



Saskatchewan's Health Care System and "Lean"

What is the Lean Management System?

Lean is a philosophy or a mindset - a patient-focused approach to reducing waste by identifying and eliminating activities that do not add value. Value-adding activities are those that the patient or client is willing to pay for. Everything else is waste and should be eliminated, simplified, reduced or integrated.

How does it work?

Lean empowers employees to find ways to improve. It focuses on identifying and reducing waste. In health care, that would include things like excess inventory, time spent waiting for services, and inefficient processes that reduce time spent on direct patient care.

Why is Saskatchewan providing funding for Lean?

Saskatchewan is the first jurisdiction in Canada to apply Lean processes across its entire health system. We are doing this because Lean has proven its value in helping many organizations improve and support quality, cost-effective services that meet the needs of clients, patients and staff. Although many of our patients do not directly "pay" for services in our publicly funded health care system, they do fund services with tax dollars.

Saskatchewan is uniquely positioned to introduce major, meaningful health care reform. Health regions, health care professionals and associations, unions health sector agencies and other partners are ready to commit to an aggressive four-year program.

QUICK FACTS

- Lean was originally created in the manufacturing sector, but has since been successfully applied to many other sectors and industries.
- More than 200 Lean projects are already underway in Saskatchewan health regions and within the Ministry of Health and Saskatchewan Cancer Agency.
- During the next four years, over 1,000 focused quality improvement projects will occur across Saskatchewan's health care system, to improve patient experiences and reduce errors.
- In 2012-13, Lean efforts will primarily be focused on improving surgical services, patient and staff safety, shared services and capital projects such as the Moose Jaw regional hospital and Children's Hospital of Saskatchewan.
- Approximately one-quarter of our 40,000 health sector workforce is being trained in Lean processes, so that patients receive more efficient, timely services.