HealthStream Regulatory Script

Introduction to Performance Improvement
Version: May 2008

Lesson 1: Introduction
Lesson 2: Activities of Performance Improvement
Lesson 3: The P.I. Team
Welcome to the introductory lesson on performance improvement.

As your partner, HealthStream strives to provide its customers with excellence in regulatory learning solutions. As new guidelines are continually issued by regulatory agencies, we work to update courses, as needed, in a timely manner. Since responsibility for complying with new guidelines remains with your organization, HealthStream encourages you to routinely check all relevant regulatory agencies directly for the latest updates for clinical/organizational guidelines.

If you have concerns about any aspect of the safety or quality of patient care in your organization, be aware that you may report these concerns directly to The Joint Commission.
Have you ever wondered whether what you do at work makes a difference? And, if what you do does make a difference, could anyone ever measure that difference?

If so, you will be interested in performance improvement (P.I.). P.I. is a method for making a difference and tracking that difference.

This course will teach you the basic principles of P.I.

Once you understand the basics, you will be ready to move onto part II in this series, *Performance Improvement in the Workplace*.

In that course, you will learn how to help your facility use P.I. to:
- Improve services
- Increase customer satisfaction
- Save time and money
### 1003

**Course Goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After completing this course, you should be able to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identify the function of each activity in the P.I process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• List the responsibilities of each player on the P.I. team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Point 3 of 4*
This introductory lesson gave the course rationale and goals.

Lesson 2 describes the basic activities of P.I.

Finally, lesson 3 discusses the role of each player on the P.I. team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FLASH ANIMATION: Course Map</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1: Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2: Activities of Performance Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3: The P.I. Team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lesson 2: Activities of Performance Improvement**
- Receiving a task
- Identifying customers
- Analyzing the current process
- Establishing a performance baseline and improvement target
- Examining the current process and correcting identified problems
- Evaluating improvement

**Lesson 3: The P.I. Team**
- Team sponsor
- Team leader
- Team facilitator
- Team members
## Introduction & Objectives

Welcome to the lesson on the activities of performance improvement.

After completing this lesson, you should be able to:
- Recognize the activities involved in P.I.
- Identify customers affected by healthcare processes
- Identify baseline outcomes and P.I. targets
- Recognize the relationship between process and outcome
- Evaluate P.I. efforts

Note: This course provides an overview of P.I. activities. For a more detailed step-by-step explanation, see the second course in this series: Performance Improvement in the Workplace.
Performance improvement can be structured in many ways. Each facility may have a unique approach to P.I.

In general, however, a P.I. team:

- Receives a P.I. task
- Identifies customers
- Analyzes the results of the current process
- Establishes a performance baseline and a P.I. target
- Examines the current process and corrects identified problems
- Evaluates improvement

Let’s take a closer look at each of these activities.

Remember:
This lesson provides an overview of P.I. activities. The sequence of activities described here may vary somewhat, depending on the nature of the P.I. task and your facility’s protocol.
Receiving the Task

The P.I. team sponsor tells team members about their task.

For the purpose of this lesson, we will use the following task as an example:

**Our P.I. team must decrease the amount of time it takes for physicians to receive test results from the lab.**

You will learn more about the P.I. sponsor in the next lesson.
### Identifying Customers

The P.I. team should always make *meaningful* improvements. Improvements are meaningful only if they help a specific customer.

Therefore, the P.I. team must identify relevant customers. These customers are affected by the process (glossary) the team is trying to improve.

**Remember: Patients are not the only customers in the healthcare industry!**

A customer is anyone who needs information or services from someone else.

After identifying important customers, the team also must identify what each customer needs and wants.

See the text box to the right for an update on our P.I. example.

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### P.I. Example: Identifying the Customer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>Needs and Wants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In our example, we will focus on the <em>physician</em> as a customer. Physicians depend upon the hospital lab to provide test results.</td>
<td>Physicians need test results as quickly as possible, to make important treatment decisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2005

Analyzing the Results of the Current Process

We have identified our customer.

Now we need to think about the results of the current process.

Do the results match the customer’s needs and wants? If not, the current results are not satisfactory.

The purpose of the P.I. team is to create results that are satisfactory. The goal is to meet the needs and wants of the customer.

See the text box to the right for an update on our P.I. example.

