

## **Are we doing a good job?**

### **3sHealth measures improvements for Saskatchewan's healthcare system**

*How do we engage stakeholders? How do we know whether we are on the right track? Can we create a feedback tool that allows us to quickly gauge satisfaction levels and follow up on specific concerns?*

These are the types of questions that we often ask ourselves in our quest to deliver better services to patients, families, and other client groups. Unfortunately, these are often difficult questions to answer.

As part of its on-going effort to engage stakeholders and continuously improve the services it provides, 3sHealth has developed a new feedback tool called the “pulse survey”. The survey consists of a single, unchanging question the 3sHealth poses monthly. The question, which simply asks whether the stakeholder is satisfied with their project or service line, is scored on a four-point scale ranging from very satisfied to very dissatisfied. It encourages responders, who are not anonymous, to include comments. Project and service line leaders then follow up with dissatisfied responders in person, seeking ways to address concerns before they become barriers to success.

James Munro, a 3sHealth senior performance analyst, credits the pulse survey with allowing 3sHealth to “move away from huge quarterly or annual reviews of projects and service lines as the primary way to detect issues,” and react more quickly to emerging issues. Instead, 3sHealth uses pulse surveys to detect issues and engage stakeholders. This ensures that 3sHealth meets the needs of the health regions, communicates well, and builds trust and transparency. The results are posted on the organization’s visibility wall and are used as an on-going evaluation tool.

The pulse surveys mark a change in the way 3sHealth does business. “We are fueling positive change in healthcare in Saskatchewan, and we – 3sHealth, the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, the health regions, and other affiliated organizations – are all working together toward realizing the change,” explains Munro. “Without constant engagement, we cannot successfully facilitate change.”

The pulse survey is also a tool that works well within the system’s Lean focus because it allows employees to catch defects before they become mistakes. Munro, however, is quick to point out that the surveys “are not about failure – they are about learning.” Rather than focusing on what we do wrong, Munro explains, we are finding ways to continually improve and create a stronger healthcare system.