Assessing Your Performance Management System at the Program Level

Dan Ward and John W. Moran

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Introduction

Assessing performance management at the program level is an innovative approach to tracking the organization-wide implementation of a performance management system. Adapted from the Public Health Performance Management System Framework (shown in Figure 1), the goal of this approach is to capture visually the uptake of a performance management system and alignment of program strategic goals throughout an organization.

Figure 1

A key driver for this approach is to get program level personnel involved in understanding how the performance management system functions, focusing on targets, measures, and performance, and how this ties in with quality improvement (QI), as well as tracking how widespread the usage is of a performance management system. Together, the first three quadrants of the Public Health Performance

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4http://www.phf.org/focusareas/performance_management/toolkit/Pages/PM_Toolkit_About_the_Performance_Management_Framework.aspx
Management System Framework focus on program evaluation, as highlighted in Figure 2; that evaluation produces data to determine the focus for QI efforts. Thus, standards, measures, and regular reporting of progress can be used as a guide for decision makers.

While health departments often develop logic models for their grants or programs, staff may miss opportunities to align these logic models with their organization’s performance management system. Measures and targets created for a logic model are often similar to those developed for a performance management system, as illustrated in Figure 3. Because of this, many programs already have some parts of a performance management system in place, though that may not be the term used.

![Example Logic Model](http://slideplayer.com/slide/4351582/)

To build a performance management system in a program requires capturing data on progress toward implementing strategies to achieve strategic goals. Figure 4 is a sample matrix (e.g., dashboard) that illustrates where a specific program is in the process of meeting targets aligned to strategic initiatives (e.g., Strategy 1, Strategy 2, etc.), and informs opportunities for QI when targets are not met in pursuing a particular strategy.

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Different programs can be at different stages of developing a performance management system. Figure 5 shows an example of a matrix used for tracking progress of several programs toward implementing the four components of a performance management system:

- Component 1 – Performance Standards (PS)
- Component 2 – Performance Measures (PM)
- Component 3 – Reporting of Progress (RP)
- Component 4 – Quality Improvement (QI)

Tracking by program (as in Figure 5) enables a performance improvement manager (PIM) to assess what performance management components are in place for each program. The program-level information can then be used to help identify resources needed for each program (e.g., training, QI tools, templates, etc.), and pinpoint opportunities to strengthen each program’s performance management practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Active Performance Management System</th>
<th>Opportunities for Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Home Visiting</td>
<td>Vera</td>
<td>PS PM RP QI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sexual Violence</td>
<td>Alan</td>
<td>PS RP</td>
<td>Wants to create a logic model as a start to developing a full PM system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. WIC</td>
<td>Annette</td>
<td>PS PM RP QI</td>
<td>Consider adding a logic model. QI projects are prescribed by CDC; choice in projects is limited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Suicide Program</td>
<td>Marco</td>
<td>PS PM</td>
<td>New program. Time and mentorship are needed to get data and proceed with QI projects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4

Figure 5
**Potential Uses**

Performance improvement professionals (e.g., PIMs and accreditation coordinators) can use the dashboard and matrix described above to show the evolution of the performance management system in various programs. The tracking matrix shown in Figure 5 can be updated quarterly; persistent gaps can point to lack of engagement or opportunities for training to strengthen performance management at the program level and agency-wide.

The number of programs that are actively using each of the four components a performance management system can be tallied in a simple graphic, as in Figure 6. This provides “the big picture” of performance management system uptake and growth in the organization to inform recommendations for where to deploy resources to strengthen the system, effectively operationalizing the outer ring of the Performance Management System Framework (see Figure 1).

![Performance Standards 4, Performance Measures 3, Reporting of Progress 3, Quality Improvement 2](Figure 6)