# ZYNXHEALTH®

PART OF THE HEARST HEALTH NETWORK

## Smarter Care Made Simple

# Formalizing a Successful Performance Improvement Process

## AN OPTIMIZATION BLUEPRINT

This is your guide to deploying a successful, targeted performance improvement process to drive better results across your organization.

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# Introduction

Providing patient care that is both high quality and cost-effective is a challenge healthcare organizations across the United States face every day. To meet these challenges, organizations must be willing to adopt a system-wide approach to improve processes and communication, both of which are crucial to establishing solid interdepartmental and interdisciplinary relationships that foster trust and a teamwork approach to meeting stated goals.

Hospitals and other healthcare facilities must be agile and innovative when approaching the task of enhancing processes and communications. Implementing an effective performance improvement program is a major key to attaining success.

This eBook will help guide you in starting a quality improvement program at your organization. It will outline the steps you will need to take, the stakeholders and decision makers to be involved, when to collect and analyze data, and how to interpret and apply your findings to drive continued improvements.
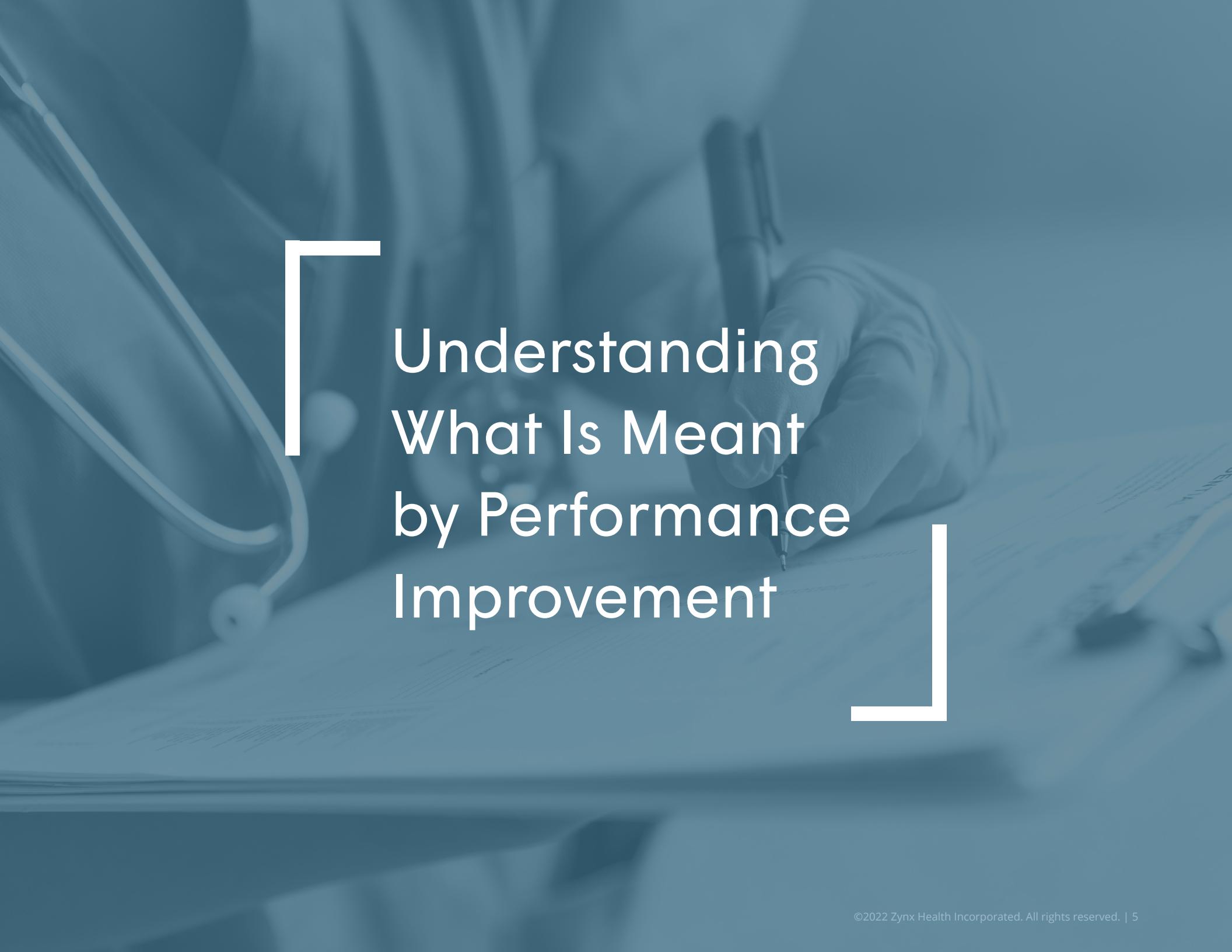
A single quality improvement program initiated to prevent bloodstream infections resulted in a net savings of $1.85 million over 3 years and a 50% decrease in bloodstream infections.

