

# Is my project suitable for Quality Improvement Methodology?

## Definition of Quality Improvement (QI)

Systematic, coordinated, data-guided approach to solving a problem using specific methods and tools with the aim of bringing about a measurable improvement through tests of change.

### A QI Project must have:

- An identified process or system with a demonstrable need for improvement (e.g., not meeting an accreditation standard, a clinical practice standard, evidence-based best practice, process efficiency, or patient satisfaction).
- Enough interest or priority that others would want to join a team to work on it.
- The desire and ability to collect ideas for improvements from those involved in the process.
- Measurable activities that should be able to answer the question “How will you know a change is an improvement?”
- The ability to systematically test and refine ideas through the Plan - Do- Study-Act (PDSA) cycle.
- A sponsor who has authority over the work being undertaken and is committed to removing barriers, providing guidance to the project lead and monitoring the project’s progress.
- Alignment between the project aim (goals) and the following:
  - [IH Strategic Priorities](#)
  - [BC Quality Matrix Dimensions of Quality](#)
  - [Quadruple Aim](#)

Good for QI approach	Better for another approach
Problem is complex and requires testing and learning to make improvement(s)	Problem is clear
Pathway to the solution is unknown or unclear	Pathway to solution is clear or predetermined
Measures are incremental towards improvement	Measures are milestones
Those who do the work can influence the improvements	Decisions lie with a position of authority, not with those who do the work
Success is a commitment to continuous improvement	Success is usually resolution or finite
The goal is to translate existing knowledge into practice and improve existing systems and processes	The goal is to generate new knowledge, evaluate an existing service or program or the need for a new service or program

*Adapted from NHS*



## Examples of QI Projects:

- Increase percent of rehab patients receiving an appropriate patient mobility assessment.
- Improve completion of best possible medication history in the Emergency Department.
- Improve the obstetrical and neonatal emergency response.
- Reduce wait times for appropriate screening in patients with chronic liver disease.
- Improve Community Respiratory Therapy (RT) referral process.
- Improve the discharge planning process in acute care.
- Decrease patient wait time – arrival at cancer clinic to first chemo drug started.
- Reduce the use of potentially inappropriate antipsychotics in LTC.
- Reduce percent of incomplete care plans.
- Improve interdisciplinary team care for clients with obesity.
- Improve glycemic control in surgery.
- Improve access to outpatient care after transient ischemic attack (TIA).
- Reduce length of stay for patients with complex vascular wounds.

## QI Leader / Physician QI Projects

Participants need an appropriate project to focus their learning and directly apply QI tools and methodologies during the program. The project must meet the criteria listed above as well as the following **additional criteria**:

- Improvement can be well underway within the timeframe of the program.
- PDSA cycles can be started within the timeframe of the program.
- Project is small enough to fit the limited course timeframe. Consider dividing a larger project into smaller, more focused pieces and work on one at a time.
- You can pull a project team together to work on the improvement opportunity.

## Examples of Projects that are Unsuitable for QI Methodology

- Writing/Revising a Clinical Decision Support Tool (CDST)/policy/education materials.
- Implementing a software package where there's no ability to make changes to the package.
- Buying a new software package and implementing it.
- Gathering data to determine current state, but no work to improve the system is planned.
- Setting up a system to monitor an existing process but no improvements to process are planned.
- Committee work.
- Mapping a current process with no intention of improving the process.

## Resources

- [How to Start a Quality Improvement \(QI\) Project — CANADIAN PA](#)