

# Quality Improvement Learning Collaborative Syllabus

## Overview

This virtual interactive learning collaborative is designed to help CAH staff incorporate quality improvement (QI) concepts into organizational practice. Topics covered will include a variety of foundational QI skills, such as leading a QI team, Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles, process mapping, change management, data collection and analysis, and more.

## What is expected of participants?

- Identify a project for improvement that you can work on while applying the practical concepts discussed in the sessions.
- Participate in cohort kick-off call on November 20, 2024, from 1-2 p.m. MT
- Participate in a QI project scoping call with Stratis Health facilitator(s) to identify/define a project (December 2024)
- Participate in four 60-minute interactive virtual group sessions via Zoom (Jan – Feb 2025)
  - Before each session, review short videos and related resources and come prepared to discuss what you learned, including sharing examples and posing questions to the group.
- Participate in a virtual ‘office hours’ session to discuss your project, and/or sign up for an optional 1:1 coaching discussion (March)
- Develop a poster presentation (template provided) to share your QI project with peers at the MHA Health Summit (April)
- Complete individual pre- and post-assessment and brief evaluations of each virtual learning session.

A certificate of course completion will be provided for those who complete the pre- and post-assessment, participate in all four group sessions, and complete the poster presentation that will be shared during the MHA Health Summit in April. Total time commitment is estimated to be 15 – 20 hours over four months (December – March).

## When will the cohort meet?

A project kick-off call will take place on November 20, 2024. Individual project scoping calls will be held in December with each participating CAH. The QI Learning Collaborative will meet virtually in January and February. During that time, participants will engage in facilitated discussions about applying the QI concepts in their own settings and problem-solving experiences or anticipated barriers as they work on implementing a QI project.

The cohort kick-off call will occur on Wednesday, November 20, from 1-2 p.m. (Mountain).

Virtual sessions will be held every other Wednesday from 1-2 p.m. (Mountain) on the following dates:

- January 8
- January 22
- February 5
- February 19
- Office Hours – March 5 (optional)

The QI project poster will be shared at the MHA Health Summit in Helena on April 2-4. The specific day and time of the poster session will be shared as soon as possible.

**Course Website:** [Quality Improvement Learning Collaborative | Montana Performance Improvement Network](#)

**For more information, contact:**

Collaborative Facilitators:

- Casey Driscoll, [casey.driscoll@mtha.org](mailto:casey.driscoll@mtha.org).  
406-457-8000
- Lindsay Konen, [lindsay.konen@mtha.org](mailto:lindsay.konen@mtha.org)  
406-457-8002

Stratis Health instructors/coaches:

- [Janelle Shearer, jshearer@stratishealth.org](mailto:jshearer@stratishealth.org)
- [Nicole Gackstetter, ngackstetter@stratishealth.org](mailto:ngackstetter@stratishealth.org)

## Session 1: Introduction to Quality Improvement, Processes and Systems, Prioritization

Wednesday, January 8 | 1-2 p.m. | [Zoom](#)

### Pre-Work



Complete brief Pre-Assessment by COB on Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup>:  
[Montana QI Learning Collaborative: Pre-Assessment Survey](#)



Participate in a 1:1 Scoping call with Stratis Health Facilitators.

Identify a project/action area for improvement you can work on while applying the concepts discussed during the sessions.



Review the following [QI Basics Modules](#):

- [Introduction to Quality Improvement](#) (15-minute video)
- [Processes and Systems](#) (9-minute video)
- [Prioritization](#) (10-minute video)



Review the following QI Basics Tools and Resources:

- [PICK Prioritization Matrix](#)
- [QI Prioritization Tool](#)



Consider and come prepared to discuss:

#### Introduction to Quality Improvement

- Does your organization have a specific approach to quality improvement? (e.g., PDSA, Model for Improvement, Lean Six Sigma, etc.)
- Review the four foundational elements of quality (slide 11). Reflect on how your organization uses these foundations to support quality improvement.
- Review the differences between quality assurance and quality improvement (slide 13). Describe times you have seen each of these approaches used in your organization.

#### Processes and Systems

- Review the difference between a process and a system (slide 2)
- Have you seen attempted improvements fail due to either a process or system?

#### Prioritization

- Have you ever been part of a team using a prioritization matrix or PICK? If so, what was that experience like? How would the use of either of these tools support team decision-making?

### Notes

## Session 2: Model for Improvement, Process Improvement Methods, Tools, and Measurement

Wednesday, January 22 | 1-2 p.m. MT | [Zoom](#)

### Pre-Work



Review the following [QI Basics Modules](#):

- [The Model for Improvement](#) (14-minute video)
- [Introduction to Process Mapping](#) (8-minute video)
- [Data Basics](#) (11-minute video)



Review the following **QI Basics Tools and Resources**:

- [Model for Improvement and PDSA Worksheet](#)
- [Cause and Effect Tool/Fishbone Diagram](#)



Consider the following and come prepared to discuss:

#### The Model for Improvement

- Review the three questions of the Model for Improvement. Why is it essential for QI teams to answer these three questions?
- What do PDSA cycles accomplish during a QI project?
- Reflect on obstacles or barriers (real or perceived) that might stand in the way of utilizing the PDSA model for quality projects.

