

## A CURRICULUM FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CHANGE AGENTS

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**Category:** Education

### Background

Many clinicians with quality improvement (QI) responsibilities enter these leadership roles without training in leading change. The VA Quality Scholars (VAQS) program is an interprofessional postdoctoral fellowship that trains interprofessional clinician leaders in QI, innovation and implementation at nine sites throughout North America. To cultivate clinician leaders as change agents, we developed the Leading Change course.

### Objectives

The goal of the course is to provide learners with the leadership skills necessary to implement their own quality improvement projects and to develop skills that are transferable to future roles as change agents.

### Methods

The Leading Change course, adapted from the Practice Changes Leaders Program for Aging and Health, is loosely based on John Kotter's 8 Steps of Change. The eight session topics are: (1) generating urgency for change, (2) building an interprofessional team, (3) creating vision, (4) communicating vision to stakeholders, (5) overcoming barriers to change, (6) using PDSA cycles to generate short-term wins, (7) building on the change, and (8) implementing the change in their clinical culture. Each sixty-minute session contains an introduction to the topic as relevant to QI, example(s) from an expert QI clinician leader, and an opportunity for learners to dialogue with peers, faculty, and topic experts on their own projects. Satisfaction data is collected after each session on a five-point Likert scale from very satisfied to not satisfied.

### Results

The course is ongoing with five of eight sessions delivered. Participants have indicated that they are "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the sessions; the combined percentage of "very satisfied" and "satisfied" for each session ranged from 67.67% to 100% with a mean of 82.03%. Qualitative data from fellows indicates that the course has helped fellows: generate urgency in a fecal occult testing project, team formation in a VA ethics implementation of life sustaining treatments, vision statement development of a urine contamination project, stakeholder analysis of metro transport to have healthcare for underserved women, and removal of obstacles for a pressure injury prevention improvement project.

### Discussion

Fellows report incremental changes in their QI projects related to the course and are overall "very satisfied" or "satisfied". Long-term impact of the course on participants' leadership skills and implementation of quality improvement projects will take more time to assess. We intend to continue to track alumni who have completed the course and to determine post hoc utility of the course in their development as change agents.