

PROGRAM NAME: Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology
 PROJECT TITLE: Hospital Birth Registration Timeliness Improvement Project
 DPH STRATEGIC GOAL/OBJ.: 6.6.d
 PROJECT TIMELINE: January 2014 – December 2014
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PLAN
Identify an opportunity and Plan for Improvement

1. Getting Started

California law requires that all births be registered within 10 days. In LAC, only about 20% of births are registered within this timeframe because many hospitals fail to submit birth certificates to the LAC Vital Records Office (VRO) for registration in a timely manner. We plan to work with hospital staff responsible for submitting birth certificates to the VRO to help them identify ways to improve their processing timeliness.

2. Assemble the Team

The project was initiated by the Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology which oversees the LAC DPH VRO. Before the project was implemented, the project coordinator consulted with experts including LAC DPH Registrars, California DPH VRO, and hospital staff to identify opportunities for improvement.

3. Examine the Current Approach

Hospital staff are responsible for completing the birth certificate when a baby is born and submitting the completed certificate to the VRO for final registration. There are three main areas where delays can occur: 1) failing to gather the required information from parents so the birth certificate can be completed before discharge, 2) having limited hospital staff who are authorized to sign the completed certificate, and 3) failing to mail completed certificates to the VRO at

the end of each day using an overnight delivery service.

4. Identify Potential Solutions

We planned to educate hospital staff about the need for timely submission of birth certificates to the VRO. The VRO needs sufficient time to complete the process to register the birth certificate within the 10-day State-mandated timeframe. We addressed the three main areas of delay and encouraged hospitals to: 1) have parents to fill out the birth certificate worksheet before the baby is born, 2) authorize more staff to sign birth certificates, and 3) send birth certificates to the VRO each day using overnight delivery service. The goal was for hospitals to submit birth certificates to the VRO by the fifth day after birth.



5. Develop an Improvement Theory

We believed that after being informed of sub-optimal timeliness of birth certificate submission, most hospitals would be motivated to improve. We provided detailed reports for each hospital summarizing their timeliness, and provided their ranking compared with other birthing hospitals in LAC. We engaged hospital staff to help

them develop more efficient procedures and planned to award certificates of appreciation to hospitals when project timeliness goals were met.

DO
Test the Theory for Improvement

6. Test the Theory

Hospital-specific baseline timeliness was evaluated for 2013, and each hospital received a detailed report. After receiving the report, hospital staff were contacted to discuss the report and to provide suggestions to avoid delays by modifying hospital procedures. A tip sheet for improving performance was provided to each hospital, and periodic newsletters were sent to keep hospital staff interested and engaged in the project. Performance was monitored regularly, and reported to the hospitals for January-June 2014, and July-December 2014.

CHECK
Use Data to Study Results of the Test

7. Check the Results

During 2013, 75% of birth certificates were submitted to the VRO within 10-days of birth (baseline). When the project ended in December 2014 this improved to 90%. Nearly all 52 birthing hospitals improved compared with 2013 baseline levels. As a result of more timely submission of birth certificates to the VRO, birth certificate registration within 10-

days of birth increased from 20% in 2013 to 53% in 2014.

ACT

Standardize the Improvement and
Establish Future Plans

8. Standardize the Improvement or Develop New Theory

The project goals were met and we anticipate continued improvement.

9. Establish Future Plans

We will continue to monitor hospital performance and provide quarterly feedback to encourage their continued compliance.