



QUALITY IMPROVEMENT NEWSLETTER

Creating a Culture of Continuous Improvement

Friday, January 23, 2026

Update - Strengthening Quality Improvement and Performance Management Across MDH

As presented in the last issue of this newsletter, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) is building capacity Department-wide for performance management (PM) and quality improvement (QI) with the creation of a Performance Team in the Office of the Secretary (OOS). In the coming weeks, the Performance Team will be talking to all MDH administrations to learn about their ongoing PM and QI work, among other topics, and how the Team can support programs across MDH. The Team looks forward to using what they learn to draft a roadmap for advancing MDH's culture of quality and continuous improvement.

For questions related to PM or QI at MDH, please contact the OOS PM/QI team at mdh.quality1@maryland.gov. For questions about PM and QI in Public Health Services, please contact mdh.phsqi@maryland.gov.

Four Quality Improvement (QI) Council Project Teams Introduced at the QI Council & QI Steering Committee Joint Meeting

Members of the Quality Improvement (QI) Council and QI Steering Committee met jointly on December 15, 2025 to appreciate both groups' work this year and get energized for the year ahead. The 21 QI Council members have formed four QI project teams which were

introduced during the meeting. Team names and the areas in which they are working are as follows:

1. Prevention and Health Promotion Administration (PHPA) Ops QI Team focused on improving PHPA's operations and small procurement process
2. Power Rearrangers working to improve the Office of Public Health Improvement's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program unsolicited reporting notifications process
3. Data Dreamcatchers streamlining the Office of Public Health Improvement's Behavioral Health Workforce data processes
4. Quality in Motion working to improve the Office of Human Resources' process for hiring candidates with exceptional qualifications

Find more information about the QI Council and QI Steering Committee, including each QI team's theme song, in the December meeting [slides](#). To learn more about the QI Council, please email MDH.PHSQI@maryland.gov.



Caption: QI Council and QI Steering Committee members did a mini-Plan-Do-Study-Act simulation during the December 2025 meeting. Teams had to decrease the time it took for all team members to touch the ball. Congratulations to Dr. Monique Wilson's team who had the fastest time!

Vote on this Newsletter's New Title

This newsletter will be expanding to include PM, as well as QI. Help us pick the newsletter's new title by voting [here!](#)

MDH Shares Performance Management with Charles County

Division Directors at the Charles County Health Department furthered their knowledge of PM on December 16, 2025 when MDH virtually delivered the presentation “Demystifying PM and QI for Accreditation.” To help the local health department learn more about best practices for PM/QI and how these best practices align with accreditation, the MDH team explained the Public Health Accreditation Board's requirements in plain language and shared how MDH implements PM and QI.

If you would like to learn more about PM/QI best practices and MDH's re-accreditation process, or if you would like to request that the MDH team deliver this presentation to your team or local health department, reach out to MDH.PHSQI@maryland.gov.



Demystifying Performance Management and Quality Improvement for Accreditation

MDH Accreditation, Performance, and Quality Improvement Team

Slides adapted from the [September 2025 LHD PHIG Convening](#)



Caption: [Slides](#) from the presentation delivered to the Charles County Health Department's Division Directors on December 16, 2025.

QI Learning Corner

“If I had only one hour to save the world, I would spend fifty-five minutes defining the problem, and only five minutes finding the solution.”

Like Einstein’s quote above suggests, developing an understanding of the problem is vital and worth the time before diving into brainstorming solutions. Use the 5W1H approach, outlined below, to answer six questions that will help your team thoroughly understand a problem so you can then find an effective solution. For more information about defining the problem and writing a problem statement, see these [slides](#).

A “5W1H” can be a helpful organizing framework to define your problem

Question	Description
What	Describe the problem. What do you see?
Where	At what location does the problem occur?
Which	The category of residents or type of service that causes the problem or suffers from the problem
When	When does the problem occur? How long has it been occurring?
Who	Who experiences the problem?
How	How does the problem happen? What else happens when the problem occurs?

Important: No ‘Why’ Question is asked here. Focus on just describing what you observe.

Example: 5W1H – Illustrative example from another state

Question	Example
What	“We don’t do succession planning for senior leadership well.”
Where	“Across all State departments, particularly those related to Health and Social Services.”
Which	“Department Directors, Deputy Directors, and Division Directors.”
When	“At varying times, but particularly in the final two years of an administration.”
Who	“Department staff, especially HR and managers.”
How	“Departments must scramble once transition are announced, leading to pausing of major initiatives and limited knowledge transfer.”
Problem statement	“How can the State begin implementing a plan for succession in senior leadership positions, in all departments, using a standard approach based upon proven best practices by the end of the year?”

Caption: Slides from the Governor’s Office of Performance Management September 2025 training entitled “How to Write a Compelling Problem Statement.”