–*JAMA Intern Med*

# Understanding What Is Meant by Performance Improvement

# What do we mean by "performance improvement program"?

Before launching a department- or company-wide performance improvement campaign at your organization, it's important to understand what is meant by "performance improvement program" in healthcare.

Simply stated, a performance improvement program (or process) refers to the ongoing study and assessment of the functions within your organization and modifying them in an effort to increase the likelihood of attaining desired outcomes and to best meet the needs of all patients. It should not be confused with a performance improvement *plan*, which is an action plan developed at the individual employee level to help eliminate performance deficiencies.

# Benefits

# Benefits

Performance improvement programs exist because, when properly executed, they can have tremendous benefit. Performance improvement programs:

- Serve as a guide to excellence
- Necessitate that each team member becomes a change agent capable of sustaining process modifications via a systematic approach to addressing opportunities for positive change
- Guide teams to evaluate existing processes, explore opportunities, and develop calls to action
- Are essential for organizational success in managing patient care, resources, and outcomes

In addition to being geared toward reducing clinical variation, successful performance improvement programs are associated with:

- Attaining better patient outcomes
- Demonstrating decreased costs
- Achieving organizational goals
- Meeting regulatory requirements
- Successfully navigating state and national quality programs
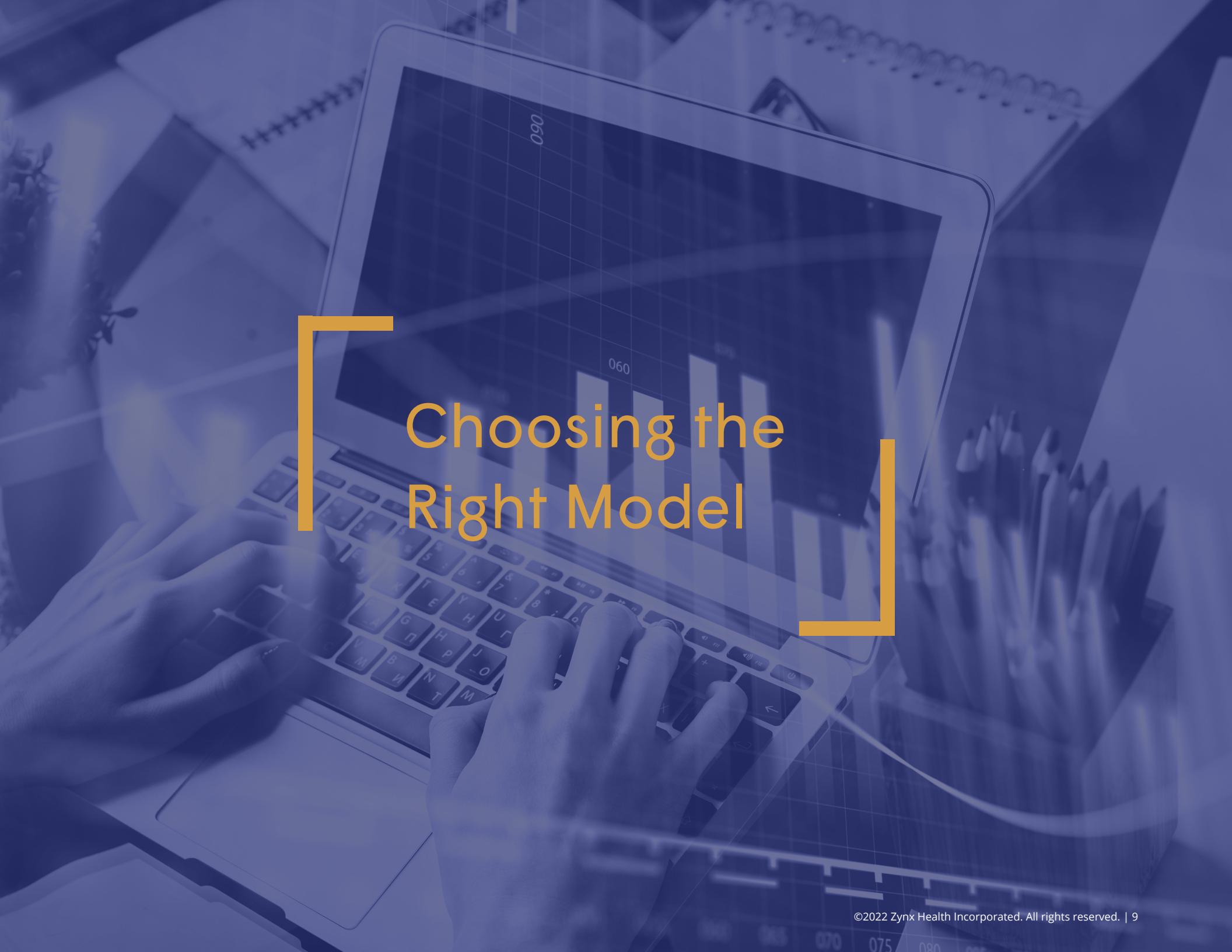
# Choosing the Right Model

