

County of Santa Clara

Social Services Agency

333 West Julian Street
San Jose, California 95110-2335



DATE: May 28, 2019

TO: Board of Supervisors
Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D., County Executive

FROM: Robert Menicocci, Agency Director

SUBJECT: Off-Agenda Report relating to observations and recommendations made by the Continuous Quality Improvement Manager

At the May 16, 2019 Board of Supervisors' (Board) Budget Workshop, the Board requested an off-agenda report from the Social Services Agency (SSA) relating to the observations and recommendations made by the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Manager.

Engaged In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) on April 18, 2018 leveraging a CQI tool called TOS (Throughput Operating Strategy). This tool works well with systems that do not have their processes mapped and do not have sufficient data to support operational-focused decision making (productivity and quality measures).

Participants: IHSS management team

Findings:

1. Poor location of equipment (printers, computers) to enable a high degree of workflow within the unit. Current equipment is also hindered by programs that are inefficient.
2. Lack of staff enablement to make decisions places constraints on the amount of work that can be completed in IHSS' workflows while also impacting client services.
3. Staff spend a great deal of time dealing with incomplete forms and finding completed paperwork within existing flows and filing systems.
4. Assigned tasks and actions may be assigned to staff that are not proficient with required actions. Additionally, management and oversight of these tasks and actions are not focused on productivity. This allows for the buildup of backlogs and all of the negative effects on morale and productivity that come with loosely regulated work.

It was determined by the team that the approach taken was at too high a level. The effort was then re-launched at the beginning of 2019 with the intent to get a more granular understanding of the system. Current efforts are focused on mapping the processes out in detail, identifying productivity metrics (how much work is being done and the quality of the work), identifying inefficiencies within the process and then reducing / eliminating them.

Participants: IHSS intake management, supervisors, and front line staff

Methodology employed: Lean Visual Stream Mapping (VSM)

Advantages: Identification and reduction / elimination of inefficiencies (wastes) at a very granular level. Production metrics become an absolute requirement for a VSM to work. This means how much work, how well the work is done, and how long the work takes to do become required metrics in order to gauge work flow and resource requirements. This data was requested in the abovementioned approach and could not be produced; the organization does not have productivity metrics at this level.

Disadvantages: Time needs to be taken to map out the process in order to get the team to a point where they can identify inefficiencies. This process is time consuming for unmapped organizations, such as IHSS, as the process is usually done in different ways (non-standardized operating procedures). Additional time is required in both mapping the process out and also later when reducing inefficiencies becomes the focus. Finally, introducing any process changes to the larger teams within the organization is complicated due to workers doing processes their own way.

The current state VSM is mostly completed and has been released to the organization for feedback.

The goal for either approach remains the same; streamline workflow, leverage bottlenecks, thereby enabling the current workforce to increase productivity and quality while having a clear picture of resource requirements (workforce) to get the job done. Given my work with the initial approach and the visibility I have into the current process we are reviewing, the issue is not the number of bodies we have working, but *how* the work is being done by the number of bodies we currently have.

c: Chief Board Aides
Miguel Marquez, Chief Operating Officer
James R. Williams, County Counsel
Megan Doyle, Clerk of the Board