

Quality Improvement 102: The Model for Improvement: Your Engine for Change
Summary Sheet

The Model for Improvement, developed by Associates in Process Improvement, is a simple yet powerful tool for accelerating improvement. This model has been used successfully by hundreds of health care organizations in many countries to improve many different health care processes and outcomes.

The model has two parts:

- Three fundamental questions
- The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle to test changes and determine if the change is an improvement

1. Aim: What are we trying to accomplish?

- A good aim addresses an issue that is important to those involved; it is specific, measurable, and addresses these points: How good? By when? For whom (or for what system)?
- Struggling to pick an aim? Remember STEEP, the six Institute of Medicine dimensions—Safe, Timely, Effective, Efficient, Equitable, and Patient-centered.

2. Measures: How will we know a change is an improvement?*

- Outcome Measures = Where are we ultimately trying to go?
- Process Measures = Are we doing the right things to get there?
- Balancing Measures = Are the changes we are making to one part of the system causing problems in other parts of the system?

*Remember: Plotting data over time (with a run chart) is a simple and effective way to determine whether the changes you are making are leading to improvement.

3. Changes: What changes can we make that will result in improvement?

- Five useful way to develop changes: Critical thinking, benchmarking, using technology, creative thinking, and change concepts.
- Change concepts: Eliminate waste, improve work flow, optimize inventory, change the work environment, producer/customer interface, manage time, focus on variation, focus on error proofing, focus on the product or service.

4. PDSA Cycle(s): Plan-Do-Study-Act

- Plan: Plan the test or observation, including a plan for collecting data.
- Do: Try out the test on a small scale.
- Study: Set aside time to analyze the data and study the results.
- Act: Refine the change, based on what was learned from the test.

The Model for Improvement

