What is Lean?

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Lean is the process of identifying the least-wasteful way to provide value to our customers. In other words, providing our customers what they want, when they want it.

Lean focuses on:
1. **Understanding and consistently delivering what adds value to the customer**
2. **Improving flow and efficiency**
3. **Continuous cycles of learning**

Lean requires:
- Always being customer centered and customer driven
- Employee engagement and ownership of the work
  Front-line employees who see and touch the work are directly involved in changing process methods to improve performance
- *Tracking performance with simple but meaningful Lean metrics to continuously improve quality and delivery to our customers*
- Using the PDCA problem solving method to continuously improve the way work is performed
- *Continuously learning, improving and innovating*
- Accountability, strong commitment and follow through at all levels of the organization

How is Lean different?

Lean brings **new concepts, tools and methods** that have been effectively applied to **improve quality, reduce waste and improve process flow** in many industries, including healthcare.

Lean Terms:

Value: What a patient would be willing to pay for and/or need to meet their requirements

Value Stream: All processes (and individual steps within processes), both value-creating and nonvalue-creating, required to complete a service or product from beginning to end

Flow: the extent to which work progresses smoothly through the processes and through the value stream

Standard work: Standards or specifications for performing the work in a process, process step, or procedure according to the currently documented best method, this to ensure that work is done correctly and with the least amount of waste, regardless of who is doing the work.

Continuous Improvement: continuous, incremental improvement of standard work on the front line of Lean healthcare operations

Key Lean Concepts and Tools:
- Standardization of work: *documenting and implementing the most efficient and least wasteful process for accomplishing the work*
- Elimination of non-value added steps (waste)
- Workplace organization: *to improve flow of work*
- Visual cues: *visual aids to ensure a process produces what is expected*
- Visual management: *visually documenting work performance and making abnormalities visible*
- Leveling the work: *the balancing of work among workers to achieve optimal efficiency*

7 Types of Lean Process Waste

Defects / Rework: Time Spent doing something incorrectly, inspecting for errors, or fixing errors

Overproduction: Doing more than what is needed by the customer or doing it sooner than needed

Transportation: Unnecessary movement of the "product" (patients, specimens, materials) in a system

Waiting: Waiting for the next event to occur or next work activity

Motion: Unnecessary movement by employees in the system

Inventory: Excess inventory cost through financial costs, storage and movement costs, spoilage, and wastage

Overprocessing: Doing work that is not valued by the customer or caused by definitions of quality that are not aligned with patient needs

Lean Value-Stream Improvement Roles

Process Owner:
- Project Manager; works with Team Members and Implementation Leaders to execute the full implementation plan designed at workshop

Workshop Participant/Implementation Team Member:
- Frontline staff, clinicians, patients, vendors etc as appropriate for the area of focus. May also include "outside eyes"; team members who have no connection with the process and can challenge the team to examine their processes.
- Active participation in the 5 day workshop and responsible for developing and testing changes to make rapid improvement toward the targets of defined for the workshop.

Sponsor:
- Certified executive leader with operational accountability for area of focus.
- Approves the workshop and provides support for completion and implementation.
- "Roadblock Buster"
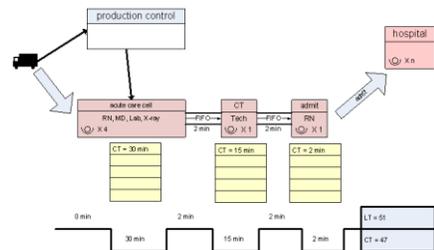- Ensures organizational support and linkages

Kaizen Specialist / Coach:
- Coaches organization and teams in the application of Lean Principles and Tools

Current State Value-Stream Map
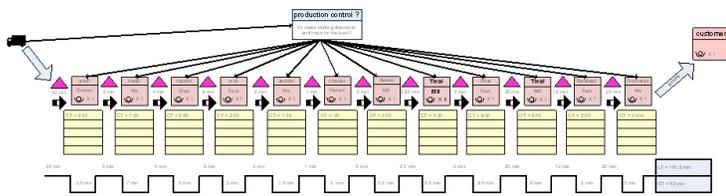
Future State Value Stream Map

A3-T (Team Charter)

- Each service line that has been selected as a focus for kaizen has a future state map and an A3-T
- A deliverable of a Value Stream workshop is the creation of a 12-18 month improvement plan that will achieve the future state vision, which is documented on the A3-T.
- The 12-18 month improvement plan is implemented via Kaizen Workshops.

Kaizen Workshop:
- "Kaizen" is a Japanese word that means to break something apart in order to put it back together in a better way.
- A kaizen workshop is a five day event where 8-12 staff members from throughout the organization come together to break apart a process in order to make improvements to their daily work.
- Most of the team members are intimately involved with the process that is being evaluated; however, it is always best to have a few members of the team that are "outside eyes"