

## Checklist for Developing and Implementing a Plan for Performance Management and Quality Improvement

Amanda McCarty and John Moran<sup>1</sup>  
July 2024

*“Everything in life is a checklist, whether it’s building a birdhouse or building a kitchen. If you don’t have a checklist, you’re much more likely to forget something.”— Brian Tracy<sup>2</sup>*

Developing and implementing a Performance Management (PM) and Quality Improvement (QI) plan in any public health agency can seem like a daunting task. Any employee or staff member within the agency should be able to read a PM/QI Plan and understand the goals of these efforts, the support structure in place, training options that are available, and how to participate in PM/QI efforts. The checklist shown in Appendix A details the important aspects of developing the PM and QI plan that will guide you to start and complete your plan.

Some of the questions often asked by leadership about developing and implementing a PM and QI plan are:

### 1. Why do I need one in my agency?

- A Public health department should build a combined PM and QI Plan since the two aspects of the plan are mutually supportive. The PM plan discusses how to get the right data consistently, and the QI plan needs to know where to implement improvements in the organization. The PM and QI Plan is a basic document that includes what you are planning to accomplish with regular collection of agency data, how it will be analyzed, and how it will be used for taking action for organizational wide improvements.

### 2. Do I need separate PM and QI Plans?

- A Public health department should build a combined PM and QI Plan since the two aspects of the plan are mutually supportive. The PM plan discusses how to get the right data consistently, and the QI plan needs to know where to implement improvements in the organization. The PM and QI Plan is a basic document that includes what you are planning to accomplish with regular collection of agency data, how it will be analyzed,

---

<sup>1</sup> Authors profiles are at the end of this article

<sup>2</sup> <https://quotefancy.com/quote/778233/Brian-Tracy-Everything-in-life-is-a-checklist-whether-it-s-building-a-birdhouse-or>

and how it will be used for organizational wide improvements. The PM and QI plan is not a static document or a one- time event, but rather a continuing process of improvement that shows what is happening to ensure ongoing continuous improvement.

**3. Is it a one-time event?**

- No, the PM and QI plan is not a static document or a one- time event, but rather a continuing process of improvement that shows what is happening to ensure ongoing progress. It needs to be reviewed every six months to ensure it accurately describes what is taking place.

**4. How do I start developing a PM and QI Plan for my agency?**

- Start by developing a PM and QI council of about 8-10 members of the various department's leadership. It should be chaired by a senior leader and the membership should rotate on a -planned basis to ensure new blood is brought in to keep the process moving forward.

**5. How do I start since it seems like an overwhelming task?**

- The steps involved in developing a PM and QI plan are described in the checklist in Appendix A. Appendix A details the following steps to help develop a PM and QI Plan:
  1. Introduction and background of the Plan
  2. Purpose and definitions
  3. Goals and Objectives of the Plan
  4. Definition of Quality Improvement
  5. Foundational Elements to a Culture of QI
  6. Reporting Process
  7. Alignment with Agency Level Plans
  8. Support Structure
  9. Training and resources
  10. Performance management System Overview
  11. Implementation, Monitoring, and reporting
  12. Identify Improvement Efforts (QI Projects)
  13. Sustainability
  14. Ongoing Communication and Engagement

**6. How can I keep track of the process?**

- The checklist has start and end dates and who is responsible for each task. This should be reviewed during a regular review meeting to ensure the PM and QI Plan development is on track and indicate what was/is completed.

**7. Will this help with accreditation?** Yes, it will since the use of a performance management system is required by PHAB. Standard 9.1 states that *“the performance management system serves as the framework to set goals, measure progress, report on progress, and make improvements. The process should encourage a culture of organizational learning within the health department. Monitoring data through the performance management system is one mechanism for identifying opportunities for improvement, growth, and learning within the health department. An important component of an effective performance management system is the implementation of quality improvement projects. Infusing the ongoing use of performance management and quality improvement throughout the health department fosters continuous improvement among staff.”*<sup>3</sup>

**Summary:** The PM and QI Plan is important to develop for the organization since it articulates the agency’s commitment to use data to make informed decisions about where quality improvement activities in the organization should be focused and tracked. This plan also shows management’s commitment to use data to make informed decisions. The checklist in Appendix A will provide a guide for an agency to develop a Performance Management and Quality Improvement Plan.

**Authors profiles:**

Amanda McCarty, MS, MBA, MHA, is the Vice Chancellor of Health Sciences at the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. She is also an Adjunct Professor in Health Care Administration at West Virginia University Institute of

---

<sup>3</sup> [Standards & Measures for Reaccreditation, Version 2022](#)

Technology. From 2012-2016, she served as the Director of Performance Management & Systems Development at the West Virginia's Bureau for Public Health. At the Bureau, Amanda was a member of the health department's leadership team and was responsible for accreditation, performance management, strategic planning, workforce development and quality improvement efforts. Prior to joining the Bureau, Amanda worked for Mountain State Blue Cross Blue Shield/Highmark, Inc. in health promotion and disease prevention.