# Not All Models Are the Same

Many systematic, formal frameworks are available to guide the development of your performance improvement program. Determining which plan to select should be made based on numerous factors, such as alignment between the framework and your team's objectives and, to a lesser extent, staff familiarity with and understanding of the proposed model. Process improvement models include:

- **Lean,** a continuous improvement and employee engagement program developed by the Massachu-setts Institute for Technology

- **Six Sigma,** a five-step process improvement methodology based on the concept of limiting errors or defects to 3.4 per every 1 million opportunities

- **The Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control (DMAIC) Process,** a quality-driven model developed by the American Society for Quality and used by Six Sigma

- **Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Worksheet,** a healthcare-focused tool developed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement

- **Model for Improvement,** a framework developed by the Associates for Process Improvement

Once you have selected a model, it will guide your team members through activities to achieve departmental and organizational goals.

# Developing a Formal Presentation

> **"** Implementing a process improvement culture can make a real difference to business teams and to the success of an organization. **"**
>
> –T. Kohlenbach

# Developing a Formal Presentation

Establishing a performance improvement process begins with attaining executive support. Full support by senior leadership will improve the likelihood of a successful plan. In fact, performance improvement initiatives often germinate at the executive level. To help ensure buy-in from all executive team members, a formal presentation should be developed.

# ELEMENTS OF A FORMAL PRESENTATION

1. An overview of the issue(s) that necessitate starting a performance improvement program (e.g., high rates of pressure ulcers among inpatients, high fall rates, low staff retention)

2. The design and scope of the program

3. The desired goal(s) and objective(s); setting reasonable and attainable goals and objectives is critical to the program's success

4. An understanding of the team members who will be included in the program

5. Anticipated costs (e.g., staff time, hardware or software acquisition) to implement the program

6. The action plan, which should include the program's start and end dates as well as an overview of process changes to be implemented to attain stated goals and objectives

7. A summary of the data collection process to be deployed and the projected time frames against which objective baseline findings will be compared; true process improvement involves assessment of multiple points in time

8. An explanation of how process changes that result in performance improvement will be implemented and an explanation of steps to be taken if no process improvement is attained

9. Directives for senior leadership (e.g., providing written or verbal support of the program across departments or the organization)

Providing senior leadership with clear and delineated objectives at the onset will help spread enthusiasm about the project and help drive its success.

