

MAKING THE GRADE

QUESTIONS AND TIPS FOR ASSESSING EFFICIENCY



As a healthcare provider, you are driven to do what is best for your patients. In order to deliver the most value to patients, you need to ensure your organization is operating efficiently. Below are 10 universal questions for healthcare providers who want to begin evaluating their organization's efficiency. There are also some additional questions specifically tailored for primary care, acute care and nursing homes. All of these are designed to spark conversations and offer guidance on different areas throughout the care continuum that should be considered when assessing operational efficiency.

Instructions: As you read through the list of questions and corresponding tips, tally your “Yes” and “No” responses. This will help you gain a better understanding of where to direct your focus as you begin making improvements.

☐ Y ☐ N

1. HAVE WE CONDUCTED A FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT TO IDENTIFY AREAS OF WASTE?

TIP: Look to your budget for clues about areas of financial inefficiency.

☐ Y ☐ N

2. HAVE WE MAPPED CLINICAL PROCESSES TO IDENTIFY INEFFICIENCIES?

TIP: Map out processes and understand each of the steps in clinical routines. By breaking down processes and evaluating each individual step, you can get a better feel for where your resources are being used.

☐ Y ☐ N

3. HAVE WE MADE ADJUSTMENTS TO RESPOND TO INTERNAL BOTTLENECKS AND STREAMLINE WHERE NEEDED?

TIP: Develop a plan and take action when you find problem areas.

☐ Y ☐ N

4. HAVE WE STANDARDIZED THE PROCESSES THAT HAVE PROVEN TO BE MOST EFFICIENT?

TIP: Don't just look for areas of inefficiency. Find processes and procedures that are driving efficiency and make them standard across one or more divisions, or even your entire organization.

☐ Y ☐ N

5. ARE WE COLLABORATING WITH EXTERNAL PROVIDERS IN OUR COMMUNITY AND COORDINATING CARE?

TIP: Look to make improvements to processes that are shared with external providers. While you can fix internal processes on your own, inefficiency outside of your organization requires you to work with external providers and make improvements together.

☐ Y ☐ N

6. HAVE WE TAKEN STEPS TO OPTIMIZE COMMUNICATION WITH PATIENTS, OTHER PROVIDERS, AND WITHIN OUR OWN ORGANIZATION?

TIP: Fix communication breakdowns and you will automatically see improvements to efficiency.

QUESTIONS AND TIPS FOR ASSESSING EFFICIENCY



7. DO WE PROVIDE ONGOING TRAINING TO STAFF ON HOW TO MAKE ENVIRONMENTS SAFE FOR THEM AND FOR PATIENTS?

TIP: Team members are more productive and can perform tasks more efficiently when they are in a safe environment.



8. ARE WE ENCOURAGING STAFF TO SHARE IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT?

TIP: Ask your staff for feedback when workflows or processes are not working as designed. Chances are good they will be able to help identify problems and provide ideas on how to fix them.



9. DO WE REGULARLY SURVEY PATIENTS TO GET FEEDBACK ON HOW WE ARE DOING?

TIP: Use feedback from your patients to help you identify breakdowns and waste. Patients that are very satisfied signal that processes and procedures are running seamlessly. The opposite is true when patients report being dissatisfied with the quality of care they received.



10. ARE WE CONTINUOUSLY EVALUATING EFFICIENCY AND MEASURING PROGRESS?

TIP: Don't just make improvements and assume they are working. Monitor the effects of your improvement efforts.

PRIMARY CARE

YES or NO? Are we effectively using preventive care to help reduce the need for acute care?

YES or NO? Are we using electronic medical records? Is interoperability achieved with our EMR system?

YES or NO? Are we using data to manage population health?

YES or NO? Are we using automated appointment scheduling? Are we using patient portals to facilitate two-way communication?

YES or NO? Have we assessed and streamlined the patient experience from check-in to the time a patient leaves the office?

HOSPITALS

YES or NO? Have we achieved our goal of keeping infections low?

YES or NO? Do we have updated medication reconciliation procedures?

YES or NO? Are we giving patients information and tools to help them once they leave our facility?

YES or NO? Are we following up with patients after they leave the hospital to monitor their health and respond to complications?

YES or NO? Are we identifying patients that are at a higher risk for being readmitted and providing them with extra support?

NURSING HOMES

YES or NO? Are we attacking areas where medical errors are most likely to occur – for example, during care transitions?

YES or NO? Are we involving patients and family members in care planning?

YES or NO? Are we collaborating with other providers in the community to make care seamless across multiple providers?

4. Have we switched from paper charts to electronic?

5. Are we using technology to improve quality and efficiency?

How many “yes” responses did you have? Which questions did you answer “no” to? As a next step, you should spend some time diving deeper into the questions with “no” responses. For further help assessing your processes and procedures or for guidance on how to begin making improvements, contact Primaris today.