Evolving the Role of the Quality Improvement Advisor

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Background/Context

- The Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and Providence Health Care (PHC) Physician-Led Quality Improvement (PLQI) initiative is designed to support physicians on quality improvement (QI) activities through QI tools, coaching of leadership skills, and an opportunity to lead a QI project.
- The program offers 60 hours of classroom time for quality improvement teaching and 1:1 advisor support for a QI project implementation.
- PLQI is directed by a steering committee and supported by a team with QI experience, including QI advisors.
- The role of the QI advisor has evolved and continues to be defined as the program, health authority, and needs of patients’ change over time.

Aim

To improve and optimize the Quality Improvement Advisor role.

Intervention

Year 1 – 2017/18

- 21 physicians accepted into the program
- The QI advisor role was primarily to teach and deliver QI curriculum

Year 2 – 2018/19

- The number of physicians has increased to 36
- As QI projects mature into the sustainability and control phase, there is more emphasis on project coordination and business skills
- The health authority has developed a greater interest in the program and stronger organizational navigation is needed.
- Now, the QI advisor role includes project coordination, data analysis, and relationship building between the physician and the rest of the organization.

Year 3 – 2019/20

- Program expands to over 40 physicians
- Role of teaching shifted from QI advisor to program alumni and subject matter experts
- Now, the QI advisor is focused on mentorship and 1:1 support for the physician and project
- Not only focused on QI training but the advisor works to ensure alignment with operational and strategic priorities
- QI advisor breaks down silos and acts as a bridge between the physicians, health authority administration, and the quality patient safety office (see diagram below)

Results

Overall, at the end of the year, physicians agreed that the training provided quality improvement tools and skills.

- In comparison from Year 1 (n=11) to Year 2 (n=19), evaluations results from physicians were:

This initiative provided me with...

- Adequate learning opportunities to increase my knowledge, confidence and competency in QI
- The necessary tools and skills to help me successfully undertake and lead a QI project
- The project support staff/resources I needed to successfully undertake my QI project
- Infrastructure resources I needed to successfully undertake my QI project

Potential Impact

- As PLQI matures, the QI advisor role is important to understand as physicians learn about and undertake their QI projects
- The QI advisor is an important bridge between local QI project and full organizational support and sustainability
- As the number of physicians grow, more QI advisors are needed. Clearer role expectations will allow for role clarity and desired experience/education
- By understanding the desired skills, appropriate professional development courses and workshops can be identified for staff development
- As we better understand the role of the QI advisor, the team can anticipate the skills and expertise necessary to develop a strong team through professional development.

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