle Reporting

Reporting Team:	Report Date:	
Project Aim Statement:		
Strategy:		
Cycle #:	Beginning Date:	Completion Date:

Plan

Plan: We plan to....

Plan: In order to ...

Plan: Prediction ...

Plan: We will collect the following data...
(Note: The plan should include who will do what, when and where the test will take place.)

Do (The Action Plan)

Do: What we did was...

Study (Analysis)

Study: What happened was...

Study: We learned that...
(Include how the results relate to the prediction)

Study: Surprises...

Act

Act: What decisions were made based on what was learned?

Act: What we plan to do next is ...

Aim: What are we Trying to Accomplish?

- What is the aim?
- Align the aim with the strategic goals of the organization.
- Write a clear and concise statement of aim.
- Include what is needed to keep the team focused (strategy, client population, office systems, scales, scope, constraints)
- Use a numerical goal to clearly communicate your aim
  - Example: By November 1 , 2010 decrease processing time on new applications to less than 15 days.

What Strategy are We Going to Use to Achieve our Aim?

- Be creative! Test ideas that will:
  - Improve customer service
  - Improve policies and procedures
  - Improve workflows
  - Change the work environment
  - Eliminate waste
  - Improve customer/worker interface

How Do We Know That a Change is an Improvement?

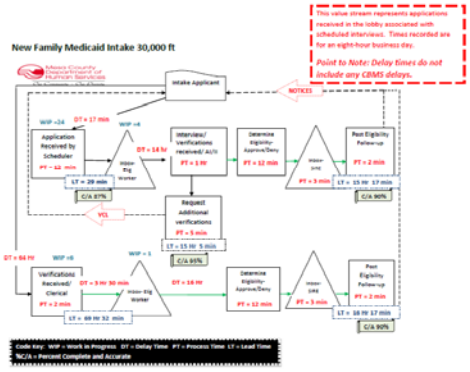
- Track data as a measurement for guidance, testing, and learning.
- Usually requires more than one measure.
- Measures should reflect aim and be specific
- Measures are used to guide improvement and test changes
- Purpose is for learning and not judgment
- Integrate measurement into daily routine

How We Used the PDSA Tool in Mesa County to Improve our Processing Timeframes

Redesign of our process

- Step back for a moment and redesign your process
- Don't let financial resources or human resources limit your creativity
- Your changes should address the problems you identified in your analysis of your existing process.

Current Value Stream Map- New Process



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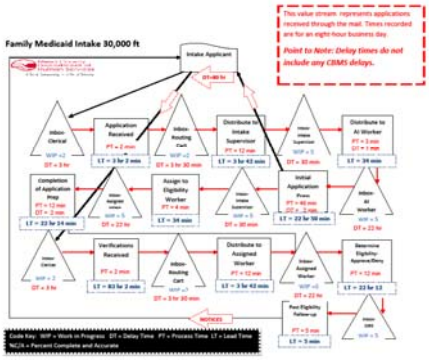

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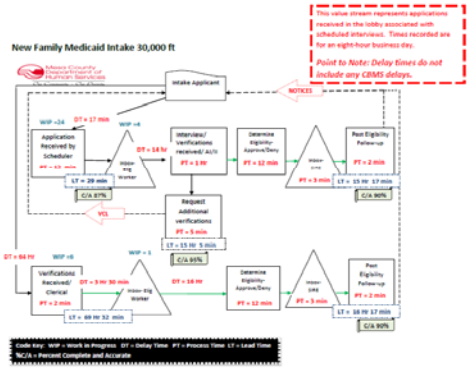

PDSA #2- Testing New Intake Process Idea

Colorado Eligibility Process Improvement Collaborative
Plan, Do, Study, Act Cycle Reporting

Reporting Team: Mesa County | Report Date: November 23, 2010
Process Aim Statement: Reduce processing time to less than 21 days from date of receipt for Food Assistance/Family Medicaid applications
Measure: Percentage of FMFA/ Combo cases ready to work at interviews
Measure: Percentage of initial interviews by appointment, based on week of interviews
Cycle #: 1 | Beginning Date: 11-1-10 | Completion Date: 11-5-10

Plan

Plan: We plan to have three Community Services Building intake workers see new applicants for Food Assistance/Family Medicaid through scheduled appointments, instead of "walk in". Two are seasoned staff, while one is relatively new. We will continue to only test with FMFA combo cases for this cycle.

