Building Solutions with Data: Creating a Continuous Quality Improvement Culture

Department of Family and Protective Services

Systems Improvement Division

- Laying the Foundation for CQI

- Implementing CQI

- Supporting Frontline Management in Implementing CQI

Part 1:

Laying the Foundation for CQI

# Need Some Base Level Data and Reporting Infrastructure

- Must be able to measure what trying to accomplish and regularly report on metrics over time and down to business unit level

- Has to include both quantitative and qualitative data

- High enough in hierarchy to create a CQI infrastructure

  - Must be imbedded in system but sufficiently apart to maintain objectivity

  - Important to have balance among CQI staff

    - Need both those with experience working in the field and those with strong quantitative experience and training

Texas CQI Structure
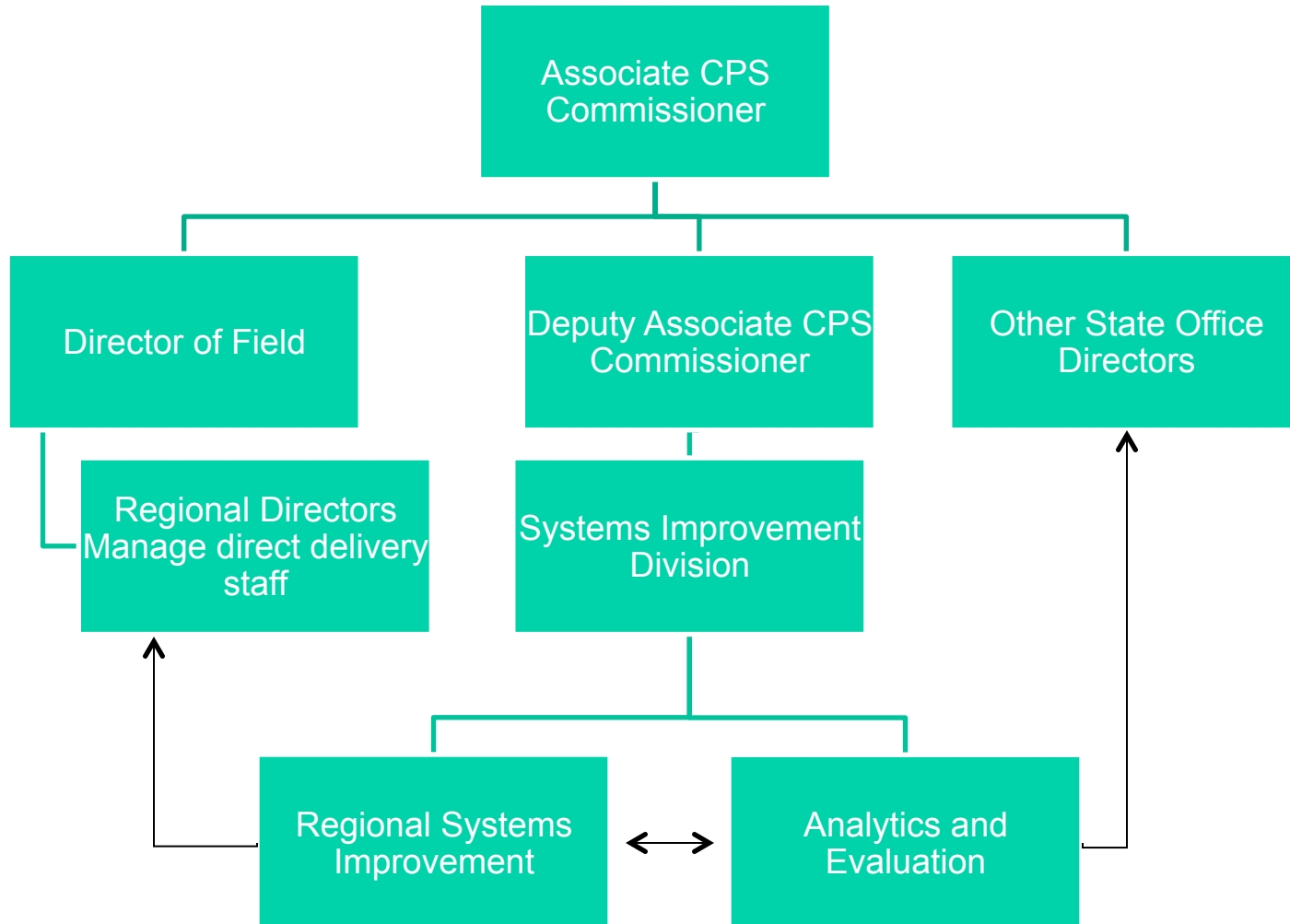
- Set the tone for CQI
  - It is a tool to support leadership, make the job easier for staff and improve outcomes
  - It is not a "gotcha" or a way to identify who's not doing a good job
  - Data can only tell you where you are, not why you are there
  - Allow challenges to the data - if the data looks or feels wrong, there's a good chance it is

