Quality Assurance

QA Programs for Local Health Departments
Objectives of this course are:

- Define Quality
- Know 6 Main Causes of Poor Quality
- Know 6 Service Quality Dimensions
- Know Characteristics of a Quality Assurance (QA) Program
- Explain Purpose of QA Programs in Health Departments
- Know 8 Developmental Steps of QA Programs
- Explain Importance of Management “Buy-In”
- Know S.M.A.R.T. System for Defining Quality Objectives
- Know 6 Mandatory Procedures for QA Programs
What is Quality?

- Quality has many different definitions
- Definitions range from informal to formal
  - Some informal definitions are:
    - Excellence
    - Adding Value
    - Commitment to Improve
- A formal definition is:
  “Quality is the ongoing process of building & sustaining relationships by assessing, anticipating, & fulfilling stated & implied need.”
Why quality?

- Improve Quality
- Reduce Costs, Rework, Delays, & Errors
- Increase Productivity
- Improve Customer Satisfaction
- Success in Business
6 Main Causes of Poor Quality

- **Man** -
  - Lack of motivation, training, skills, interest

- **Machine** -
  - Lack of capability, maintenance, outdated

- **Material** -
  - Low grade, unspecified, variation

- **Management** -
  - Lack of vision, mission, decision making & communication

- **Method** -
  - Lack of procedures, communication, procedures not followed

- **Mother nature** -
  - Humidity, temperature, lighting
Further Defining of Quality

- Many definitions are based on different points of view:
  - **From a Process point of view** - Conformance with process standards & specifications
  
  - **From a Product point of view** – Degree of excellence at an acceptable price
  
  - **From a Cost point of view** – Best combination between costs & features

- **From a Customer point of view** - Service &/or product meeting customer needs
  
  - *Fitness for Use* = does it do what it is suppose to do?
Customer satisfaction is an important part of running a successful business.

4 Tips for avoiding customer dissatisfaction are:
- Be Pro-active
- Be Responsive
- Be Honest
- Be Realistic
6 Service Quality Dimensions

- Timeliness
- Courtesy
- Consistency
- Convenience
- Completeness
- Accuracy

These dimensions if implemented wisely will limit customer dissatisfaction.
What is Quality Assurance?

- Quality Assurance (QA) is prevention of quality problems through planned and systematic activities including documentation.
Defining QA Programs

• A Quality Assurance program is a complete system to assure the quality of services &/or products by evaluating performance &/or a service against a standard or specified requirement for customers. It is a way of management.

• Quality Management System (QMS)
Quality Management System (QMS) = QA Program

- QMS & QA Program is a formalized system that documents the structure, responsibilities, & procedures required to achieve effective quality management.
Characteristics of a QA Program

- Process Driven
- Pro-Active
- Staff Functions
- Prevent Problems & Defects
- Quality Audit
- Defining Process
- Selection of Tools
- Trainings
QA Programs in Health Departments

- Should strive to promote & protect the health, safety, and well-being of the people being served by providing responsive, independent assessment, and monitoring of human services through respectful relationships.
Or as defined by NC Local Health Department Accreditation, Essential Service #9:

- Local Health Department’s (LHD) shall employ a quality assurance & improvement process to assess the effectiveness of services & improve health outcomes.
QA Programs in Health Care Assist with:

- Monitoring & ensuring that mandatory standards & protocols are being met;
- Identifying areas needing improvement;
- Implementing performance improvement plans;
- And, making sure regulations are clearly interpreted & followed.
QA Programs have 8 Main Development Steps

- Learn
- Plan
- Define
- Build
- Launch
- Review
- Assess
- Improve
Step #1: Learn

- **Top Management Buy-In**
- Define Scope
- Conduct Gap Analysis
- Management Review
  
  **Lack of top management commitment will cause failure or loss of organizational productivity, profitability, effective work-place efficiency, job satisfaction, employee morale, & continuous product/service improvement**
Importance of Management Buy-In

- Management needs to provide evidence of their commitment to QMS by:
  - Communicating importance of meeting customer & legal requirements;
  - Setting up quality policy & quality objectives;
  - Conducting regular management reviews;
  - & ensuring that required resources are made available.
Step #2: Plan

- Establish an Implementation Team
- Develop Implementation Plan
- Identify Key Processes
- Involve & Communicate with Employees
- Management Review
Step #3: Define

- Define the Quality Policy
- Communicate the Quality Policy
- **Define the Quality Objectives**
- Establish Roles & Responsibilities
- Management Review
Defining Quality Objectives

- Quality Objectives are S.M.A.R.T.
  - S – it must be Specific
  - M – it must be Measurable
  - A – it must be Achievable
  - R – it must be Realistic
  - T – it must be Time Bound

Quality Objectives should be set aiming to improve the effectiveness of the QMS.
Step #4: Build

- Develop the Quality Manual

- **Develop the Mandatory Procedures**
  - Including Operational Procedures & Auditing Tools
  - Each compliance point should match with a performance standard to serve as benchmarks in audits.

- Select & Train Internal Auditors

- Management Review
6 Mandatory Procedures

- Control of Documents
- Control of Records
- Internal Audit
- Control of Non-Conforming Product
- Corrective Action
- Preventative Action
Step #5: Launch

• Provide Employee System Training
• Implement the Quality System
• Audit the Quality System
• Management Review
Step #6: Review

- Begin Process Auditing
- Implement System Changes
- Refine the System
- Management Review
Step #7: Assess

- Pre-Assessment Audit

- Correct Non-Conformances & Corrective Actions

- Management Review
Step #8: Improve

- Maintain & Improve the QMS
Developing a QMS

- Generally takes from 1-9 months depending;
  - On Business Size & Type;
  - How many Protocols & Procedures are documented;
  - How many & what Type of Records are kept;
  - Management commitment;
  - & Resources
1) Determines & documents the compliance status of each risk factor & intervention through observation & investigation: (i.e., IN compliance, OUT of compliance, Not Observed [NO] or Not Applicable [NA] is noted on inspection form);

2) Completes an inspection report that is clear, legible, concise, & accurately records findings & observations;

3) Interprets & applies laws, regulations, policies & procedures correctly;

4) Cites the proper local code provisions for CDC-identified risk factors & Food Code interventions;

5) Reviews past inspection findings & acts on repeated or unresolved violations;

6) Follows through with compliance & enforcement actions;

7) Obtains on-site corrective action;

8) Discusses & documents discussion of options for implementing food safety systems, when required;

9) Confirms that the facility is assigned to the correct risk category & inspection frequency; &

10) Files reports and other documentation in a timely manner.
Conclusion

• Quality Management Systems, or Quality Assurance Programs ensure an organization is doing due diligence to maintain compliance, while improving customer service and satisfaction.
References