

Lean event addresses improvements in Group Purchasing processes

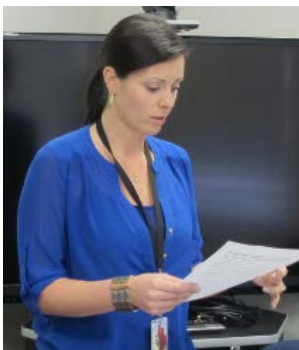
In October, 3sHealth hosted a rapid process improvement workshop (RPIW). Participating in the event were representatives from several health regions, the Ministry of Health, John Black and Associates, a patient, and a vendor.



The team focused their efforts throughout the week on two guiding questions:

1. What improvements can be made to the 3sHealth contracting process to better support Regional Health Authority (RHA) conversion (implementing the contract)?
2. How can product issues be communicated to 3sHealth to improve response time and to monitor vendor performance?

Highlights of the week



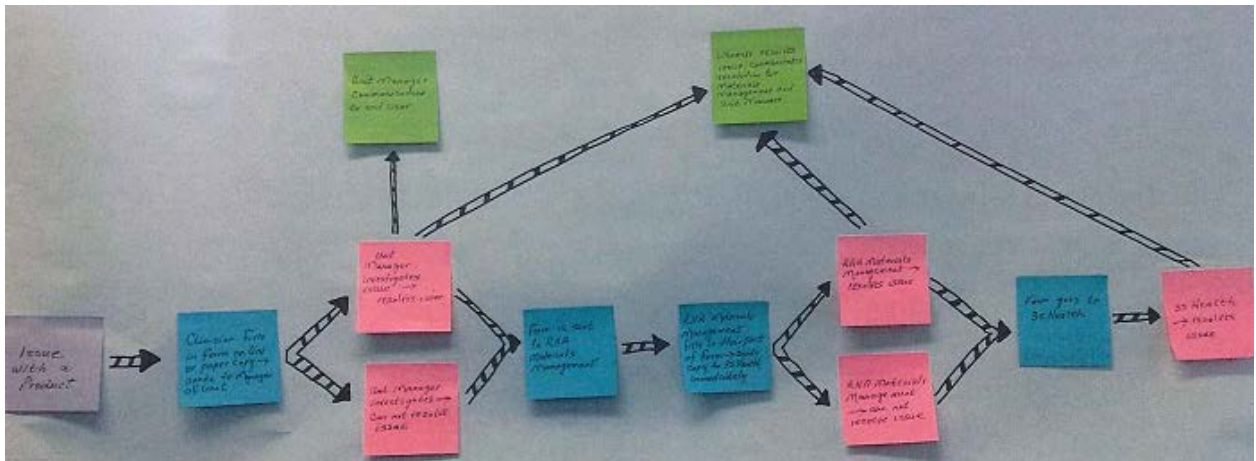
Utilizing RPIW tools, the team crafted idea sheets to address lack of clinical engagement with subject matter experts, and the communication gap between stakeholders. The team then created standard work for the contracting process and devised an email communication process that was tested and is being implemented across the health system.

The team identified the need to: redesign the current issue reporting form; develop a communications plan to educate staff; and finalize a process for investigating products. Standard work was created for product issue reporting and investigating. The form was tested and will be trialed for two months before being implemented across the province.

A value stream map, a picture of the work process being examined, was created for reporting instances when there is an issue or problem with a product.

The patient representative noted, "I have been involved in the healthcare system since 2002 and didn't know anything about materials management until this week." While reflecting on the work that was done, the patient representative continued, "This week the team revised both the product issues reporting process and the form. I don't believe that every patient wants to, or needs to know about every product issue, but it would be nice for patients who do report concerns to know that someone is going to listen and investigate. Also, the revised form itself now includes a place to record the impact of the issue

on the patient. This is a nice addition, which considers the patient, who, after all is your primary focus.”



Value Stream Map of product issue reporting

Workshop summary

1. Stakeholder engagement framework
2. Contract summary document to share across province
3. Standard process for product issue reporting
4. Plan to test and implement new product issue reporting process
5. Standardized contract file management



Most RPIWs occur where process change can be realized quickly. Such was not the case for this RPIW. “The RPIW that got handed to this group was not your typical *rapid improvement*; there’s a lot of work that still needs to be done to make this happen” Suzanne Boudreau, Director, Materials Management, 3sHealth said. Boudreau continues, “I really appreciate the fact the team took it on, looked at the obstacles and found ways around or over those obstacles. I also appreciate the time that was put in by everyone.”

To wrap up the week, 3sHealth CEO Andrew Will added, “There is a lot of work that goes into the procurement process within 3sHealth, the regions and Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. This is critically important work, as it has direct benefit to the patients that we care for. It was great to see a patient representative involved. It grounded us in how important this work is.”