

# Quality Improvement in Local Health Departments: The Development of a Classification System

Findings from the Multi-State Learning Collaborative (MLC) Evaluation

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## **Contributors:**

Brenda Joly PhD, MPH

Maureen Booth, MRP

Prashant Mittal, MSc, MS

George Shaler, MPH



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SOUTHERN MAINE


# Acknowledgements

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- **Project:**
  - Evaluation of the Multi-State Learning Collaborative (MLC): Lead States in Quality Improvement
- **Project Officer:**
  - Brenda Henry, PhD, MPH

# Overview

- **Brief Review of Evaluation**
- **Quality Improvement (QI) Tool**
  - Process
  - Major domains
- **Methods and Results**
  - Clusters analysis
  - Description of five clusters
- **Conclusions**
- **Next Steps**

# Evaluation Overview

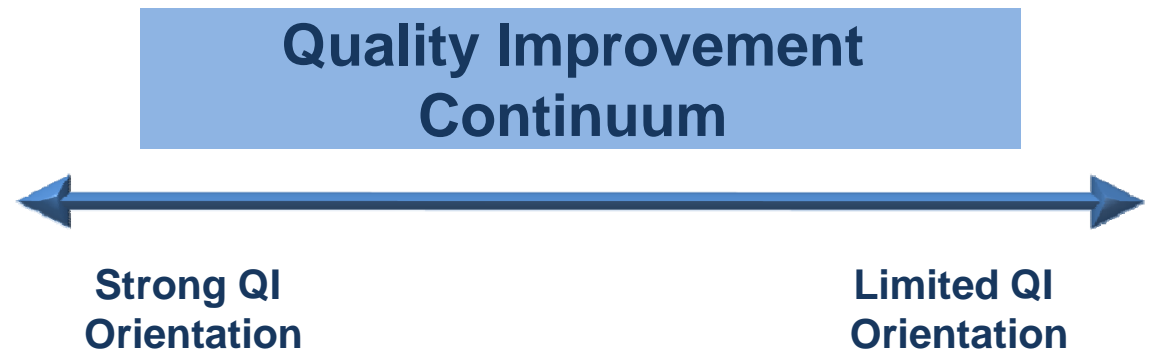
- **Goals of MLC initiative:**
  - To promote the application of QI methods
  - Prepare for & contribute to national accreditation
- **Data collection efforts:**
  - Annual survey (QI tool) 
  - Mini-Collaborative survey
  - Quarterly reports
  - Case studies
  - Key informant interviews

# Quality Improvement Tool

- **Developed to:**
  - Evaluate MLC
  - Classify agencies

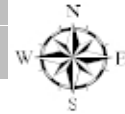
- **Questions:**

- Likert scale
- Focus on:
  - Organizational culture
  - Capacity and competency
  - Alignment and spread
  - Quality improvement practice



# Response Rate (n=690)

MLC Annual Survey, 2009: Administered to all LHDs  
(Average Response Rate – 60%)



# Methods

- **Factor Analysis for each Domain:**
  - Organizational culture (n=7)
    - Collaboration and commitment
  - Capacity and competency (n=10)
    - Application, skills and investment
  - Alignment and spread (n=11)
    - Integration, authority, value, diffusion
- **Cluster Analysis (n=601):**
  - To classify agencies based on factors known to influence quality improvement
  - Explored agency differences
    - Practice questions
    - Organizational characteristics

# Results At-A-Glance

## Five “Distinct” Clusters of LHDs

Strong QI  
Orientation



Limited QI  
Orientation

Domain	Component	Cluster #1 (n=86)	Cluster #2 (n=158)	Cluster #3 (n=168)	Cluster #4 (n=145)	Cluster #5 (n=36)
Culture (n=7)	Collaboration	Red	Yellow	Green	Teal	Purple
	Commitment	Red	Yellow	Green	Teal	Purple
Capacity and Competency (n=10)	Application	Red	Yellow	Green	Teal	Purple
	Skills	Red	Yellow	Green	Teal	Purple
	Investment	Red	Yellow	Green	Teal	Purple
Alignment and Spread (n=11)	Integration	Red	Yellow	Green	Teal	Purple
	Authority	Red	Yellow	Green	Teal	Purple
	Value	Red	Yellow	Teal	Green	Purple
	Diffusion	Red	Teal	Green	Yellow	Purple

Results based on average scores for a specific component

# Characteristics of Clusters

Highest Percent ←  → Lowest Percent

Domain	Item	Cluster #1 (n=86)	Cluster #2 (n=158)	Cluster #3 (n=168)	Cluster #4 (n=145)	Cluster #5 (n=36)
QI Practice	Ever implemented QI process (yes)	83%	61%	57%	48%	19%
	Had 5+ QI projects in past 12 months	26%	8%	8%	4%	0%
	Engaged in QI for 5+ years	50%	32%	20%	15%	0%
Agency Info.	Total population in top 25%	36%	23%	26%	25%	11%
	Total expenditures in top 25%	42%	22%	26%	23%	11%
	Total FTEs in top 25%	39%	26%	27%	19%	9%

# Differences in Clusters

Highest  
Percent



Lowest  
Percent

Item	Cluster #1 (n=86)	Cluster #2 (n=158)	Cluster #3 (n=168)	Cluster #4 (n=145)	Cluster #5 (n=36)
LHD is accredited (yes)	38%	23%	19%	16%	6%
LHD is familiar with national voluntary accreditation*	60%	53%	51%	58%	28%
LHD would seek national voluntary accreditation*	36%	26%	26%	30%	3%
LHD believes accreditation would improve quality*	37%	18%	20%	27%	14%
LHD is confident in obtaining accreditation*	44%	20%	11%	13%	0%
LHD has participated in $\geq 1$ readiness activities	97%	89%	90%	86%	58%

\* Percents based on those who reported “strongly agree”

# Conclusions

- **Classifying agencies along a QI continuum will help to:**
  - Pinpoint influencing factors
  - Identify opportunities
  - Describe differences in clusters
  - Determine changes over time
  - Stimulate more research

# Next Steps

- **Short-term**
  - Understand differences between clusters 2-4
  - Name clusters
  - Validate findings with case studies
  - Assess changes annually (2009-2011)
  - Determine elements for advancing along continuum
- **Long-term**
  - Link with community outcomes
  - Explore impact of national voluntary accreditation

# Questions

- **Contact Information**

Brenda Joly

Assistant Research Professor

Population Health and Health Policy

Muskie School, University of Southern Maine

207.228-8456

[bjoly@usm.maine.edu](mailto:bjoly@usm.maine.edu)