### P.I. Example: Analyzing the Results of the Current Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Needs</th>
<th>Physicians need rapid delivery of test results from the hospital lab.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Results of the Current Process</td>
<td>Currently, it takes eight hours for physicians to receive test results from the lab.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the Current Results Meet the Customer’s Needs?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the Current Results Satisfactory?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Establishing a Baseline and a Performance Improvement Goal

Remember: One of the key features of P.I. is the ability to track changes.

This ability comes from:
- Establishing a baseline
- Setting a measurable target for improvement

Establishing a baseline means that we find out and document what is currently happening. This gives us a clear understanding of our starting point.

Then, we set a measurable target for improvement. This gives us the ability to track our progress.

See the text box to the right for an update on our example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline Outcome</th>
<th>The baseline outcome is the eight-hour timeframe for a physician to receive results from the lab</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Outcome</td>
<td>In our example, let's set the performance improvement goal at four hours.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examining the Current Process and Making Changes

Now it’s time to figure out how to reach our P.I. goal. To do this, we look at each of the steps in the current process.

As we examine the current process, we look for any problems. We need to be alert for any wasted time or effort.

We then come up with solutions for each of the problems we find.

When we put our solutions in place, we expect to improve the process.

When we improve the process, we expect to improve the outcome. In this way, we move toward our P.I. target.

See the text box to the right for an update on our example.

**P.I. Example: Analyzing the Results of the Current Process**

| Identification of Potential Problem Areas     | 2. Lab analyzes sample.                      |
| Identification of Possible Solutions          | 3. Lab finishes analysis and records results.|
|                                                | 4. Lab delivers results to physician.       |

- Is time or effort wasted in delivering samples to lab?
- Is time or effort wasted in analyzing samples?
- Is time or effort wasted in completing analysis or recording results?
- Is time or effort wasted in delivering results to physician?

Solutions should address the root causes of any identified wasted time and effort. This is described in greater detail in the second course in this series: Performance Improvement in the Workplace.
To evaluate our P.I. efforts, we ask:

*Have our solutions made a difference?*

See the text box to the right for an update on our example.

### P.I. Example: Evaluating Performance Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Baseline Outcome</strong></th>
<th>Eight hours for a physician to receive test results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Outcome</strong></td>
<td>Four hours for a physician to receive test results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus of evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Are physicians receiving critical test results in less than eight hours? Are physicians receiving results within four hours?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Results of Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>When physicians reliably receive results within four hours, we know our process changes have made a difference. The P.I. target has been reached.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In each of the following scenarios, identify the most immediate customer by dragging and dropping items from the word bank.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Immediate Customer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A nurse is waiting to receive a patient's medication from the pharmacy.</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A physician is waiting to receive test results from the lab.</td>
<td>Physician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A patient is waiting to receive services in the E.R.</td>
<td>Patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab technician</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You have completed the lesson on the activities of performance improvement.

Remember, in the P.I. process:

- Identify customers to come up with a meaningful P.I. target.
- Find out about the current outcome to set an outcome baseline.
- Look at the process to identify problem areas.
- Come up with solutions to each problem you find.
- Put these solutions in place to improve the process and its outcome.
- Evaluate your P.I. work by comparing improved outcomes to 1) the baseline outcome and 2) the P.I. target.
Welcome to the lesson on the P.I. team.

After completing this lesson, you should be able to:
- List the key players on the P.I. team
- Identify the role of each player

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FLASH ANIMATION: Lesson Map</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson 3: The P.I. Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Team sponsor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Team leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Team facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Team members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction &amp; Objectives</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome to the lesson on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the P.I. team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After completing this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lesson, you should be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- List the key players on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the P.I. team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify the role of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>each player</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Performance improvement always involves a team effort.

The team includes:
- The project sponsor
- The team leader
- The team facilitator
- Team members

Let's take a look at the role of each of these key players.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Sponsor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The project sponsor is usually a member of senior management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The project sponsor:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tells the team about the P.I. project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Makes sure the team has all the support it needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Receives progress reports from the team leader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Image: 3003.GIF](https://via.placeholder.com/150)
Team Leader

The team leader is in charge of the P.I. team.

The team leader:

- Makes sure the team meets its goals
- Keeps the sponsor updated on the team’s progress
The team facilitator may not know much about the specific P.I. task. Instead, the facilitator helps the team work through the P.I. process smoothly and effectively.

The team facilitator:
- Helps team members work together
- Keeps team meetings focused and productive
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team members usually know a lot about the specific P.I. task.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Team members:
- Come to every team meeting.
- Actively participate in team meetings. At meetings, team members should use their experience and knowledge to recommend agenda items and offer input.
- Complete outside assignments. This includes looking into a process to find problem areas, and reporting back to the team.
- Use data. This includes understanding charts and graphs to help analyze a process.
- Help the team decide on changes and solutions.

