An Introduction to Performance Improvement in Public Health: A Practicum Experience

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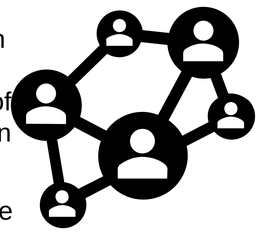
INTRODUCTION

The public health practicum experience is a connection of classroom competencies being applied in the field.

Students in the public health program gain increased knowledge of the public health system and can assist with the provision of services, and network with professionals in the field.



This poster highlights my experience at the Office of Performance Improvement and Accreditation (OPIA) within the Division of Prevention and Quality Improvement (DPQI) at the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH).

EXPERIENCE

Timeframe: June 2023 to December 2023

Structure and Scope:

- All interns at the department underwent a departmental orientation program to ensure expectations and best practices were discussed
- Regular meetings with supervisor were set
- A menu of available projects was discussed, and I was matched with a scope of work that was of interest and within my skill set
- With the support of my supervisors, I learned about quality improvement(QI) in the public health sector, how to develop SMARTIE goals, how to conduct projects using the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Cycle, and the utilization of quality improvement (QI) tools.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

I was able to attend the Public Health Improvement Training (PHIT) conference through a generous scholarship from the KDPH. This conference was also an opportunity to improve my communication skills. I learned best practices for oral presentations to public health professionals and how to better create materials using various design platforms with a focus on accessibility as a main feature.

PHIT is a collaboration between the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) and the following organizations:

- Center for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support (CSTLTS) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)
- National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)
- National Indian Health Board (NIHB)
- Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB)
- Public Health Foundation (PHF)
- Public Health Learning Network (PHLN)

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT OVERVIEW & IMPACT

In collaboration with supportive team members and supervisors, I led a project on OPIA Customer Satisfaction Survey. The aim of this survey was to assess the services provided by the OPIA team and look for ways to improve. This practicum was an occasion to observe, learn and improve on competencies we worked on in the classroom It was a unique opportunity to explore areas of public health practice that are integral to performance improvement and public health transformation. Not only did I have the opportunity to learn more about quality improvement, but I was able to apply these tools to real life opportunities in a public health setting. I learned and was able to then train others, which was a very fulfilling experience! Shown below is a completed storyboard for the customer satisfaction survey I completed. My work provided an opportunity for me to learn and grow, but also for others to benefit at the KDPH and local health departments in Kentucky.

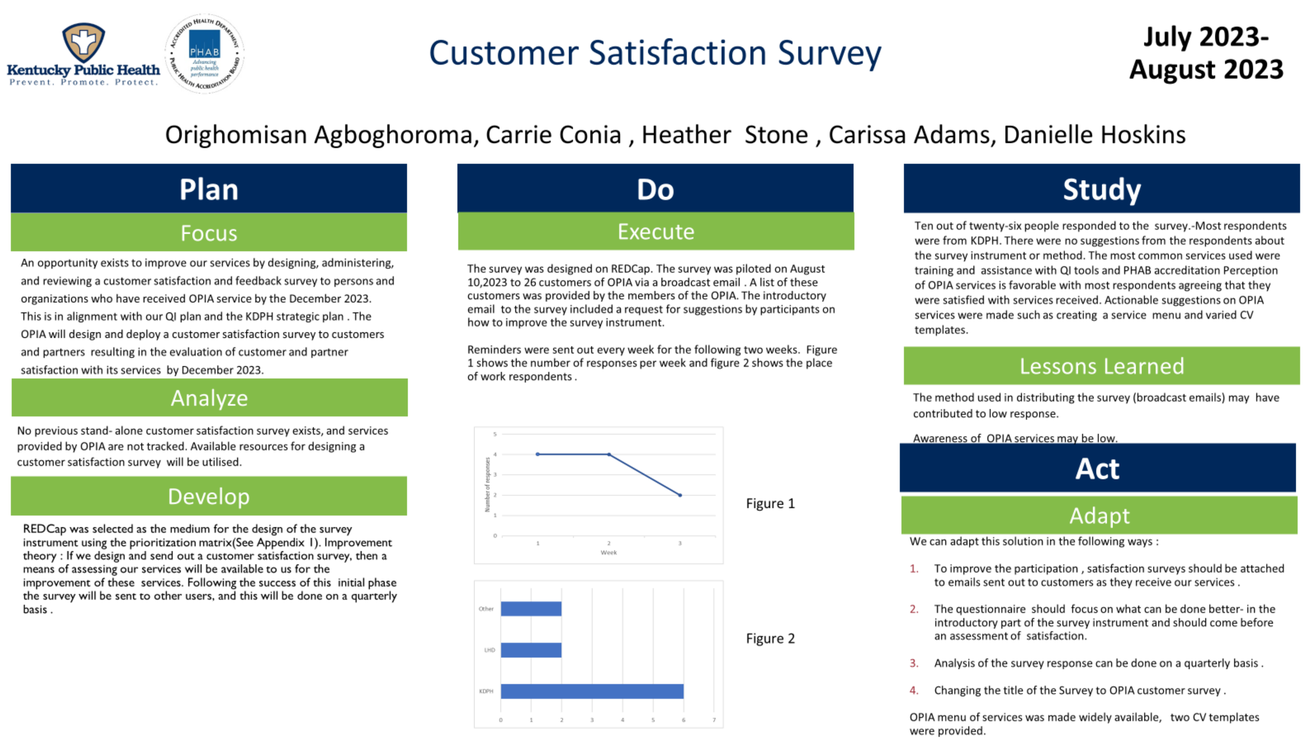
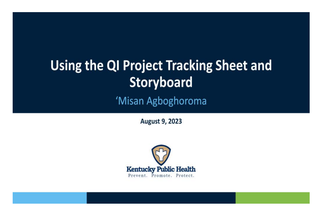


Figure 1 : Storyboard showing the OPIA Customer satisfaction survey quality improvement project

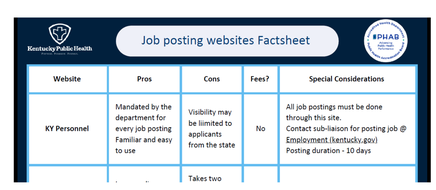
GUIDANCE AND TRAINING MATERIALS DEVELOPED

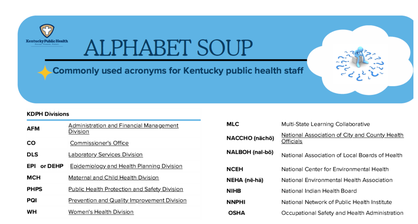
I worked with the OPIA team to develop new and, update existing training materials and guidance documents. Presentations on how to use Quality Improvement tools, including a prioritization matrix, storyboard, and tracking sheet were made to the Quality Improvement Committee of the KDPH and to the Kentucky Public Health Improvement Network (KPHIN). The KPHIN is a group of state and local public health practitioners that work together for quality improvement and performance management initiatives across the state. They include those from local health departments and the Kentucky Department for Public Health. Shown below are evidence of training materials for the following:

- Training slides for Prioritization matrix, KDPH Quality improvement Project tracking sheet, PDSA Storyboard template, development of SMARTIE goals in planning a quality improvement project
- A guide on commonly used acronyms in the Kentucky Department for Public Health
- A guidance document for job postings at Kentucky department for Public Health



Training slides





Guidance documents