# Prelaunch, Launch, and Beyond

# Prelaunch Tasks

Before launching the project, review the evidence from reliable sources to identify best practices that align with your team's objectives. Determine which best practices will be implemented, and provide training to relevant team members.

Be sure that you have collected and documented all baseline data that falls within the scope of the performance improvement project.

# Launch the Project

After completing all preliminary tasks, it's time to launch the project! The launch can be done though a semi-informal team (or company-wide) meeting and should be reiterated in writing via email or another means of distribution shortly thereafter. The launch should be delivered with positivity and encouragement.

Ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of *why* the project is being undertaken and *how* it will positively impact the organization's long-term performance.

# Postlaunch

Following the launch, there's still plenty to do. For example:

- Record and document all findings at agreed-upon time points.

- Conduct postimplementation assessments and measure against other data collection time points including baseline.

- Depending on the length and complexity of the program, provide periodic refresher training sessions to ensure newly initiated standards are being followed. Set course corrections as needed.

- Identify and share successes and challenges.

- Determine which process changes resulted in positive outcomes and continue to identify improvement opportunities.

- Document findings in white papers or via other channels to reinforce the value of the program.

- Eliminate or revise process changes that did not improve outcomes.

- Share your findings with your team and executive leaders. Celebrate successes and develop a strategy to ensure ongoing success.

# Summary

# Closing Thoughts

Performance improvement is never a one-and-done task. It requires flexibility, adaptability, and an ongoing organizational commitment and determination to achieve consistent positive outcomes. Although not without challenges, the labors of undertaking a performance improvement program that is well-developed and backed by senior leadership can reap many rewards.

Selecting a performance improvement model that complements organizational structure and resources is among the keys to success. The model guides performance improvement activities and creates value by driving improved financial and clinical outcomes. Additionally, variation is eliminated, standardization prevails, and sustainability is achieved.

Organizations that realize the value of performance improvement and place the highest importance on formalizing a plan within their organization are the most likely to find success. Using the industry-leading solutions available from Zynx Health, and services available from our dedicated Performance Improvement Team, can help you successfully complete your improvement objectives.

## Make a Change for the Better

With this eBook, you have the information necessary to start a successful performance improvement process. Zynx Health can help guide your every step.

Discover what we can do together.

Now that you know the steps for success, it's time for action.

# About Zynx Health

Since 1996, Zynx Health has helped improve the quality of care delivered to millions of patients across the United States and Canada. Thousands of hospitals and healthcare systems rely on our solutions daily to guide performance improvement initiatives and complement clinical decision making at the point of care. Our performance improvement specialists are available to help healthcare organizations of all sizes achieve better patient outcomes.

"Everyone supports the concept of 'evidence-based medicine' — but getting it into practice is another matter. **Zynx Health has been a great asset t**o help us establish this approach."

Robert Murphy, MD | Memorial Hermann

**> 500,000**
order sets and care plans in use by Zynx clients

Demonstrated improvements in key patient outcomes including **mortality, length of stay, cost**, and **readmission**

Strong vendor partnerships including **MEDITECH, Cerner, Epic, Krames, Netsmart,** and **Healthwise**

**Best in KLAS**
Best in KLAS **2022** and **2021**. KLAS Category Leader **2017, 2016, 2015, 2014,** and **2012.**

"With Zynx Health solutions, we have the evidence-based tools to **improve efficiency and care.**"

Brad Clegg, DO | Metro Health

Speciality content for **home health, skilled nursing, long-term care managemen**t, and **physical rehabilitation**

**> 8,000**
pages of evidence-based referential content

"[Our] hospital is able to **decrease costs** and **improve quality** simply by applying evidence-based practice to our order sets."

Timothy Counlhan, MD | Berkshire Medical Center

Achieve your organization's performance improvement goals with Zynx Health's evidence-based solutions.

Contact us at 888.333.9969 or info@zynx.com to learn more.

zynxhealth.com

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