

Using Performance Management to increase Organizational Accountability and Communication

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Abstract: Like other government programs, there is increased interest in fiscal and demonstrated accountability for public health. The challenge public health faces is that many of our efforts are difficult to measure. How do you put a value on helping families live healthier lives? We all know there is value in everything public health does-the problem is trying to quantify that information in a manner that is meaningful to the public and to policymakers.

Our LHJ has implemented a Performance Management Program that takes a three prong approach to increase accountability, continually improve performance, and communicate the value of public health-dashboard measures, performance measures, and a quality improvement program. The performance measures and quality improvement program were both initiated as pilot programs to ensure that before being implemented department-wide, staff and stakeholder involvement were maximized. In addition, it was critical that the process be meaningful and useful to staff.

As these programs shift from pilot to department-wide implementation, we have found that these efforts not only met, but exceeded anticipated outcomes. While the departmental dashboard measures have not been finalized, the committee working on the measures has developed a data collection and reporting protocol that should provide “real time” information to leadership in making management decisions. The program staff involved in developing performance measures has demonstrated increased team work and consistency in the messages they provide to the public and to policymakers. And the quality improvement process has spurred increased cross-departmental collaboration in addition to system improvement.