

## Forming a Team

Teams should include representatives from every work area that will be affected by the system changes taking place. Including representatives from every area ensures that each person understands the changes, and promotes buy-in for the changes. Getting the right people on the team is critical to a successful improvement effort. Teams vary in size and composition according to an organization's needs. A typical team is composed of three to six members.

### Team Leadership Roles

Team activities are guided by members in four leadership roles: senior leader, system leader, physician champion, and day-to-day leader. In some facilities, one person may serve in the capacity of senior leader and system leader. Individuals in these roles share lessons learned with other members of the team. Examples of how these roles have worked well in other organizations are described below.

#### Senior Leader

- has ultimate authority to allocate the time and resources to achieve the team's aim
- has ultimate authority over all areas affected by the change
- will champion the spread of successful changes **throughout the organization**

Examples of senior leaders include a vice president, CEO, or senior director. The senior leader is encouraged to show support for the team and its work by attending team meetings and offering resources and support. Acting as a voice for the organization and to the community shows the team that its work is important and appreciated.

#### System Leader

- has direct authority to allocate time and resources needed to achieve the team's aim
- has direct authority over the particular systems affected by the change
- will champion the spread of successful changes **throughout the department or service area**

An example of a system leader would be the administrative or operational vice president or director of the medical department. The system leader supports the team and offers guidance for the work being done.

#### Physician Champion

- is a practicing provider who is an opinion leader and is respected by peers
- understands the processes of care
- has a good working relationship with colleagues and the day-to-day leader
- wants to drive improvements in the system

It is essential to have a physician champion on the team to address clinical issues.

#### Day-to-Day Leader

- drives the project, ensuring that cycles of change are tested, implemented, and documented
- coordinates communication between the team and the organization

- oversees data collection
- works effectively with the physician champion

The day-to-day leader should understand how changes will affect systems and have time available to keep the project moving forward. The day-to-day leader typically has QI leadership responsibility at the organization, but could also be a staff nurse or other staff member key to the issue of focus.

### **Selecting Team Members**

In addition to team leaders, the team includes staff members from all areas potentially affected by system changes related to the topic at hand. For example, potential team members for an immunization team might include:

Medical Director or Physician Champion/Infectious Disease Physician QI Staff Nurse Manager/DON	Infection Control Practitioner/Employee Health Nurse Pharmacist Staff nurse representative Business office/billing representative
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Teams should meet regularly (at least monthly), with each member of the team assigned specific tasks and responsibilities between meetings. Some tips on team functioning include the following:

1. In addition to team meetings, plan brief huddles (5-10 minutes) to help organize the work and share information between meetings. (This might be a hallway conversation or e-mail notes.)
2. Designate one team member as the day-to-day leader who will keep the work of the team moving between meetings. Another person could be responsible for coordinating data collection, and other responsibilities can be assigned as the team develops.
3. Make the work of the team visible displays with information about the project and data you are collecting to promote the project to others in your facility throughout the course of the project. Use posters and gain support for the changes being tested, and to help spread improvements throughout the facility.

### **Checklist for Selecting Team Members**

An effective team has members who work well together and who have a combination of skills, styles, and competencies. An effective team has members who:

- are leaders
- are team players
- have specific skills and technical proficiencies relevant to treatment of diabetes
- possess excellent listening skills
- communicate well verbally
- are problem-solvers



- are motivated to improve current systems and processes
- are creative, innovative, and enthusiastic

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