How Data and Quality Assurance Can Enhance the Effectiveness of APS Programs
November 18, 2020
Part II

Leslie McGee and Karl Urban, WRMA Inc.
Rose Green, Data Specialist, Colorado APS Program
Ben Seisdedos, Analyst, San Francisco APS Program
Workshop Faculty

- Leslie McGee, APS TARC, Senior Research Associate/Subject Matter Expert
- Karl Urban, APS TARC, Senior Research Manager
- Rose Green, Data Specialist, Colorado APS Program
- Ben Seisdedos, Analyst, San Francisco APS Program
Workshop Overview

Objectives

• Review the importance of data and quality assurance in improving APS programs.
• Understand how data can be used to manage APS programs and learn best practices in the use of data.
• Understand how quality assurance activities can be used to improve APS programs and learn best practices in quality assurance.

Outline

Part 1
• What is QA
• The APS QA Hierarchy
• The Benefits of QA
• Panel response

Part 2
• The role of data in QA
• Panel response
• Audience response
What is Quality Assurance?

A widely accepted management function that is intended to ensure that services provided to consumers meet agreed upon standards. Standards come from professional organizations, evidence-based practices, and public policies that specify outcomes for consumers.

- It is a **management function**: QA requires oversight, direction, and use by management to be effective.
- It is **consumer-focused**: ultimately, the purpose is to improve the quality and outcomes of services.
- It is focused on **defined expectations for performance**: expectations should be derived from program policy.
The Hierarchy of APS QA Needs

Program Evaluation

Case Reading

Performance Management

Supervisor Review and Approval

Documentation
Benefits of QA

- Accountability for Staff and Program
- Policy and Practice Improvements
- Improved Services/Outcomes for Clients
- Identify Training Needs
Why Data Is Necessary for QA

Because….  
• You can’t read that many cases  
• Supervisor’s individual assessment is subject to bias  
• You have to measure what you want to improve to incentivize changed behavior and to know if you actually improved it

To….  
• Assess the system not the pieces  
• Determine the right questions  
• Target areas for focused review  
• Complement case review information to get complete picture
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QA Approach</th>
<th>Data Use Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>No documentation, no data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor Review</td>
<td>Generally not structured in a way to capture data. Nevada and MA DPPC use a structured approach focused on key criteria that captures data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Case Reading        | Peer review case review is not data focused but “soft” feedback focused  
Independent case review should produce data for program improvement by:  
  • Determining key program standards  
  • Measuring compliance with those standards by scoring cases of as representative a sample as possible at whatever unit of analysis (from worker to program as a whole) you choose  
  • Providing feedback into program improvement processes (employee evaluation, program evaluation, policy and training updates) |
| Performance Management | Based on collection of casework data on a systemic basis. Requires case management system that collects more than case note information. 
Have to decide:  
  • What are key policy and practice areas that we want to measure and can we measure them?  
  • What are key client outcome that we want to measure and can we measure them?  
  • Who has access to and uses the data? What is the feedback loop for program improvement? |
| Program Evaluation  | Relies on data gathered from any source  
Often will collect additional data  
May conduct more sophisticated statistical analysis of data |
Panelist Discussion Time

1. Describe how you use data in your QA program

2. Provide an actual example how data was used to improve your program

3. What one thing do you think is the key to successful use of data in a QA program?
Your Turn: What Questions Do You Have for Us?

Raise your hand if you want to ask verbally or type your question in the chat box
Successful Use of Data Requires Users

1. Quality data
2. System for collecting, using, and validating the data
3. Access to the data
4. Integrity of the data
What are the limitations in use of APS data?

- Difficulty measuring outcomes
  - Nebulous change attribution
  - Expensive to collect

- Data must be accurate and reliable
  - Is documentation accurate?
  - Is sample size sufficient?

- Don’t misuse the data
  - “All management cares about is the numbers”
  - Perceived as punitive, not constructive
  - It’s easy to miss the forest because of the trees
The pros and cons of managing by data

Data is a means, not the ends, to improving outcomes for clients.

Data helps you to ask the right questions, but rarely provides definitive answers on how to improve performance.

The rewards are worth the effort, but pay attention to potential unintended consequences.
APS TARC Workshops for Improving Program Effectiveness

• Using System’s Thinking to Improve Your APS Program
• Using Data to Improve Your APS Program
• Use QA to Improve Your APS Program
• See other Toolkits for other potential workshop ideas
Contact Us

https://apstarc.acl.gov/support@apstarc.net

kurban@wrma.com