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## State CQI Meeting

The Second Quarter State CQI Meeting was held on May 20, 2010. Topics discussed at this quarter's meetings included reviewing the results from the Employee Satisfaction Survey, CQI Survey, and Birth Parent Survey; discussing the Council on Accreditation Annual Report; reviewing progress on Risk Management Plans; and the quarterly review of DCS's Disciplinary Action Report, Grievance Report, and Accident Report. The team also discussed the new Data Trending and Analysis Team (DTAT) that has been developed.

The team decided that they would like to trend the 2009 Employee Satisfaction Survey with the 2007 and 2008 surveys. By doing this the team hopes to be able to do a much deeper study of what specific areas the Department can focus on in order to improve over all satisfaction and retention of employees. The trending report will be completed by the Central Office CQI Unit.

The same Employee Satisfaction Survey has been used for the past three years. This should make it much easier to trend this data. The survey we have been using is one developed by the Council on Ac-

creditation. The Central Office CQI Unit is currently looking at using a different Employee Satisfaction Survey for 2010.

The State CQI team decided that it will form an Employee Recognition Team. This team will be made up of employees from Central Office, DCS facilities, regional staff, and community partners. Stephanie Coleman of the Northwest Region and Leigh O'Hay of Shelby County both volunteered to be members of this team. The Central Office CQI Unit will recruit other employees to become members of this team. The team will be formed by July 1, 2010.

Brenda B. Bell, Director of Accreditation and Policy Development, discussed the Annual COA report with the team. This report will be due each January. The report must detail the progress being made by DCS in rectifying any issues that were identified in our self-study or that were identified by the COA Peer Reviewers.

The Department must also identify a specific area on which we wish to focus for the report. COA gave DCS thirteen possible areas to choose from.

A few weeks prior to the State

CQI meeting the Regional CQI Coordinators had been asked to get feedback from their regions on areas they would like to focus on for the annual report. The area that received the highest number of votes was Risk Management.

The State CQI Team decided that they agreed with focusing on our Risk Management Plans for our Annual COA Report. Manish Goradia, with Internal Audit, was at the meeting and he will be working closely with Brenda B. Bell and Shirley Crawford over the next few months in order to make certain we have the information we need for the report.

Brenda B. Bell was also asked by the State CQI Team to form a group that will work with the development of the COA Annual Report. She will begin forming this group in the very near future.

The team also reviewed a referral that was sent up from Northeast Region around snow removal from the parking lots of their offices during the winter. Tom Riche, Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Training agreed to follow up on this request.





*“Preservation of one’s own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures.”*

*- Cesar Chaves -*



## Social Worker’s Corner

The Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers speaks on numerous occasions to the need for respect for everyone and maintaining the dignity and worth of persons that we serve as clients, as well as our peers. However, we often don’t think about how what we do or what we say may negatively impact those around us.

If you work for the Department of Children’s Services, then you work for a social services agency, regardless of whether or not you consider yourself a Social Worker. As employees of a social services agency it is important that we in no way practice, condone, or facilitate discrimination in any fashion.

Tennessee is the home to many different cultures. Culture is a self-identified entity that can be based on age, background, class, color, community, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, immigration status, language, marital status, mental or physical ability, national origin, education, politics, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

As employees of this Department, we must be striving for cultural competency. Cultural competence is an on-going process, however. This means that we, as professionals, must constantly be conscious of our own beliefs, conceptions, and ideas around diversity.

Each year employees are required to take a course on cultural competency. How-

ever, our responsibility for being culturally competent does not stop there. There is no way that you can become culturally competent by taking one class.

Cultural competence cannot be taught in one day, one week, or even one semester. Culture is a very complex thing. Culture is not just a black and white thing. It’s not just a gay and straight thing, or a rich and poor thing.

As a professional you cannot just assume that you are fully knowledgeable about a particular culture. Culture is an intersecting, intertwined entity. It is in those intersections that people begin to self-identify who they are.

You can’t just look at an Asian person and say, I am knowledgeable about their culture. You may know something about Asian culture, but that person is more than just Asian. That person is also male or female. That adds a different aspect to their cultural identity. That person may have grown up in a lower socioeconomic class and lived in a rural area. Maybe they had wealthy parents and grew up in a large city.

It is important to understand all the aspects of a person’s culture. It is even more important to understand your own underlying beliefs and feelings about all aspects of culture. Whether you realize it or not, your reactions to culture can effect the job that

you do, and it can effect the services you provide to children and families.

Everyone is entitled to their own beliefs, opinions, and even perceptions. However, as a professional, you can not allow your own personal issues to influence the work that you do.