![The P.I. Team](3006.GIF)
FLASH INTERACTION: 3007.SWF/FLA

Drag and drop items from the word bank to complete the table of P.I. team players and their responsibilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team facilitator</td>
<td>To make sure team members work together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project sponsor</td>
<td>To make sure the team has the support it needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team member</td>
<td>To offer input based on experience and knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team leader</td>
<td>To make sure the team meets its goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have completed the lesson on the P.I. team.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember:
- The project sponsor is usually a member of upper management. He or she makes sure the team has enough support.
- The team leader is in charge of the team. He or she makes sure the team meets its goal.
- The team facilitator helps team members move through the P.I. process.
- Team members participate in every team meeting. They complete outside assignments and report back to the team. They use data to analyze a process and make decisions about how to change the process.
## Course Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>process</td>
<td>a series of steps involved in achieving an outcome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pre-Assessment

1. Which of the following is a typical task of a performance improvement (P.I.) team?
   a. Analyze the results of a current process
   b. Discipline workers with poor performance
   c. Provide service to customers with complaints
   d. Hire workers to accomplish tasks more efficiently

   Correct: Analyze the results of a current process
   Rationale: The P.I. team analyzes the results of a current process. This provides a starting point to make improvements.

2. In the hospital setting, one process involves lab testing. A lab technician performs the required test and communicates results to the treating physician. In this process, the most DIRECT CUSTOMER is:
   a. The patient
   b. The lab technician
   c. The treating physician
   d. The hospital administrator

   Correct: The treating physician
   Rationale: In this process, the treating physician is a customer for the lab tech.

3. The goal of a performance improvement (P.I.) process is to:
   a. Create additional work for hospital staff
   b. Meet the needs and wants of the PI team
   c. Meet the needs and wants of the customer
   d. Create additional work for hospital administrators

   Correct: Meet the needs and wants of the customer
   Rationale: P.I. aims to improve process and outcome to better meet the needs and wants of the customer.

4. During a performance improvement (P.I.) project, the P.I. team measures a baseline outcome:
   a. At the end of the project
   b. At the mid-way point of the project
   c. To find out the results of an existing process
   d. To find out the results of an improved process
Correct: To find out the results of an existing process
Rationale: The baseline outcome is the starting point. It is the result of the existing process.

5. Choose the best definition of "target outcome" in the context of a performance improvement (P.I.) project:
   a. The desired result of a process
   b. The result of a process that needs to be changed
   c. The result of a process at the starting point of the P.I. project
   d. The result of a process at the midway point of the P.I. project

Correct: The desired result of a process
Rationale: The target outcome is the desired result of a process. It is the goal of the P.I. project.

6. A certain process has a certain outcome. According to the ideas of performance improvement (P.I.):
   a. Improving the process will improve the outcome.
   b. Improving the outcome will improve the process.
   c. There is no relationship between outcome improvements and process improvements.
   d. The relationship between process improvement and outcome improvements cannot be predicted.

Correct: Improving the process will improve the outcome.
Rationale: P.I. relies on improving process to improve outcome.

7. You are evaluating a performance improvement (P.I.) project. The key question to ask is:
   a. Has the target outcome been reached?
   b. Has the baseline outcome been reached?
   c. Are hospital employees happy with the changes that have been made?
   d. Are hospital administrators happy with the changes that have been made?

Correct: Has the target outcome been reached?
Rationale: In P.I., the target outcome is the goal. If the target outcome is reached, the project is a success.

8. Performance improvement (P.I.) in the workplace is best achieved through the efforts of:
   a. A team of staff members
   b. A team of administrators
   c. A single dedicated staff member
   d. A single dedicated administrator
e. A team of both staff and administrators
Correct: A team of both staff and administrators
Rationale: P.I. is a team effort. The team should include both staff and management.

9. Which of the following is a key responsibility of a performance improvement (P.I.) project sponsor?
   a. The project sponsor makes sure the P.I. team meets its goals.
   b. The project sponsor makes sure the P.I. team has all needed support.
   c. The project sponsor keeps P.I. team meetings focused and productive.
   d. The project sponsor completes outside assignments and reports back to the P.I. team.
Correct: The project sponsor makes sure the P.I. team has all needed support.
Rationale: The project sponsor is responsible for making sure the P.I. team has all the support needed to complete the project.

