

Key Ingredients in Public Health QI

The emphasis on quality improvement (QI) continues to intensify in state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments. Over time, this focus will benefit both programmatic and administrative public health activities and improve the public's health. To support health departments' efforts to implement QI, this guide lists factors that contribute to successful QI endeavors. Specific QI tools can and should be used to support incorporating these success factors into quality initiatives. To find examples, white papers, and more QI resources, visit www.phf.org.

Ensure Clear QI Vision

- Secure leadership support for QI teams to implement changes that will improve the organization and its results
- Set clear priorities that are aligned with strategic and operational goals and objectives
- Tie information and data to goals and objectives
- Include relevant intervention targets such as processes, policies, outputs, and outcomes

Choose & Pace QI Initiatives Wisely

- Select projects with attainable goals that are important to the team
- Be conscious and realistic about what can be controlled and influenced
- Start with small, manageable projects to allow initial gains to build momentum for ongoing QI work

Maximize QI Effectiveness

- Assess the organization's QI competence and make a plan to bridge knowledge and competency gaps
- Invest in effective training and provide opportunities for teams to practice and implement QI
- Train staff at all levels of the organization in QI
- Select experienced, objective facilitators
- Identify internal champions, teams, and team leaders
- Reinforce and reintroduce QI regularly

Use the Right QI Tools

- Use well-established assessment and performance management tools
- Employ a robust performance management system that incorporates QI tools and methods
- Be courageous and try to enjoy the new experience; experimentation and change are essential parts of QI

Share QI Insights & Results

- Create an internal communication strategy
- Document processes and share promising practices broadly
- Build internal interest in QI by communicating about successes
- Consult and contribute to national, state, tribal, and local networks and resources

Build a QI Culture

- Emphasize QI as a way of doing work better, not as an isolated project
- Make building a culture of quality a long-term objective
- Devote sufficient resources to QI initiatives
- Provide incentives for embedding QI into daily work and seeking continuous improvement

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