#### Process Mapping

- Have you ever used process mapping at your organization? If yes, what worked and what didn't?
- What types of processes do you think would be helpful to map as you think about your improvement efforts?

#### Data Basics

- Share examples of qualitative and quantitative data that your organization is collecting.
- Identify a process and an outcome measure for a current QI effort underway at your organization.

### Notes

## Session 3: Teams and Communication

Wednesday, February 5 | 1-2 p.m. MT | [Zoom](#)

### Pre-Work



Review the following [QI Basics Modules](#):

- [Building Your QI Team](#) (13-minute video)
- [Communication Basics](#) (11-minute video)
- [Meeting Facilitation](#) (8-minute video)



Review the following **QI Basics Tools and Resources**:

- [Project Charter](#)
- [Work Plan](#)
- [Communication Plan](#)



Consider the following and come prepared to discuss:

#### Building Your QI Team

- Share examples of when a QI team should be used. Which ones of the team roles described should always be included?
- Do the roles discussed in the module seem to align with the roles in your organizations?
- Share experiences you may have had being part of a QI team.

#### Communication Basics

- Share what it means to have a shared mental model within a team. Have you experienced this?
- Review the five characteristics of effective communication. Consider examples of projects when communication succeeded or the time(s) it failed. What do you think contributed to the communication's effectiveness?

#### Meeting Facilitation

- Have you ever facilitated a meeting? What was that experience like? What kind of meeting was it? Looking back on that experience, would you have done anything differently?
- Conflict resolution is vital within any team, especially within a QI team. Review the PEARLS tool (slide 9). Can you identify situations where you might use the tool? Try using one of the PEARLS statements in a conflict situation before the next meeting and be ready to share the outcome with the group.

### Notes

## Session 4: Organizational Culture and Change Management

Wednesday, February 19 | 1-2 p.m. | [Zoom](#)

### Pre-Work



#### Review the following [QI Basics Modules](#):

- [Organizational Culture and Change Management Basics](#) (9-minute video)
- [A Culture of Quality](#) (13-minute video)



#### Review the following QI Basics Tools and Resources:

- [Force Field Analysis](#)

#### Review the following report:

- [Building Sustainable Capacity for Quality and Organizational Excellence: Core Elements of CAH Quality Infrastructure](#)



#### Consider the following and come prepared to discuss:

##### **Organizational Culture and Change Management Basics**

- Name a couple of different cultures within your work environment. Examples may include direct care staff, ancillary services, night shift, etc. What are some ways to ensure that changes are accepted in differing work cultures?
- Where do you fall as an individual in the Adopters of Change curve (slide 8)? Where does your organization fall?

##### **A Culture of Quality**

- Does your organization have a culture of quality? How is that evident within the organization?
- Review the nine CAH Quality Infrastructure core elements and criteria. What opportunities do you identify at your organization?

### Notes

## Quality Improvement Learning Collaborative Facilitators



### **Janelle Shearer, RN, BSN, MA, CPHQ**

Janelle is a program manager at Stratis Health and has extensive experience leading quality improvement initiatives related to hospital, home health care, patient safety, and palliative care. During her 20 years at Stratis Health, she has led multiple community-based initiatives, a statewide coordination of care initiative, and co-led multiple rural community-based palliative care projects. Janelle has presented on these initiatives at numerous local and national conferences and has authored multiple journal and healthcare news articles. She has over 20 years of experience as a registered nurse (RN) in a rural health system. She has experience in multiple clinical areas, including Med-Surg, ICU/CCU, OB, house supervisor, and home health/hospice. Ms. Shearer holds a Master of Arts in nursing from Bethel University and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) from the University of Iowa.



### **Nicole Gackstetter, CPPM, BA**

Nicole is a program manager at Stratis Health and has over 20 years of experience in health care quality improvement at the community, state, and national levels. She specializes in program management, facilitation, and technical assistance, with a strong emphasis on health equity. Nicole has worked across diverse health care settings, including clinics, hospitals, home health, and rural communities, addressing critical issues such as aging, chronic conditions, and health disparities. She has led many quality improvement initiatives, including the Quality Payment Program for Small, Rural, and Underserved Providers and the Rural Quality Improvement Technical Assistance Program.

Currently, Nicole oversees key projects such as the Health Plan Performance Improvement Plans (PIP) for Minnesota, focusing on diabetes and depression, and the Healthy Start Program for Children and Pregnant People. She also leads the DHS CLAS (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services) Technical Assistance Project, collaborating with grantees statewide to implement the 15 CLAS standards within their organizations. Additionally, she supports the AHRQ Antibiotic Stewardship Telehealth Program and the Rural Health Initiative, which emphasizes quality improvement in critical access hospitals. Nicole holds a bachelor's degree in communication, is a certified professional program manager, and is a TeamSTEPPS Master Trainer.