Abstract Submission Opportunities

Consider submitting PM and QI work to one of the following conferences. Please let us know if you submit so we can celebrate this milestone with you! Reach out to mdh.quality1@maryland.gov if you would like the PM/QI team in the OOS to provide feedback on your abstract draft.

- [Maryland Action Coalition Summit](#) - Abstract submissions due February 27, 2026
- [NACCHO conference](#) - Student poster abstract submissions due February 28, 2026 (must be a current undergraduate or graduate student in public health)
- [Maryland Association for Healthcare Quality conference](#) - Abstract submissions due March 16, 2026
- [National Association for Healthcare Quality](#) - Abstract submissions due March 9, 2026

QI and PM Trainings & Events



[Sign-up here](#) to register for upcoming QI trainings, PM information sessions, and other upcoming events. Whether you are new to QI or need a refresher, these events are a great opportunity to build your skills, meet other aspiring changemakers, and contribute to continuous improvement.

Upcoming trainings:

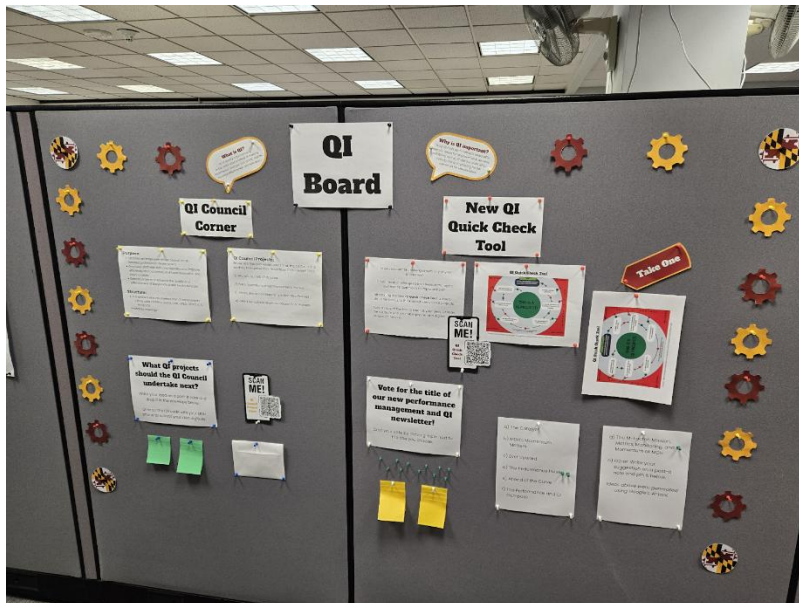
- Advanced QI Training: February 12, 2026, 10am - 11:30am
- Performance Management Information Session: January 28, 2026, 10:00am - 11:00am
- Performance Management Learning Bursts (February - April 2026)
- Introductory QI Training: April 22, 2026, 10am - 11:30am

Wondering which training to attend? Here are our suggestions:

- **New MDH staff** - Introduction to QI Training and the PM Information Session.
- **MDH staff new to QI** - Introduction to QI Training.
- **Colleagues looking for tools to make their work more efficient** - Intermediate QI Training. Be sure to attend the Introduction to QI Training if you are new to QI.
- **Anyone interested in leading changes and improvements** - Advanced QI Training. Be sure to attend the Intermediate QI Training first. Also attend the Introduction to QI Training if you are new to QI.
- **Managers, Supervisors, Directors, and any colleagues who want to track how their work contributes to MDH's bigger goals** - PM Information Session.

Submit Ideas for QI Projects

What QI projects should the QI Council or Performance team undertake next? Submit ideas on this [form](#) or visit the QI Board on the 5th floor of 201 W. Preston St., by desk 526-B to submit your idea on paper.



Caption: The QI bulletin board launched in November 2025 displayed in the Office of the Deputy Secretary Public Health Services.

Reflecting on 2025

As we move into the new year, we want to take a moment to remember a few PM and QI accomplishments from the second half of 2025. Many thanks to all of the MDH colleagues who supported these activities in 2025. We look forward to working with even more MDH colleagues to expand PM and QI in 2026!

- December - Joint QI Steering Committee & QI Council in-person meeting held.
- November - Completed the inaugural Performance Management Learning Burst weekly series.
- October - Pamela Tenemaza presented a lightning talk on the Performance Management Implementation Guide at the PHIT/Open Forum conference in Pittsburgh.
- September - New QI Council cohort launched with 22 members.
- August - First Performance Management Information Session conducted with 97 attendees. QI Council 2024-2024 cohort concluded and members created a fishbone diagram to support continuous improvement of future Councils.

PM/QI by the Numbers

These numbers capture the PM/QI team's performance in 2025, representing activities moving us towards our larger goals and objectives.

- 250+: Attendees at PM/QI trainings and events since August 2025.
- 10: QI projects initiated by 2 cohorts of the QI Council.
- 7: MDH programs who received PM/QI technical assistance in 2025.