Starting this year you are going to be seeing and hearing a lot about culture. You will be attending your annual cultural competency training. You may have an opportunity to attend one of the poverty simulations. There will be a satellite broadcast training on cultural competency on June 25th. There will also be a blog started in order to provide people with more information around culture. This blog will also be an opportunity for employees to ask questions and share experiences that they have had in relation to culture and identity.

It is the hope of the Department that each employee will use these tools to grow professionally and personally. This in turn should allow for a better service delivery system to the children and families of Tennessee.



## Employee Satisfaction Survey

The results of the 2009 Employee Satisfaction Survey have been compiled by the Central Office CQI Unit. The survey was sent out to DCS staff on December 21, 2009 via GroupWise.

Employees were given until January 15, 2010 to complete the survey on line. A total of 1,049 employees completed the survey. This provided a response rate of 22.8%.

The results of the survey will be distributed to Regional CQI Coordinators in July. This information can be utilized by CQI teams in order to brainstorm around ideas for improving employee satisfaction and retention in each region and facility.

The usage of survey data in CQI meetings can be very beneficial in setting goals and action steps for improving outcomes. Teams that would like assistance in interpreting this data from this survey or any of the other surveys completed by the Central Office CQI Unit can contact their

Regional CQI Coordinator for assistance.

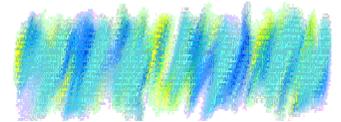
A few of the highlights from the 2009 Employee Survey include:

- 79.9% of employees responded that they receive regular supervision.
- 82.1% of employees responded that they feel their supervisor was competent.
- 82.1% of employees responded that they feel a real sense of pride in doing their jobs.
- 74.0% of employees responded that they find the work they do to be fulfilling.
- 66.3% of employees responded that they feel the services DCS offers to families makes a real difference.
- 64.3% of employees responded that they feel the goals of DCS are clear.
- 59.5% of employees responded that they do not feel that it is difficult to ask

others for help when they need to do so.

- 67.8% of employees responded that they participate in quality improvement activities.
- 19.3% of employees responded that they feel DCS implements changes based on feedback received from employees.
- 41.0% of employees responded that they receive the recognition they deserve at work.
- 26.1% of employees responded that they feel the work they do is not appreciated.
- 39.9% of employees responded that they feel the training provided by DCS prepared them for what they have to deal with on a daily basis.

There were a total of 49 questions in this survey. Responses for all of those questions will be available for CQI teams to utilize through their Regional CQI Coordinator.



*“A cardinal principle of Total Quality escapes too many managers; you can not continuously improve interdependent systems and processes until you progressively perfect interpersonal relationships.”*  
- Stephen Covey -

## Closing the Loop

One of the primary issues that the Department's CQI process has is closing the feedback loop. This was very apparent from the results of the Annual CQI Survey.

According to the 2009 CQI Survey only 45.5% of employees stated that they receive feedback from issues that their

CQI team sends up to a higher level team. This could be issues sent up to Core Leadership CQI Teams within regions or to the State CQI Team. Needless to say, it is very evident that this is a problem that we need to rectify.

Even though 90% of all CQI issues are generally resolved by

the originating team, one of the quickest ways to deflate enthusiasm around the CQI process is for items being sent up to either get lost in the system, or for the decisions/answers from the upper level team to never flow back down to the originating team.

(Continued on page 5)

## June Is ....

Child Vision Awareness Month  
Effective Communications Month  
National GLBT Awareness Month  
National Safety Month  
Professional Wellness Month  
Rebuild Your Life Month  
Dairy Month  
National Business Etiquette Week (June 7–11)  
Men’s Health Week (June 14–18)  
Say Something Nice Day (June 1)  
Stand for Children Day (June 1)  
World Environment Day (June 5)  
National Cancer Survivors Day (June 6)  
Abused Women and Children’s Awareness Day (June 13)  
Race Unity Day (June 13)  
Multicultural American Child Awareness Day (June 13)  
Family History Day (June 14)  
Flag Day (June 14)  
Native American Citizenship Day (June 15)  
Family Awareness Day (June 20)  
Father’s Day (June 20)  
Baby Boomer’s Recognition Day (June 21)  
Summer Solstice (June 21)  
World Humanist Day (June 21)  
Public Service Day (June 23)  
America’s Kids Day (June 27)  
Descendant’s Day (June 27)

## Second Request

Using the state e-mail system is a very valuable way that we communicate with each other. Often times it is much easier when you are going to communicate with a group of individuals over a period of time to develop your own e-mail group in your GroupWise address book. When employees need to communicate with larger groups, regions have their own Region All e-mail group and then there is the DCS All e-mail group.

