

# Public Health Performance Management Centers for Excellence

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT STORY BOARD 8/14/14



## WHATCOM COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

509 GIRARD STREET, BELLINGHAM, WA, 98266  
 (360) 676-6724  
 70 EMPLOYEES  
 SERVING A POPULATION OF 203,500

<b>QI Team:</b>	Debbi Bailey, EH Clerk
	John Wolpers, EH Manager
	Alice Simmons, PHN Supervisor
	Tom Kunesh, Food Safety Supervisor
	Susan Sloan, Performance Management Specialist
	Wanda Williams, Quality Improvement Consultant

See Food Safety Specialist names on page two

### STRENGTHENING EQUITY THROUGH FOOD SAFETY QI PROJECT

#### HIGHLIGHTED QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TOOLS:

- KAIZEN:** A focused quality improvement event designed to efficiently and quickly improve a process.
- GEMBA:** The "real place" where the improvement work is implemented.
- KANBAN:** A visual scheduling system.

#### PLAN

##### 1. Getting Started

###### AIM STATEMENT:

The project team will increase food safety program efficiencies (money & time spent) and improve effectiveness (communication and voice of the customer service) with non-English speaking and ESL food service operators.

###### PRIMARY TARGET:

- 30% reduction in the number of Food Code violations by non-English/ESL operators.

##### 2. Assemble the Team

Our diverse team included five staff from across the Divisions plus the entire Food Safety program staff during the Kaizen event. We received important technical assistance from DOH's Centers for Performance Management Excellence.

##### 3. Examine the Current Approach

We flow charted the inspection process, calculated average (mean) violation points for level 3 food establishments for non-English/ESL versus English, and interviewed 16 non-English/ESL operators to obtain "voice of the customer" data.

- 17.8% of all level 3 (highest level of food preparation) establishments are run by non-English/ESL operators.
- Non-English/ESL level 3 establishments had 27.79 average (mean) red violation points versus

18.33 for operations where English is the primary language.

- 50% of interviewees responded that language creates barriers to compliance with the Food Code and 31% responded that culture creates barriers.

##### 4. Identify Potential Solutions

A 2-day Kaizen event was held and the following language-related improvement was identified for implementation within 30 days:

- ✓ Begin to use resources from the FDA Oral Culture Learner Project.

##### 5. Develop an Improvement Theory

- *If we provide appropriate language material relating to specific code violations by non-English/ESL then there will be fewer violations.*

#### DO

##### 6. Test the Theory

- Posters designed to enhance food safety training were downloaded in nine different languages and laminated for purposes of durability.
- Materials are available to Food Safety Inspectors to distribute based on the type of Food Code violations found during inspections. Materials are to be provided in as many languages as needed for each establishment.



- In addition, interpreters will be used more frequently during both inspections and enforcement follow-up visits.

#### CHECK

##### 7. Study the Results

Initiative is in progress with the primary success measure being a reduction in the average (mean) red violation points for non-English/ESL food establishments. This could take up to two years to evaluate based on the infrequency of inspections.

#### ACT

##### 8. Standardize the Improvement or Develop New Theory

If found to be effective, the improvement will become a permanent part of how inspections are done.

##### 9. Establish Future Plans

- ✓ Many more improvements were proposed during the Kaizen event and many of these improvements have the potential to benefit both English and non-English speaking Whatcom County food establishments. See page two for more details. ⇨

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## KAIZEN PROGRESS REPORT

### WCHD FOOD SAFETY SPECIALISTS CONTRIBUTING IMMEASURABLY TO THIS PROGRESS:

- Sarah Cierebiej
- Molly Burke
- Patrick Hull
- Luis Flores

### Tasks completed:

- ☑ Inserted link to Food Code in plan approval letter
- ☑ Included a pre-operational checklist with all plan approval letters to help assure that operators are prepared for inspection (*incorporated for use by all inspectors following Kaizen event; idea generated by staff prior to Kaizen*).
- ☑ Downloaded U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [Oral Culture Learner Project](#) materials to field computers; posters are available in eight languages: Hindi, Korean, Russian, simplified Chinese, Spanish, traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, and Arabic. This covers most but not all languages needed in Whatcom County. Materials in Punjabi and Thai are also needed.
- ☑ Researched legal obligation to provide interpreter services/translated materials to ESL operators and food workers and found that our legal obligation is to provide translation during and in connection with enforcement proceedings
- ☑ Researched cost/budget for in-person interpreter services for use in enforcement situations

### Tasks in progress:

- ☺ Laminating/copying FDA Oral Culture Learner Project materials for distribution by field inspectors
- ☺ Utilizing interpreters during inspections (via telephone) and during follow-up visits (in person) to assure correction of food code violations.
- ☺ Creating an inspection guide for field inspectors using a template created by our staff member Sarah Cierebiej
- ☺ Using social media to push recall notices to the public when recall is connected to human illnesses (ongoing)
- ☺ Researching format for electronic copies of all food establishment floor plans
- ☺ Adding an address correction box to all invoices

### 60-90 day list:

- ◆ Cross train Communicable Disease & Epidemiology staff in food safety/inspection procedures
- ◆ Cross train Environmental Health staff to assist with temporary food inspections
- ◆ Develop quarterly newsletter to be distributed to all Whatcom County food establishments
- ◆ Print DOH stickers with translated messages in "most needed" languages (those not provided by DOH)
- ◆ Compile food meeting minutes in indexed form to sort by topic
- ◆ Convert site plans to PDF format and save to field computers
- ◆ Create form letter for questions about service animals in food establishments



### PARKING LOT:

- Develop handouts for operators on common violations to assist with compliance
- Institute premium pay for field inspectors with language skills used in performance of food inspections, etc.
- Revise plan review application and follow-up process