**Hospital survey inspection team uses LEAN to improve survey process**

By Diana Ehri, Performance and Accountability and Kris Kernan, Health Systems Quality Assurance

The department is mandated by law to conduct inspections of hospital facilities on an average of every 18 months. These timelines are important to our role of protecting patient safety and well being in these facilities. A recent audit found that the Department of Health did not survey hospitals in accordance with state law, which could increase the risk of clients receiving substandard care. Specifically, hospital surveys are not being done in a timely fashion.

The hospital survey inspection team in Health Systems Quality Assurance and a state fire marshal devoted five days together to evaluate the survey process. Customers from three hospitals met with the team and shared what was important to them in an inspection. The team found more than 100 ways to improve quality and make the survey process more meaningful to customers.

By the end of summer, the group will approach work in two phases:

1. **Scheduling and pre-work:** The team will develop a streamlined process for scheduling inspections to reduce time and costs. The new scheduling process will drop by more than half the time, 26 days from 63.
2. **Post survey:** The team will create a standardized process to notify hospitals and administrative staff of survey results. The time to notify the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services that the survey is complete shortens to 70 days from 201.

In the fall, agency nurses and public health advisors will standardize their procedures so that more hospitals can be surveyed in during the same period.

Staff expressed appreciation for each other’s work and thought the time was well spent. It helped with team-building and gave each an understanding of everyone’s role in the process. As team member Cheri Carter, put it, “Wow, I never realized all that went into the survey process. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to make the administrative work easier.”

Please contact [Trent Kelly](mailto:Trent.Kelly@doh.wa.gov) with questions. Photos of the team are online. [O:\Performance\_and\_Accountability\Quality and Process Improvement\Projects\Hospital Inspections\Photos](file:///O:\Performance_and_Accountability\Quality%20and%20Process%20Improvement\Projects\Hospital%20Inspections\Photos)