Unfortunately, we have all witnessed those annoying and unnecessary responses back to everyone in the e-mail group from employees asking to be taken of the e-mail lists, etc. These unwanted e-mails do nothing but waste valuable time that none of us have to spare.

The state CQI Team had a referral from the South Central Region around finding possible solutions to this issue. What we found out was in

order to prevent these responses back to the entire group the sender can send the e-mail to the group as a blind copy (BC). When a group e-mail is sent out as a blind copy any responses to the e-mail go directly to the sender and not the rest of the group. So, those of you who send out e-mails to larger groups of people, please start using this solution. It should save a little time for us all. *(This article was re-run from the March/April issue as a special request).*



## Closing the Feedback Loop *(Continued from page 3)*

One way to avoid having this happen is for each region, division, and facility to keep an up-to-date action step tracking log. This will enable the CQI Coordinator to easily know what issues have been taken care of, and which still need to be addressed.

The State CQI Team implemented an Action Step Tracking Log in the Fall of 2009. This tracking log is updated on a monthly basis, and is sent out to members of the State CQI Team on a regular basis. The Action Step Tracking Log is then reviewed at each State CQI Prep Team meeting to determine what actions need to remain on the log and what actions are fully resolved.

Tracking the action steps is only part of the issue, however. An even bigger part of closing the feedback loop is to share information back to the

originating team. It is imperative that each CQI team review previous action steps at each of their meetings. If the team has not had a response, always make sure the Leader/Facilitator of that team follows up with the CQI Coordinator to make certain that information is shared.

It is the responsibility of lower level CQI teams to present proposed solutions to issues that they send to upper level teams. Upper level CQI teams then need to make sure that the feedback that they give lower level teams is constructive and useful. A reply back to a lower level team should never be a simple "no."

If the proposed solution from the lower level teams is not feasible as suggested, it is the responsibility of that upper level team to be very specific in their feedback as to why

that solution is not able to be implemented. The upper level team should then provide the lower level team with a possible compromise or request that they come up with another possible solution that would be feasible.

Sharing successes is also a very important piece in closing the feedback loop. Many regions and facilities maintain an ongoing CQI Success List. This list enables employees of that region or facility to know what other teams have accomplished.

One issue that was identified by CQI Coordinators that was causing an issue with CQI teams getting feedback was that many times minutes from the team were either not completed or not sent in to the CQI Coordinator.

Unfortunately, this meant *(Continued on page 6)*

***“Defeat is not the worst of failures. Not to have tried is the true failure.”***  
- George Edward Woodberry -



DEPARTMENT OF  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

*Putting the Pieces Together*

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
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436 Sixth Avenue North  
Ninth Floor  
Nashville, TN 37243-1290

Editor:  
Tony Nease, MSW: 865-329-8879 ext. 1060



## Why CQI?

- It is a way to improve performance.
- It is a way for front-line staff to express their opinions on more efficient ways to do things.
- The Brian A. Settlement Agreement requires the Department to have a quality improvement program.
- The Council on Accreditation requires the Department to have an effective performance and quality improvement program accessible to all staff.
- It allows community partners, children, families, and contract agencies to be involved in the improvement process with the Department.
- It is a proven method for improving practice, performance and employee participation in setting goals for the agency.
- It helps to create a culture of learning and professional development for employees who participate in the process.
- It fosters critical thinking and innovative ideas for solutions to complex problems both on the micro and macro level.

## Closing the Loop *(Continued from page 5)*

that ideas and possible solutions to issues were lost. That is one of the reasons why it is very important that teams make certain that their meeting minutes are turned in and given to the CQI Coordinator for posting to the Y Drive.

So, knowing what we now do about our own internal issues with closing the feedback loop, what do we do? We need to identify a way to assure that all the ideas coming from CQI teams are being collected and recorded.

The Central Office CQI Unit would love to hear your ideas on how to make sure that information is sent from one level to another. It is very

important that we always close our feedback loop. Without this, our CQI process will never be able to achieve its full potential. If you have ideas that you would like to share about how to make sure that we capture issues being sent to higher levels and how to ensure that the responses to those issues are sent back to lower level teams, please e-mail you ideas to us at [Anthony.Nease@tn.gov](mailto:Anthony.Nease@tn.gov).

CQI has been utilized in the manufacturing and health care industries for decades. It is now at the forefront of improving practices for state child welfare agencies.

The Tennessee Department of

Children's Services actually has one of the best CQI structures of any other state child welfare system. Over the past few weeks we have had the opportunity to work with other states around developing their own CQI processes. Although our structure is solid, we need to make certain that we refine and perfect our processes.

The only way to create the changes we would like to see is for each of us to be an advocate for change. CQI is your voice to create that change at DCS. If you don't take advantage of the process then you have no one but yourself to blame for things not getting better.

