Plan: Identify an Opportunity and Plan for Improvement

1. Getting Started
To reduce the potential risk of foodborne illness associated with unregulated Temporary Food Events, Trumbull Monroe Health District chose to identify organizations holding events offering food to the public without obtaining a temporary food license as required by the Connecticut Public Health Code.

2. Assemble the Team
The QI project team included, Patrice Sulik, DOH (Team Sponsor), Rich Jackson, Chief of Environmental Services (Team Leader), Suzette Le Blanc, Food Service Inspector (Team Facilitator), and other team members including: Heather Henning, Registered Nurse, Ryan Grenon, Sanitarian, Maggie Zacchilli, Receptionist, Barbara Krajewski, Office Manager, Susan Jacozzi, Health Educator. The team charter was developed to clarify roles, responsibilities, meeting frequencies, tasks, and ground rules.

AIM STATEMENT:
"By September 15, 2012 the Trumbull Monroe Health District will increase the % of licensed Temporary Food Events that are identified and licensed 14 days prior to the scheduled event by 25% from the baseline of 77 TFEs. We do this to reduce the risk of foodborne illness."

3. Examine the Current Approach
Brainstorming of potential causes led to the creation of the fishbone diagram.

The main problem appeared to be lack of understanding by external stakeholders regarding licensing requirements of TFE’s.

Baseline data was collected reflecting total number of events and total number of licenses issued for 2010-2012. Developed a Gantt Chart to track tasks.

4. Identify Potential Solutions
Reviewing the Fishbone Diagram led us to several potential solutions.

Letters detailing Public Health Code requirements regarding Temporary Food Events were mailed to clubs, organizations, houses of worship, etc., as well as Temporary Food Event organizers issued licenses in 2010 and 2011.

Letters detailing Public Health Code requirements regarding Temporary Food Events were included in the Food Service Establishment annual license renewal packets.

An on-line Press Release was issued explaining licensing requirements and inviting the public to contact TMHD.

An External Stakeholder survey was conducted.

A dialogue with Internal Stakeholders took place.

5. Develop an Improvement Theory
Prediction: If Temporary Food Event organizers are aware that events offering food to the public require application completion, review and licensing Then fewer unlicensed, unregulated events will occur reducing the risk of foodborne illness.

Do: Test the Theory for Improvement

6. Test the Theory
Track the number of Temporary Food Events/Licenses from the point of intervention forward.

Our Aim Statement was revised after detailed data analysis comparing total number of events versus licenses issued.

FINAL REVISED AIM STATEMENT:
By September 15, 2012 Trumbull Monroe Health District will increase the percentage of licensed Temporary Food Events that are identified and licensed 14 days prior to the scheduled event by 25% from the baseline of 77 Temporary Food Events to reduce the potential risk of foodborne illness.

Check: Use Data to Check Results of the Test

7. Use Data to Check Results of the Test

Trumbull Monroe Health District’s improvement process proceeded as planned. The total number of New Applicants for Temporary Food Events increased by 62.8% from 22 organizations in 2011 to 35 organizations in 2012 thereby increasing the total number of licensed Temporary Food Events from 33 in 2011 to 48 in 2012, an increase of 68.8%.

ACT: Standardize the Improvement and Establish Future Plans

8. Five months of data showed an increase in both the number of licensed Temporary Food Events and the number of new applicants.

Plans are in place to continue monitoring data.

9. Establish Future Plans
On-line Temporary Food Event license application may include Internal Stakeholder links.

Reminder post card mailed to all 2012 licensed event sponsors in February 2013.

Organizations offering food to the public without a license will receive a letter detailing regulations and encouraging collaboration with us.

Get applications on web site. Implement the use of paying for licenses on-line.

Continue working with internal stakeholders to build in links on website to their requirements for Temporary Food Events.

10. Lessons Learned

Staff learned how to apply QI tools and terms.

Staff learned to think in terms of “data”.

The polling of internal and external stakeholders provided valuable information-this key step will broaden your view of potential causes of the problem you are trying to address.

The action items we intend to implement will improve other service areas as well.

Our team members can fill different roles on a QI team depending on the project.

Short meetings, scheduled regularly, kept the project moving forward without causing too much interruption of day to day activities during a busy time of year.

An unintended consequence of the project’s success is that we ended up with a lot more work.

A win that comes to you accidentally is still a win and can help you forward the public health agenda.

The proper use of terms and jargon is key to evaluating data and producing accurate results.

Institutional knowledge is important; the numbers alone do not tell the whole story.