

## How to Design and Implement a Basic Quality Assurance Plan

A quality assurance plan should generally include two basic areas: how to address errors (quality-related events), and how to improve practice before an error occurs (continuous quality improvement). This document outlines steps to take in establishing a QA plan plan.

- I. Design a means to effectively document quality-related events (QREs) and educate staff appropriately
  1. Collect all relevant details of the event, identify the root cause(s), and make a plan to avoid the same error in the future (consider the example provided on the Board of Pharmacy's website)
  2. Always educate staff on documented QREs and their resulting plans.
  3. Many errors reported to the Board are due to poor customer service in resolving the issue- consider including training on how to handle an error as part of your plan
- II. Identify one or two quality related parameters you would like to measure and improve. You might consider two categories of parameters:
  1. Areas known to require improvement.
    - a. These areas may be identified through a previous dispensing or procedural error, a deficiency notice from the Board, or observations of pharmacy staff.
    - b. Monitoring will be with the intent to track successful improvement.
  2. Areas expected to be satisfactory
    - a. These areas may be identified as perceived strengths in your pharmacy.
    - b. The intent of monitoring may be to verify that processes are done correctly and to identify unsuspected weaknesses.
- III. Design a method to measure the identified areas. Here are some tips:
  1. Focus on quantitative measures that can show clear results
  2. Utilize your computer system's capabilities where appropriate
  3. Use random samples where appropriate (e.g. you don't necessarily have to go through the entire prescription log book to quantify counseling documentation)
  4. Consider a method that can be accomplished in a reasonable amount of time by appropriate staff. Keep it simple.
  5. Consider a method that can be done consistently as part of normal procedures.
  6. Determine how often the measurement will be repeated and make plans to ensure it is not forgotten.
- IV. Set appropriate goals
  1. Perfection is not always a realistic goal. Determine what is acceptable for your practice.
  2. Set an attainable goal and be prepared to update the goal when it is achieved.
  3. Include instructions on what the person taking the measurement should do if the goal is not met (e.g. who to contact)
- V. Be prepared to make new plans when goals are not met
  1. Set a deadline for when unmet goals will be addressed
  2. Be prepared to change policies or procedures in order to improve areas of deficiency
- VI. Educate your staff on the Quality Assurance Plan, both at inception and at regular intervals. Include:
  1. Why it is being done
  2. What is being tracked
  3. How to perform measurements
  4. Progress in areas being monitored, including improvements implemented as a result thereof
  5. Updates on any QREs, including the plan to avoid those errors in the future
- VII. Quality assurance never ends
  1. Continue to update your plan as necessary. Over time, the entire prescription process can be monitored and improved.