

Improving Clinical Communications

Health Leads at Massachusetts General Hospital

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BACKGROUND

Health Leads has partnered with Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) for 5 years to address the essential needs of caregivers and patients by providing a screening and referral service for patients at 4 practices.

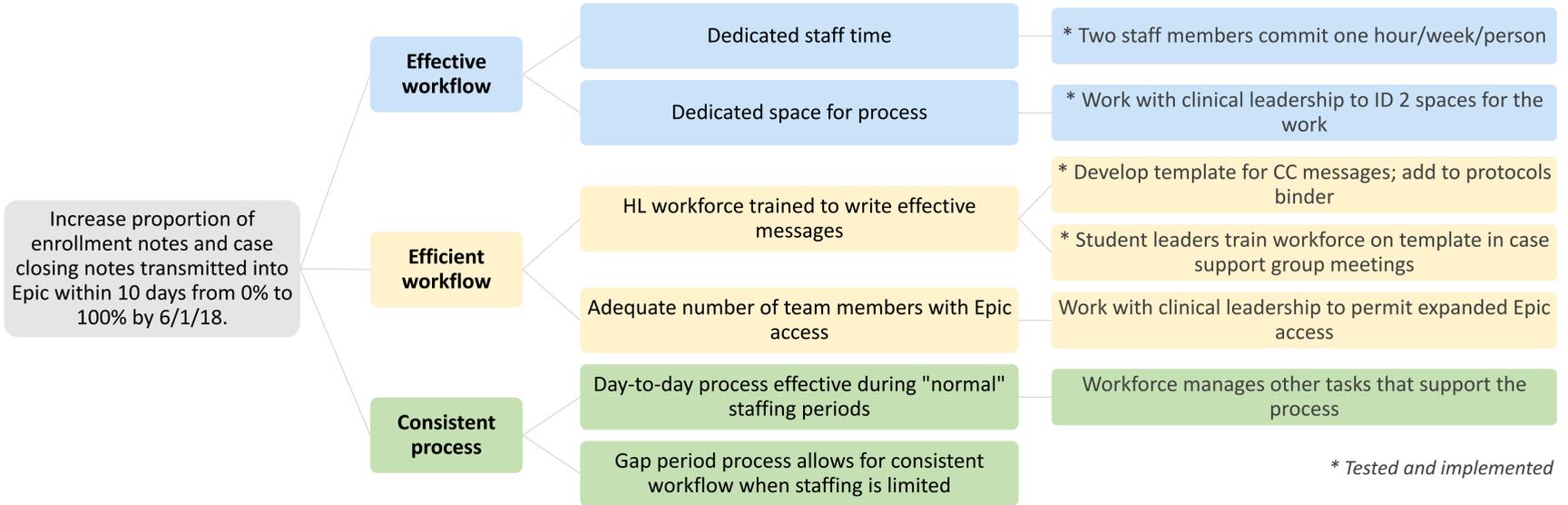
Clinical communication is the process through which Health Leads staff keep MGH providers informed about their patients' social needs and work with our program.

Our Hypothesis: Regular communication between the social needs team and health care providers improves patient outcomes by ensuring that providers are informed about the social needs of their patients and can make decisions that take this information into account.

PROJECT AIM

Increase the proportion of enrollment notes and case closing notes transmitted into Epic within 10 days from 0% (as of 10/17) to 100% by 6/1/18.

PROJECT STRATEGY



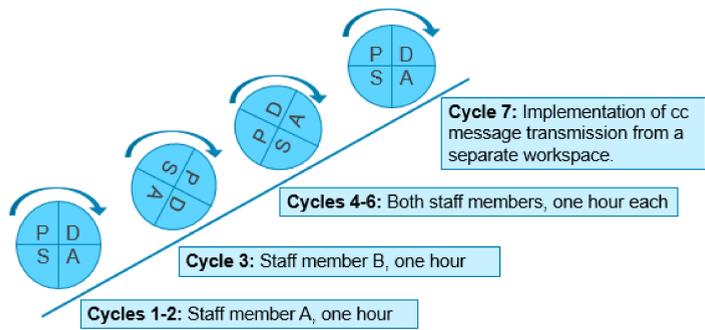
CHANGES MADE

DEDICATED WORKSPACE PDSA RAMP

Does having a separate workspace help get the work done?

1-2 Health Leads program staff tested dedicating 1 hour per week to sending clinical communications to providers from a separate workspace.

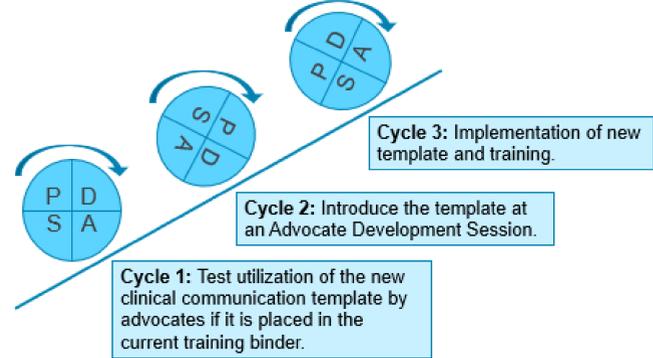
The goal was to determine whether the availability of a separate workspace would make it possible for staff to focus on the transmission of clinical communications on a weekly basis. This resulted in messages being sent on a weekly basis, as well as an increase in the median number of messages sent per week.



CLINICAL COMMUNICATION TEMPLATE PDSA RAMP

Does having a template lead to higher quality notes to providers?

Health Leads program staff developed a clinical communications template for advocates to use in drafting messages to providers. The goal was to determine if a template and advocate training would lead to more professional and appropriate notes to providers. The quality of messages created via the template and template utilization by advocates were tested and tracked. Once introduced to the template, advocates used it 100% of the time and message quality increased as a result.



RESULTS

- The dedicated workspace resulted in a consistent process for weekly clinical communication.
- The new message template and advocate training resulted in higher quality messages and increased efficiencies. Health Leads staff spent less time on average reviewing and revising messages created using the new template. As a result, the average time required to send a clinical communication message decreased significantly from 5.5 to 1.5 minutes per message. Health Leads staff were then able to transmit more messages per week on average.

LEARNING

- The number of messages sent per week was used as a proxy measure for the outcome described in the project aim due to challenges with collecting and tracking the required data.
- Health Leads staff received positive provider feedback throughout the project – with providers increasingly accounting for social needs when making clinical decisions after receiving messages from the Health Leads desk. Providers also expressed a desire for more communication with the Health Leads desk.

Provider Feedback

"Thank you! I want to get her anything she needs! So important for her health and her family!"

"What Terrific NEWS! THANK YOU! You did all of the hard work doing the forms and tracking the progress and keeping in touch with the pt. This is Big! Thanks so much!!!!!"

"Thank you for taking the time to work with [Patient Name] on all of these issues. I truly appreciate your efforts. I look forward to seeing him back in clinic soon."

"I truly appreciate all of your help and hope that he will be able to find an affordable place to live. Thanks! Have a great day!"

