QA the Texas Way

Assessing Quality in APS Casework
NAPSA Conference, November 2020
Presenter

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APS Director of Performance and Policy Development
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
Workshop Goals

Participants will be able to …

• Describe the purposes of quality assurance in APS
• Combine qualitative and quantitative data to inform a comprehensive understanding of APS casework
• Describe the processes and services of Texas APS Quality Assurance
• Implement lessons learned into quality assurance programs of other APS jurisdictions
Purposes of Quality Assurance in APS

1. Provide direct feedback on individual cases to caseworkers and supervisors.
2. Gain a more nuanced understanding of program performance.
3. Assist supervisors in understanding their caseworkers’ strengths and weaknesses.
4. Comply with statutory requirements to manage program performance.
Data Usage in Texas APS

Data Warehouse | Target Zones | Resource Metrics | Systems Briefings | Quarterly Legislative Reports
Data Warehouse

• Official historical record for the DFPS case management system
• Reports updated weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually depending on the report
• Many reports allow drill down to region, unit, and caseworker level
• Examples:
  • Cases closed by disposition and closure reason
  • Investigation rapid closure rate
  • Investigations pending over 60 days
  • Days to supervisor rejection/approval
  • Safety decision distribution
Report Parameters

* All parameters are required

Report Period: Monthly

Report Type: State

Month: 04

Year: 2020

State Summary (xls)

Abbreviations: Cnty = County; Prog = Program; Reg = Region; Supv = Supervisor; Wrkr = Worker; XLS = Excel

Legend

The checkmark icon, when displayed next to a report button, indicates that the report has been validated for release to non-DFPS entities. Please verify that the ‘For Internal DFPS Use Only’ footnote does NOT appear on the report prior to releasing the information. If you have questions regarding the release status of an intranet report, please email your inquiry to the reports mailbox (REPORTS@dfps.state.tx.us).

The multiple values icon, when displayed next to a select box, indicates that multiple values may be selected from the list.
### Adult Protective Services

**Safety Decision Distribution**

For the Month of April 2020

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th># Safe Safety Assmnts</th>
<th>% Safe</th>
<th># Conditionally Safe Safety Assmnts</th>
<th>% Conditionally Safe</th>
<th># Unsafe Safety Assmnts</th>
<th>% Unsafe</th>
<th>Total # Cmpltd Safety Assmnts</th>
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**Total:** 9,338 96.8% 286 3.0% 22 0.2% 9,646

Data in this table is for example purposes only and may not be accurate.
Target Zones

Created in 2016
• Key performance metrics that reflect “healthy casework”
• Incorporated into management approach to improve practice
• Used to demonstrate clear progress toward meeting expectations

Revised in 2019
• Expanded to three performance zones:
  • Performance expectation
  • Performance improvement needed
  • Action plan needed
• Prioritized metrics into groups
• Added qualitative metrics
Three Levels of Importance for Target Zones

1. Key Performance Metrics
2. Additional Supporting Metrics for District Management
3. Informational Measures
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DW Report</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Performance Expectation</th>
<th>Performance Improvement Needed</th>
<th>Action Plan Needed</th>
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<tr>
<td>QA Database</td>
<td>Client Safety</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
<td>≤79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inv_aps_05</td>
<td>Initiation</td>
<td>98-100%</td>
<td>96-97%</td>
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<td>Initial FTF</td>
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<td>96-97%</td>
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<td>Inv_aps_34</td>
<td>SA Timeliness</td>
<td>95-100%</td>
<td>90-94%</td>
<td>≤89%</td>
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<td>≤79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>QA Database</td>
<td>Investigation</td>
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<td>80-89%</td>
<td>≤79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service Provision - Outcomes</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
<td>≤79%</td>
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<td>Svc_14</td>
<td>SNA Timeliness</td>
<td>95-100%</td>
<td>90-94%</td>
<td>≤89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>DW Report</td>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>Performance Expectation</td>
<td>Performance Improvement Needed</td>
<td>Action Plan Needed</td>
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<td>QA Database</td>
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<td>6-8%</td>
<td>≥9%</td>
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<td>Discretionary overrides-Decrease</td>
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<td>6-7%</td>
<td>≥8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>DW Report</td>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>Performance Expectation</td>
<td>Performance Improvement Needed</td>
<td>Action Plan Needed</td>
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<td><strong>Informational Measures</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Investigation Durations</strong></td>
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<td>Info Only</td>
<td>Info Only</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Investigation with services provided</td>
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<td>Info Only</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Investigation Duration</td>
<td>Info Only</td>
<td>Info Only</td>
<td>Info Only</td>
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<td><strong>Service Delivery Durations</strong></td>
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<td>Maintenance Duration</td>
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<td>Overall Service Stage Duration</td>
<td>Info Only</td>
<td>Info Only</td>
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<td>Overall Case Duration</td>
<td>Info Only</td>
<td>Info Only</td>
<td>Info Only</td>
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<td><strong>Other Informational Measures</strong></td>
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<td>Conditionally Safe</td>
<td>Info Only</td>
<td>Info Only</td>
<td>Info Only</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Unsafe</td>
<td>Info Only</td>
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<td>High</td>
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</table>
Resource Metrics

