



LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT NAME: Austin/Travis County HHSD (A/TCHHSD)

ADDRESS: 15 Waller

PHONE NUMBER: 512-972-5410

SIZE: 415 FTEs

POPULATION SERVED FOR PROJECT: Managers and Supervisors of A/TCHHSD

PROJECT TITLE: One Wheel, Many Drivers: An Organizational Approach to Improving Staff Knowledge and Internal Communications for the Austin/Travis County HHSD

PLAN: Identify an Opportunity and Plan for Improvement

1. Getting Started

Throughout the Public Health Accreditation Beta Process, the Continuous Quality Improvement and Public Health Accreditation (CQI-PHA) team facilitators worked with each division and area in the department to learn about their benefits and challenges. Knowing what others do and navigating through our health department were among the top challenges. The team realized the need for a formal communication resource or plan that is made available and accessible to departmental staff, kept updated, and utilized as a key information source.

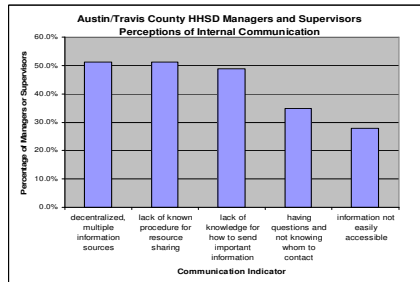
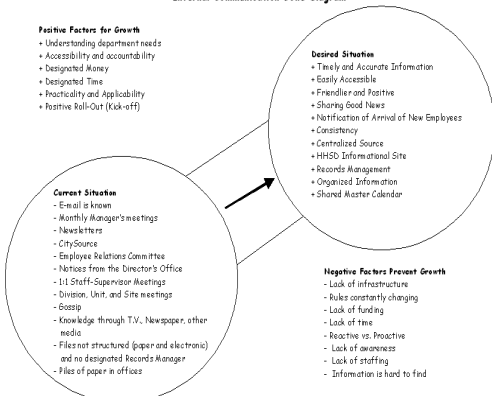
2. Assemble the Team

In order to garner input from each area of the health department for a holistic public health approach to advance quality, the Executive Leadership Team recommended representatives from all divisions in the department to participate with the CQI-PHA team. CQI Coordinator and Accreditation Coordinator facilitated monthly team meetings and were available for support, education, and guidance.

3. Examine the Current Approach

The bone diagram below depicts the department's communication process and highlights (1) positive factors for growth, (2) negative factors preventing growth, (3) the current situation, and (4) the desired situation. We asked the employees how they perceived our communication structure. The baseline study revealed (see chart to right) key reasons for not having a means for better internal communication.

Internal Communication Bone Diagram



4. Identify Potential Solutions

The team developed a Department Resource Packet that delineates each area's internal services (provided to staff in the department or City) and external services (provided to the community) and includes the department organizational chart. The team implemented the project with managers and supervisors before expanding the intervention to all department staff members.

5. Develop an Improvement Theory

If A/TCHHSD managers and supervisors are provided with the departmental resource packet delineating internal and external services, then they will know whom to contact when they need assistance. A post quality improvement intervention survey will be administered to the managers and supervisors and results will be compared to the results from the pre quality improvement intervention survey.

AIM Statement: By Nov. 30, 2010, the percentage of Austin/ Travis County HHSD Managers and Supervisors reporting that they know the responsible parties to contact for departmental resources and information (for example, HHSD news, events, announcements, plans, new policies or procedures) will increase from 65% to 90%.

DO: Test the Theory for Improvement

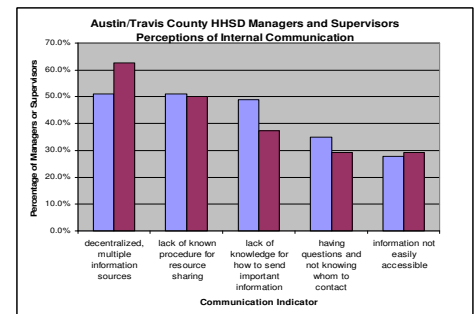
6. Test the Theory

- A/TCHHSD resource packet provided to & reviewed by managers & supervisors.
- Post quality improvement intervention survey sent to group to test theory.
- Department organization chart and mission, along with City's vision visible for public & staff at A/TCHHSD sites.
- Areas in department report to team when staff does not know whom to contact for needed information.

STUDY: Use Data to Study Results

7. Study the Results

- Results illustrate a 6% increase of managers & supervisors knowing whom to contact when questions arise and an 11% increase in knowledge of how to send pertinent information.
- A 20% increase support having a centralized information source and an increase of 11% report receiving information from 7 or more sources.



ACT: Standardize the Improvement and Establish Future Plans

8. Standardize the Improvement or Develop New Theory

The team is adapting the intervention to allow more time for managers and supervisors to review the resource packet, to provide training, and to update the packet. The team continues to study the results and will hold engagement sessions with the managers and supervisors. By doing so, we will continue to measure the project's successes and weaknesses as we gather additional input including challenges and benefits of the project.

9. Establish Future Plans

The Resource Packet will be updated at least annually and will be reviewed department wide. We will utilize lessons learned as we advance towards a centralized information system such as SharePoint. The department continues to follow the PDSA model with our multidisciplinary team as we advance quality improvement to effect positive change throughout our department and to have such change positively impact the communities we serve.