10. Which of the following is a key responsibility of a performance improvement (P.I.) team facilitator?
    a. The team facilitator makes sure the P.I. team meets its goals.
    b. The team facilitator makes sure the P.I. team has all needed support.
    c. The team facilitator keeps P.I. team meetings focused and productive.
    d. The team facilitator completes outside assignments and reports back to the P.I. team.
Correct: The team facilitator keeps P.I. team meetings focused and productive.
Rationale: The facilitator keeps the P.I. team on track. One key duty is to keep team meetings focused and productive.
Final Exam

1. A typical task of a P.I. team is:
   a. Identify and discipline workers with poor performance
   b. Recruit and hire workers to accomplish tasks more efficiently
   c. Establish a performance baseline and set an improvement target
   d. Provide service to customers with complaints and make efforts to retain their business

Correct: Establish a performance baseline and set an improvement target
Rationale: The P.I. team works to improve a process and its outcome. One key step is to establish a performance baseline and target.

2. In the hospital setting, one process involves providing patients with meals. A patient fills out a meal request form and later receives the requested meal. In this process, the most DIRECT CUSTOMER is:
   a. The patient
   b. The charge nurse
   c. The attending physician
   d. The cafeteria worker who prepares the meal

Correct: The patient
Rationale: The patient is the customer in this example.

3. A P.I. team should always make meaningful improvements. Improvements are meaningful if:
   a. The improvements help a specific customer.
   b. The P.I. team gets credit for the improvements.
   c. The hospital administrator is happy with the improvements.
   d. The improvements don't create any additional work for hospital staff.

Correct: The improvements help a specific customer.
Rationale: P.I. works to improve process and outcome to meet the needs and wants of customers.

4. In P.I., "baseline outcome" refers to the result of a process at:
   a. The endpoint of the P.I. project
   b. The starting point of the P.I. project
   c. The midway point of the P.I. project
   d. One year after the endpoint of the P.I. project

Correct: The starting point of the P.I. project
Rationale: The baseline outcome is the starting point.
5. During a P.I. project, the P.I. team sets a target for improvement:
   a. At the end of the project
   b. At the starting point of the project
   c. To find out the results of an existing process
   d. To find out the results of an improved process

   Correct: At the starting point of the project
   Rationale: The P.I. team sets a performance target at the starting point of the project. This helps to guide the team's work.

6. A certain process has a certain outcome. According to the ideas of P.I.:
   a. Solving problems in the process will improve the outcome.
   b. Solving problems in the outcome will improve the process.
   c. There is no relationship between the process and the outcome.
   d. The relationship between the outcome and the process cannot be predicted.

   Correct: Solving problems in the process will improve the outcome.
   Rationale: P.I. relies on improving process to improve outcomes.

7. You are evaluating a P.I. project. You should consider the project a success if you find that:
   a. The target outcome has been reached.
   b. The baseline outcome has been reached.
   c. Hospital employees are happy with the changes that have been made.
   d. Hospital administrators are happy with the changes that have been made.

   Correct: The target outcome has been reached.
   Rationale: The target outcome is the goal of a P.I. project. If the target outcome is reached, the project is a success.

8. Ideally, P.I. projects in the workplace should be undertaken by:
   a. A team of staff members
   b. A team of administrators
   c. A single dedicated staff member
   d. A single dedicated administrator
   e. A team of both staff and administrators

   Correct: A team of both staff and administrators
   Rationale: P.I. should be the work of a team. The team should include both staff and management.
9. Which of the following is a key responsibility of a P.I. team leader?
   a. The team leader makes sure the P.I. team meets its goals.
   b. The team leader makes sure the P.I. team has all needed support.
   c. The team leader keeps P.I. team meetings focused and productive.
   d. The team leader completes outside assignments and reports back to the P.I. team.

Correct: The team leader makes sure the P.I. team meets its goals.
Rationale: The team leader is in charge of the P.I. team. One key responsibility is to make sure the team meets its goals.

10. Which of the following is a key responsibility of a P.I. team member?
    a. The team member makes sure the P.I. team meets its goals.
    b. The team member makes sure the P.I. team has all needed support.
    c. The team member keeps P.I. team meetings focused and productive.
    d. The team member completes outside assignments and reports back to the P.I. team.

Correct: The team member completes outside assignments and reports back to the P.I. team.
Rationale: Team members do the work of P.I. One key responsibility is to complete outside assignments and report back to the team.