Bridging the Communication Gap

- One of the biggest barriers to CQI is staff not knowing what to do with the data once you give it to them
  - Have to translate "data speak" for non-data audience – tell them in plain language what it means
  - Do not data dump - highlight the most important issues they should be focused on
  - Help them translate the data into meaningful and strategic action

CQI Must Be Something More than Quality Assurance

- Quality assurance – training staff to perform required tasks
  - Focus is on
    - Tasks – processes become the end
    - Maintaining identified level of performance
- CQI – educating staff on how to continuously improve their work
  - Focus is on
    - Outcomes – processes are merely the means to achieve outcomes
    - Constantly improving on past performance

Part 2:

Implementing CQI

- Inventory your team's strengths
- Determine how to apply those strengths for the greatest return for your agency
- Use data to define problems
- Use data to measure success

Deciding Which Problems to Solve

There will be many problems to solve. Focus on those you can solve. Consider which are most important and stay focused on them.

- Team Strengths
- Strategic Considerations
- Empirical Considerations

Operationalizing the Problem

The problem has to be more than an idea. It has to be objectively defined and measureable.

- Problem Definition
- Input from Staff
- Data Resources and Analysis

The best solutions will fit within existing processes. They should be measureable so you can evaluate your success.

- Input from Staff
- Conceptual Alignment between Problem and Solution
- Required Resources

Implementing the Solution

The solution won't work if no one will work the solution as designed.

- Buy in from Staff
- Training/Support Requirements
- Process Evaluation
- Feedback from Staff

Did it work?

- Outcome Evaluation
- Communicating Results

Part 3:

Supporting Frontline Management in Implementing CQI – Texas CPS as a Case Study

- Why is CQI important for front line managers?
- How did we build the team and set its vision?
- How did we put the vision into practice?
- Successes and challenges

Why is CQI critical for managers on the frontlines?

- Management at all levels run a system
- The CQI structure moves local systems:
  - From simple measurement to understanding to actionable change
  - From data as weapon for punishment to positive accountability.

- The Data Paradox
- Legislative funding and the mandate
- Building the team
  - Vision and Structure
  - Finding the right people
  - Providing the right training
  - Working closely with regional leadership

Division Mission: The Regional Systems Improvement Division uses specialized knowledge of regional data to assist CPS staff in understanding their local system. We help local leaders sustain transformation efforts, identify and build upon regional strengths, and target initiatives toward areas that need improvement. The Team supports leadership in developing and implementing plans, and tracking and reporting on progress.

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- Do the work management wishes they had the time to do but let them make decisions
  - Condense the universe of data
  - Conduct root cause analyses
  - Develop targeted plans
  - Follow-up

Without multiple layers of clear and effective communication none of the above succeeds

Two Steps Forward

- Identifying issues not crises

- Bottom-up change

- Changing the culture around data usage

One Step Back

- Identifying issues vs. taking action
- The 7 stages of data grief
- Passive resistance

Conclusion

- Like anything, CQI must start with a strong foundation and champion

- Implementing CQI – Define, Measure, Evaluate, Repeat

- Extending CQI into front-line management is critical