The Model for Improvement

Ann Lefebvre MSW, CPHQ
“Every system is perfectly designed to get the results that it gets.”

Paul Batalden, MD
What are we trying to accomplish?

How will we know that a change is an improvement?

What change can we make that will result in improvement?

Model for Improvement

- **Plan**: Workflow Analysis, Brainstorming, Nominal Ranking
- **Act**: Small tests of change, 2 pts. 1 provider, Rapid, limited planning
- **Study**: Data pulls, Check sheets, feedback
- **Do**: Try again?, Change it?, Dump it?
Powerful Questions drive the process

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Model for Improvement

Act

- Workflow Analysis
- Brainstorming
- Nominal Ranking

Plan

- Try again?
- Change it?
- Dump it?

Study

- Data pulls
- Check sheets
- Feedback

Do

- Small tests of change
- 2 pts. 1 provider
- Rapid, limited planning
Repeated Use of the Cycle

Hunches
Theories
Ideas

DATA

Changes That Result in Improvement

North Carolina AHEC
creating a better state of health
Changes in Parallel

Strategies for Each Component of the Care Model
Model for Improvement Anywhere

- Middle school involved projects
- Every Thursday night was a crisis!!
- Something had to change...
Three questions...

• What are we trying to accomplish?....
  – Reducing the number of meltdowns on Thursday evenings.

• How will we know that a change is an improvement?
  – We’ll have less crises on Thursday evenings (current data is 4/4)

• What changes can we make that will result in an improvement?
  – Try harder...
PDSAs for Middle School Projects:

**Plan:** Have a designated time on Monday evenings when I ask about the projects for this week.

**Do:** Did it, we only had one project, it was a slow week

**Study:** Thursday came... MELTDOWN aarrgghh!

Collect data: Why didn’t you tell me you had these project due when we talked on Monday?!

Didn’t know on Monday.

**Act:** Change plans, Monday doesn’t always work because sometimes they don’t get the assignments yet.
PDSA’s In short:

• Tried Monday night meetings
• Tried asking the teacher on Monday afternoons
• Tried practicing our questions for the teacher on Monday afternoons
• Developed a question flag in our planner for Monday afternoons
• ...
Blaming the phones for poor outcomes:  
A different kind of case study

A story of how systems can affect care:

• Solo practice in a rural town in NC  
• 1 MD, 1 PM/MA (sibling to MD), 1 front office  
• PMS and EHR  
• Total panel of ~2500 patients  
• ~ 25-30 visits per day
Data indicated that DM testing rates are low and a high % of pts are out of range on A1c and HTN measures.

Intervention:

• Workflow assessments indicated that the clinical information from visit to visit was difficult to track in the electronic record.

• A DM template was adopted to help the provider quickly assess what DM tests needed to be done during any patient visit.

• The staff were trained on a system to ensure that templates were activated in every DM patient’s record.
Issue: Data remained unchanged for several months

A random electronic chart review revealed:

• Only ~50% of charts have the DM template activated

• Front office and PM have falling out

• Conflict, blaming... etc.

• It’s a faulty system ... but which system?
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Why so many calls?

• The system is designed to produce its exact results:
  – Why would this practice have more calls than normal?
  – What is normal?
• Simple observation......
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Results:

- Physician behavior change
- Phone calls reduced
- Front desk able to complete tasks - tension reduced
- Charts had necessary data collection tool
- Provider had information at hand during visit
- Outcomes improved
“When you can see at a glance what needs to be done when a patient comes in it’s much more efficient!”

1. Tried to do better “work harder” with original system
2. Workflow assessments revealed she needed templates
3. Trained on how to get templates in EHR
4. Developed process for templates to be activated
5. Gathered data
6. Realized there was a barrier in the process
7. Gathered data on phones
8. Observed practice to diagnose heavy phone usage
9. Changed physician’s behavior with phone calls
10. Staff activated templates
11. Outcomes improved
Questions?

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