Plan: In order to accommodate more of a pull system rather than a push system, appointments will be scheduled 2 hours apart, allowing time for a quality interview, if only, if early, and the generation of the VCL (or completion of the eligibility determination) prior to picking up the next interview.

Plan: We believe we will experience a higher quality of interview because staff will not be rushed (better exchange of information), workers will experience less stress from pressure, and this process will prevent the creation of a backlog. "Ready to work" applications will be processed immediately following the interview.

Plan: Appointment times will be staggered among the three workers to accommodate two different types of work schedules (4 10's vs 5-8's) and to ensure interview room availability. We will collect the following data:

1) The percentage of applications each worker participating in the PDSA was able to fully process within the 2 hour slot.
2) The ability of each worker to make time to accommodate follow-up work for applications that required the sending of a VCL.
3) The percentage of clients who were willing to participate in a scheduled phone interview versus those who preferred immediate walk-in interview.
4) The percentage of clients who submitted ALL needed verification prior to interview
5) The percentage of clients we were able to complete with collateral contact verifications for missing verifications.
6) The percentage of no shows/no reschedule.
7) The percentage of reschedules.

Do (The Action Plan)

Do: We will station an eligibility worker at reception to do the following tasks:

- Accept the application (date stamp)
- Determine expedited status
- Research if applicant is an intake or RRR
- Schedule either a phone interview or face-to- face interview with an eligibility worker
- Issue appointment letter
- Provide a list of possibly needed verifications
- Ask if client has other verifications the client brought with them (date stamp them)
- Have client complete IC affidavit for children in the home if needed
- Issue EBT card
- Provide informational handouts

Why New Process Works

- Reduced the number of steps to 6 - 10 steps
- Reduced the number of dropped-off applications
- Only 2-3 people touch each application
- Eliminated many unnecessary steps
- Moved to a pull system, which eliminated bottlenecks.
- Very little wait time.
- Increased "ready to work" percentage to 75-97%.
- Process allows clients to submit documents directly to the worker who will process.
- Process is very structured.
- Average processing time is reduced to under 10 days.
- Averaged 16 business hours to complete an application

Positive Impacts of New Process

- Client satisfaction has greatly increased. Number of complaints down dramatically.
- Clients have a better understanding of the application process, what their responsibilities are, and what they can expect from our department.
- Workers are able to focus on one case as a time with minimal distraction, which leads to increased quality of work.
- Structure provides for fair distribution of work, accountability between staff, a level playing field for performance measurement.

More Positive Impacts of New Process

- The new process has room for flexibility, so events such as staff turnover or FMLA leave won't be as devastating for the team.
- Process allows staff to have a sense of purpose in their work again!
- We have eliminated our backlog of applications and are on track to meet timeliness goals.
- Clients are receiving their benefits when they need them!
- Clerical has seen positive impact through reduced phone calls, reduced mail, reduced walk-in clients, reduced complaints.
- Relationships have improved between eligibility workers and case managers as well as between the intake and ongoing eligibility workers.
- Supervisors also receive fewer complaints.

Still More Positive Impacts of New Process

- Reduced client phone calls
- Reduced client walk-ins
- Interviews are shorter and more focused

Implementation

- The change is permanent- need to develop all support processes to maintain change
- High expectation to see improvement- no failures
- Generally takes more time than the tests

Approaches to Implementation

- Parallel
  - Changes run parallel as current processes are running
  - When old processes "turn off", the new ones "turn on"
- Sequential
  - Incorporates changes over time (completeness) or by location (coverage)
- "Just do it"
  - One cycle to study the effect of the change

Worker Buy-in

- Involve line staff from the very inception of the ideas for change. Not top-down direction.
- Involve line staff in testing of the ideas and really listen to their feedback and suggestions for improvement.
- Select staff with strong knowledge of the job, processes, and who are respected by teammates to participate in testing.
- These staff will serve as your "champions" when it comes time to implement to build excitement and help prepare others for the change.

Holding the gains

- Communication
- Standardization
- Documentation
- Measurement
- Training
- Assign ownership

Acknowledgment

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- Without their guidance, we would not have found the successes we have been able to achieve
- Thank you all!!!