Objective

This study was designed to explore relationships between scores on the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement tool and positive outcomes and to verify the relationship between an effective leadership team and a high quality facility.

Abstract

This research project was developed to assess the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement tools, developed by the University of Minnesota, one of the research partners with CMS. The practicum sites of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire participated in this assessment by completing the existing QAPI tool, taking a snapshot of performance outcomes, and assessing leadership practices. The results will make a positive contribution to the field by further evaluation and measuring if the utilization of the tools is making a difference in our participating sites spread across five different states.

Methods

- The University of Minnesota provided us with the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement tool to survey the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire practicum sites.
- The forty-seven practicum sites completed the existing QAPI tool.
- Thirty-four practicum sites completed the performance outcome and effective leadership survey.
- We used this data to develop a correlation between the high QAPI score and positive outcomes. As well as utilizing the leadership effectiveness survey to examine further examine performance that may uncover high impact practices.

Performance Outcomes

**MAJOR FINDING:**
One of the most significant results of the research efforts was the correlation between the assigned QAPI score and the CMS Five star rating. This is not surprising based on both of these measures being associated with overall quality. This validates to some degree the QAPI tool and its use as a descriptor of a quality environment. This means that the higher a facility’s QAPI score, the more likely it is to have a higher five star rating.

**OTHER FINDINGS:**
When doing the correlations for other outcome measures with the QAPI tool, we found some relationship, yet were also concerned about a high degree of multicollinearity between measures. Satisfaction, management turnover, overall turnover, and operating margin may have a relationship with the QAPI score, but can not be used as an independent predictor. One of the issues we have with this data set is it is not large enough to allow for further analysis.

Leadership Practices

As part of the research, we also asked organizations about their current quality leadership practices with the results shared above. First, it was positive that the overall means were all near or above 4 on a 5 points scale, which suggested an overall leadership commitment to the quality journey. You can also see that a commitment to customers and learning were a couple of the strongest areas emphasized. In exploratory analysis, there was some limited evidence of a relationship between the QAPI score and leaders acting on a vision and setting an example with their actions. We also asked a series of questions that suggested that their leaders modeled quality in their actions, behaviors and words.

Quality Awards

In additional analysis we looked at was how the QAPI score was different for those participating in quality award programs, such as Baldrige and the AHCA Quality Award program. As one might expect, the organizations participating in these efforts experienced a higher QAPI score. For those participating in state or national programs, they experienced a 23% higher score and for those that participated in the AHCA Quality Award they experienced an 11% higher QAPI score. This results further validates the use of the QAPI tool based on the positive association between investing in a rigorous quality award program and their own quality journey.

Discussion

In order to analyze common themes amongst the different practicum sites, we did qualitative surveys to further investigate the relationship between a high QAPI score and positive outcomes.

**People Designated to Provide Leadership:**
Responses: the administrator, director of nursing, management team, department heads, director of operations, director of organizational advancement, vice president of operations, interdisciplinary team, education and quality improvement director, grant managers, process specialist, executive director, and the quality assurance specialist. Although there were repeated answers, this exhaustive list demonstrates that there is great diversity in the people who provide leadership responsibilities throughout the facilities.

**Leadership Team Advancing a Quality Agenda and Best Practices:**
A common theme as to how the leadership team advances a quality agenda and environment included an investment in meetings such as: QAPI, stand up, QA, QI, CQI, QST, steering committee, safety committee, and leadership. Listening sessions and LEAN process improvement involved all levels of staff. A number of facilities also use internal auditing systems to track QI level goals. These qualitative results indicate that it is common for the facilities to utilize quality meetings, include all levels of staff, and use an auditing system. Strong and effective communication, being transparent, and inspiring a shared vision are frequently used best practices that help to advance the quality culture throughout the practicum sites.

Average Data for Facilities

| Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement Score | 71.5 average assigned for the facilities was 71.5. This was calculated based on a total of 120 possible points. |
| CMS five star rating (2013) | created to assist consumers in comparing nursing homes more easily. The average five star rating of the facilities was 3.38 stars. |
| Aggregate customer satisfaction | was described as satisfied residents and/or families. |
| Management turnover rate | throughout the facilities was between 5 – 9.9%. |
| Overall turnover rate | was between 20 – 39.9%. |

Credit

The QAPI tool was developed by the University of Minnesota in collaboration with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation. The QAPI tool is licensed exclusively to the University of Minnesota. The University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire is a research partner with the University of Minnesota. The QAPI tool was developed by the University of Minnesota and the Wisconsin Collaborative Grant & Benedictine Health Systems.

Research Team

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