John W. Moran, Ph.D., MBA, MS is a Senior Quality Advisor to the Public Health Foundation and a Senior Fellow at the University of Minnesota, School of Public Health in the Division of Health Policy, and Management 2010 – 2015. A member of PHAB's Evaluation and Quality Improvement Committee 2013 – 2015 Adjunct Professor Arizona State University College of Health Solutions' School for the Science of Health 2013 – 2016

Appendix A						
Activity	Start Date	Target End Date	Responsible Party	Comments	Complete	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Introduction & Background Section of Plan – Include language related to:						
– Support the plan provides to the agency (e.g. support of a culture of quality, etc.)						
– Brief overview of QI culture assessments, data and process improvement driving the Plan						
– Fulfilling PHAB requirements						
– Steps agency has taken to build a culture of PM & QI						
– Agency vision for PM & QI						
Purpose & Definition Include language related to:						
– PM/QI Plan framework						
– Performance Management definition (include any key terms the agency prefers to use, the importance of monitoring data from the PM System to identify opportunities for improvement, growth, and learning)						
– Performance Management as a framework to set goals, measure progress, report on progress and make improvements						
Goals & Objectives of the PM/QI Plan						
– Include high level, umbrella statement goals of the Plan						
– Objectives to be achieved to ensure successful completion of Goals						

– Include measures and reporting frequency for monitoring the progress of the Plan					
<b>Definition of Quality Improvement</b>					
– What QI means to the agency					
– Adopted models in place (e.g. PDCA)					
– Brief overview of the preferred model – this should be a model that the agency provides training for and has staff trained to provide TA & support					
<b>Foundational Elements to a Culture of QI</b>					
– Describe QI Culture Assessment used, date offered and who participated in the assessment					
– Include radar chart or infographic of the assessment results					
– Refer to full assessment report as an appendix					
– Highlight key findings from the assessment that is being used to drive improvement efforts within the Plan					
<b>Existing Reporting Processes</b>					
– Describe current reporting that is used to drive decision making, this can be reports used without a full PM System in place					
– Provide overview of reporting used at the program and department/agency level					
– Describe how data is currently used to guide decision making (even if not currently in place, describe the current status – the Plan is meant to address these gaps)					
– Identified gaps in reporting can be briefly described in this section					

– Plan efforts to support PM/QI activities that will contribute to alignment in reporting and sharing of information across the agency					
– If reporting is not currently in place, focus on the Plan being a mechanism to drive meaningful reporting efforts					
<b>Alignment with Agency Level Plans</b>					
– Discuss importance of alignment in agency level plans (e.g. Strategic Plan, Workforce Development Plan, PM/QI Plan, etc.)					
– Describe efforts in place to coordinate priorities of the plans to achieve goals					
<b>Support Structure</b>					
– Staff and Committee/Council(s) in place to support PM/QI efforts and specific activities within the PM/QI Plan (specifics of staff, Council and responsibilities)					
– Training opportunities provided for Committee/Council members and support staff					
<b>Training &amp; Resources</b>					
– Include draft training overview of current and planned PM/QI learning opportunities available for all staff, management/leadership, Council/Committee members, program/project teams. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ High Level Overview of PM &amp; QI</li> <li>○ PM/QI Summit</li> <li>○ QI Training with Project Launch for Teams</li> <li>○ QI Collaboration Sessions</li> <li>○ Overview of QI Culture &amp; Council for new employee orientation</li> </ul>					

<b>Performance Management System Overview</b>					
– Describe agency’s plan for utilizing meaningful goals, objectives and measures to drive decision making					
– Turning Point Framework					
– PDCA Model					
<b>Implementation, Monitoring &amp; Reporting</b>					
– Each division or program to establish goals, objectives and supporting measures					
– Describe reporting process and frequency (e.g. who will be responsible within each program/division for updating measures, and method - SharePoint site, dashboard, PM Software, etc.)					
– Expectations and guidance for ongoing discussions related to reporting and the information provided regarding program performance					
– Describe software and technical requirements					
<b>Identifying Improvement Efforts (QI Projects)</b>					
– Ongoing monitoring of performance measures helps to identify when processes are not working efficiently or when goals are not being achieved					
– Process for submitting QI project ideas (if a process exists, review and approval of project ideas, completion of form, etc.)					
– Council/Committee participation in review of QI project ideas					
– Components of ideal QI Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identified problem area</li> </ul>					



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Related to a process within control of the team or program</li> <li>○ Focus to increase process efficiency or effectiveness, customer satisfaction</li> <li>○ Aligns with operational or strategic priorities</li> <li>○ Alignment with PHAB</li> </ul>					
<b>Sustainability</b>					
- Dependent on participation from all levels within the organization					
- Council/Committee in place to support efforts					
- Information related to training all new employees on PM/QI efforts in new employee orientation					
<b>Ongoing Communication &amp; Engagement</b>					
- Describe regular communications about QI initiatives and activities in place to build awareness, increase knowledge, and facilitate engagement					
- Committee/Council members should provide relevant PM/QI programmatic updates from their division which can be shared in a newsletter to employees (quarterly or bi-annually)					
- Quarterly or annual virtual or in-person opportunities for the Committee/Council and/or Leadership to celebrate PM/QI activities, highlight QI projects, review of assessments, etc.					
- Describe regular communication efforts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ QI Newsletter</li> </ul>					

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Communications with PM/QI Council or Committee</li> <li>○ Online availability of materials and trainings to all employees</li> <li>○ Expectations for staff and management meetings to discuss PM/QI</li> <li>○ Creation of Storyboards after the completion of QI Projects and sharing throughout the organization</li> <li>○ Sharing of the PM/QI Plan</li> </ul>					
--	--	--	--	--	--