QI Basics

**Prioritization Tool**

# Introduction

This tool will assist in choosing which potential areas for improvement are the highest priority based on the needs of the patients/clients and the organization. Follow this systematic assessment process below to identify potential areas for quality improvement projects. This process will consider such factors as high-risk, high-volume, or problem-prone areas that affect health outcomes and quality of care.

## How to Use

This tool is intended to be completed as a team, incorporating the expertise of all members.

1. Begin by listing potential areas for improvement in the left-hand column.
2. Determine criteria most important for your team in guiding decision making. Examples of criteria are listed below. Add the chosen criteria in the first row of the table. Ensure your team has a common understanding of the definition of the criteria you select.
3. Score each area/idea for improvement in the following columns based on a rating system of 1 to 5 as defined below:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1 = very low** | **2 = low** | **3 = medium** | **4 = high** | **5 = very high** |

Rating is subjective and is meant to be a guide and to stimulate discussion.   
Add the scores across the row and tally in the final column. Potential improvement areas with a higher score indicates a higher priority.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Problem or opportunity  to address** | **Criteria 1  (add definition)** | **Criteria 2  (add definition)** | **Criteria 3  (add definition)** | **Criteria 4  (add definition)** | **Criteria 5  (add definition)** | **Total** |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. Discuss the scores, and any other factors relevant to the decision, and identify the priority area(s) to address.

**Criteria Examples**

* **Strategic alignment**: Is the topic under consideration aligned with the organization’s strategic plan and priorities?
* **Urgency**: Does this issue need to be addressed within the next one, to maybe three years?
* **Prevalence**: What is the frequency at which this issue arises in our organization?
* **Risk**: what is the level to which this issue poses a risk to the well-being of our patients/customers?
* **Cost**: what is the cost incurred by our organization each time this issue occurs?
* **Potential impact**: Is there is reason to believe that interventions will be successful in having a significant impact on one or more specific populations?
* **Actionable or feasible**: Are there are ways to address the issue and is there room to make any meaningful improvement?
* **Resources**: Are there resources such as funds, staff, or expertise readily available? If not, can they be acquired?
* **Leadership support**: are key leaders on board with pursuing this opportunity and shepherding it through the QI process and working to overcome barriers that arise?
* **Community readiness**: is there any momentum within the organization/community to help move this issue forward and will it be seen as important?
* **Demand**: How much interest is there in solving this problem? Is there a strong expressed need to address this? This is related to leadership support, organizational readiness, and other criteria listed. Establishing demand is key and with demand, there is increased likelihood the initiative will succeed.
* **Integration**: is there any opportunity for collaboration or building on existing initiatives, or would the project be considered a duplication of efforts?
* **Health equity**: does the topic advance health equity?