



Quality Improvement in Public Health Example: Documentation Cycle Time

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The tools and techniques of Quality Improvement (QI) can produce rapid results in improved operating efficiency. Properly applied, QI allows leaders and employees to choose an improvement plan which integrates smoothly with existing priorities. Effective use of data gathering and analysis, leadership, and communication tools maintain accountability as improvement tasks are conducted. Existing resources are coordinated with other priorities to maximize outcomes while eliminating waste. Proper documentation and performance management techniques ensure alignment with strategic objectives and transparency of operations.

The Orange County Health Department Division of Environmental Health in Florida chartered a QI team to improve customer satisfaction with the speed and accuracy of Septic System Permitting. Measurement of operations indicated that the causes for delay in issuing permits were uninformed contractors, poor internal document flow, and lack of placement support for key office staff. The Cause and Effect Diagram found below demonstrates the causes for delay in issuing permits that related to failure to meet state and local application and paperwork requirements. The QI team created an effective procedure for application requirements, provided training to building contractors on the requirements for a Septic System Permit, and instituted a tracking system to ensure that contractors have the data required to submit an application correctly. The team identified placement support for all staff positions so that the front desk was covered whenever contractors entered the office to fill out applications or request permit status. As a result of this project, the backlog of permits significantly diminished, and satisfaction of building contractors with the Division of Environmental Health improved.

