



## CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

### What is Cross-Jurisdictional Quality Improvement (QI)?

A cross-jurisdictional QI project is defined as an improvement activity that involves participation from more than one level of governmental public health (state, local, tribal, territorial, or federal) or from more than one health department at the same level (e.g., multiple local health departments) and follows an improvement cycle based on data driven problem solving and application of QI techniques.

### What is the Value of Cross-Jurisdictional QI?

- New and greater opportunities to solve system-wide or system-level problems.** Involving multiple government agencies in a QI project provides stronger potential for finding solutions that get at the heart of the problem. Cross-jurisdictional QI projects have been found to be especially valuable in addressing unique challenges in work processes or business services that involve multiple agencies or layers, such as grant and procurement processes or reporting systems. They can also be used to identify and address shared problems in improving health outcomes.
- Built in opportunities for replication.** Often, QI projects that cross different levels of government address issues that trouble more than just the participating government agencies. For example, a QI project that involves the state and a small number of local health departments may ultimately benefit all local health departments if a solution is implemented statewide.
- Stronger working relationships across levels and jurisdictional boundaries.** Through collaborative QI work, team members in different agencies indicate a new appreciation for the challenges faced by colleagues and for the perspectives shared by others.

### Tips for Successful Cross-Jurisdictional QI

The following seven tips will help make your cross-jurisdictional QI project be as successful as possible. These tips and themes are drawn from interviews with representatives of cross-jurisdictional QI projects around the country (at the federal, state, local, and tribal levels).

- Successful cross-jurisdictional QI projects focus on a shared or common issue or area of interest right from the start.** Everyone involved should be aware of why undertaking the QI initiative is important and the benefit to each agency. Put another way, a cross-jurisdictional QI project will not be successful if the agencies involved don't want to be at the table or don't see the value of participating.
- Ensure collective buy-in among the agencies involved in the cross-jurisdictional QI effort.** The goal-setting stage of a cross-jurisdictional QI process often takes longer because multiple agencies and layers of leadership are involved. To be successful, it is generally necessary to have different levels of authority and leadership involved in setting and agreeing to the goals. Additionally, if the QI project has potential for replication or spread beyond the participating agencies, that should be clearly considered as the part of the goal setting.
- Use technology to build a virtual team.** Because cross-jurisdictional QI often engages agencies in different locations, take advantage of available technology. This has proven to be a huge asset in building a collaborative working environment for cross-jurisdictional QI teams. Some teams have included technology plans in the team charter, while others have depended on the team leader to facilitate how technology can best be used. This can include venues and platforms such as virtual meeting software, conference calls, videoconferencing, social networking sites, and SharePoint sites.



- **Team member selection—for both individuals and organizations—can make or break the success of a project.** Team member selection is important with any QI project, but with cross-jurisdictional QI, additional consideration needs to be given to organizations that should be involved, whether it be the types of agencies to draw in (federal, state, local, or tribal) or multiple organizations from the same level (e.g., a small number of local health departments willing to explore a statewide issue). For each organization involved, tap into the leadership or sponsors to ensure “champions” and identify the best participants or content experts to participate.
- **The “coach” is essential in cross-jurisdictional QI projects.** Early in the project, determine the coaching strategy, i.e., whether an external coach will be used or whether a team member will fill that role. The coach plays the key role in facilitating the QI approach and methods, ensuring sustainability and change management, and building a high performing team. Many teams have found benefits to using an external coach, as this ensures neutrality throughout the process.
- **Ensure clear roles for all involved, particularly the sponsor or champion.** With so many agencies and levels involved in a cross-jurisdictional QI project, clear roles and responsibilities for all team members are critical. The sponsor or champion plays an important role in ensuring appropriate awareness and support to achieve the QI project goals. In cross-jurisdictional QI projects, it may be important to engage a sponsor at each of the participating organizations. When considering roles, include who is responsible for providing status updates to your respective government agencies and disseminating lessons learned to other agencies so that the findings can be replicated.

- **Think about the mechanics and logistics of the QI process.** When conducting a QI project that crosses organizational boundaries, the necessary resources and logistics need to be considered carefully at the front end. There are many guidance documents, checklists, and tools for QI projects available. As you view these tools, think about issues such as:
  - What QI methods and tools will work best?
  - Are there opportunities to minimize the cycle time?
  - What resources are needed (including those needed for travel, technology, or coaching)?
  - What participation is needed from all levels and each agency (team members, sponsors, leadership, and logistical support staff)?

### Additional Resources:

- **An example of an existing initiative that supports cross-jurisdictional quality improvement:** Infant Mortality Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network (CoIIN): <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/infantmortality/coiin/>
- **Quality improvement information and resources:**
  - Public Health Quality Improvement Exchange: [www.phqix.org](http://www.phqix.org)
  - ASTHO: <http://www.astho.org/Programs/Accreditation-and-Performance/>
  - NACCHO: [www.naccho.org/qi](http://www.naccho.org/qi)

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