- Resource metrics measure the strength and stability of the workforce
- Examples:
  - Vacancy rate
  - Case carrying staff ratio
  - Investigation stages opened/closed
  - Service stages opened/closed
  - Turnover rate
  - Average daily caseload
Systems Briefings

• Monthly report and bimonthly meetings with key DFPS executives:
  • Commissioner
  • Deputy Commissioner
  • Chief of Staff
  • Chief Financial Officer
  • Director of External Relations

• Discuss target zones, resource metrics, and associated APS actions
Quarterly Legislative Report

Organization:
• Background and Summary
• Appendix A: Caseworker Performance Measures
• Appendix B: Staffing Data
• Appendix C: Qualitative Data

Audience:
• Governor
• Lieutenant Governor
• Speaker of the House

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About_DFPS/Reports_and_Presentations/APS/default.asp
Texas APS QA Processes and Services

Regular Case Readings | Targeted Case Readings | Unit Analyses | Quality Improvement Meetings | Training
Who are Texas APS QA Analysts?

• Experienced former APS caseworkers, supervisors, and trainers
• Knowledgeable on policy and practice
• Strong attention to detail
• Strong written communication skills
• Able to work independently and collaboratively
Regular Case Readings

• The QA Analyst …
  • Receives a batch of closed cases each month
  • Enters scores into a Microsoft Access database
  • Seeks input from teammates as needed
• At the end of a case reading, the QA Analyst …
  • Notifies the caseworker and supervisor that a new case reading is available
  • Emails the caseworker and caseworker’s management chain when cases have exceptionally high quality
  • Notifies the appropriate manager when Standard 6 indicates a potential severely unsafe situation for the client
Case Reading Standards

1. Client Safety
2. Investigation
3. Case Documentation
4. Services & Outcomes
5. Productivity
6. Reasonable Effort

- Each standard corresponds to one or more essential job functions on the caseworker performance plan and evaluation
- Each standard is made up of several items QA Analysts score
- Each item is based on policy
Item Scoring

Standards 1-5
- N/A = Not applicable
- 0 = Policy requirements not met
- 1 = Policy requirements met
- 2 = APS Specialist went above and beyond policy and practiced mission-based work

Standard 6
- Yes = AV/CL is not left in a state of ANE
- No = AV/CL is left in a state of ANE
- Unknown = It is unknown if the AV/CL is left in a state of ANE
Targeted Case Readings

• Case readings with data collection instruments designed to answer specific questions
• Examples:
  • Estimating the number of substantiations that should have been referred to the Employee Misconduct Registry
  • Determining the accuracy of investigations closed as “does not meet”
  • Estimating the number of investigations of home health providers funded by Medicaid vs. other sources
  • Determining policy compliance during the COVID state of emergency
Unit Analyses and Quality Improvement Meetings

- Share quantitative and qualitative data
- Discuss performance
  - What is going well?
  - How can performance be improved?
- Address questions
- Help plan action items to improve performance
Training to New Caseworkers and Supervisors

Supervisor Basic Skills Development:
• One day portion
• Covering:
  • Case reading standard
  • Case reading database
  • Data Warehouse
  • Identifying a problem
  • Devising a solution
  • Goal setting

Caseworker Instructor-Led Skills Development:
Two hour portion
Covering:
• Case reading standards
• Case reading database
• Data Warehouse
• Insight (daily report on time-sensitive tasks)
• Performance evaluation
Lessons Learned
1. Be clear on the purposes of QA

“Why do you need to read my case when my supervisor already approved it?”
2. Anticipate resistance

“You haven’t worked a case in 10 years. Who are you to criticize my case?”
3. Avoid terminology with negative connotations

“Am I going to get dinged for not interviewing the alleged perpetrator?”
4. Balance the use of qualitative and quantitative data

“All management cares about are the numbers!”
5. Work on one or two issues at a time

“This month, let’s make sure we complete safety assessments on time and by policy.”
6. Celebrate when improvement happens

“Look how far we’ve come!”
QA the Texas Way

Assessing Quality in APS Casework
NAPSA Conference, November 2020