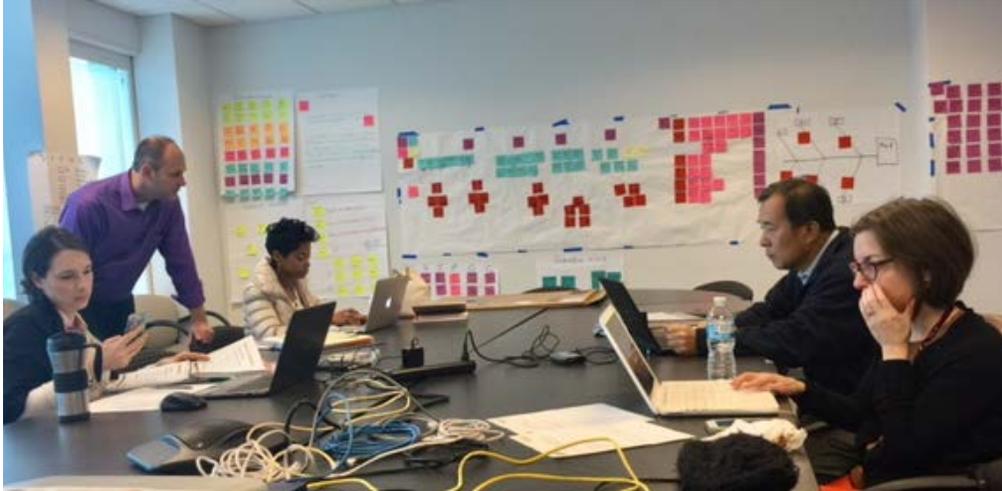


GLPTN Spotlight: UIC/UIH

Rethinking how problems are solved with Lean



University of Illinois at Chicago/University of Illinois Hospital (UIC/UIH) joined the Great Lakes Practice Transformation Network (GLPTN) to help prepare its 13 outpatient primary care clinics for the transition to a value-based payment model. Pramila Viswanathan, MD, MBA, is the quality improvement advisor (QIA) working with each clinic to identify goals and move the needle on quality improvement (QI) initiatives. She educates practices on quality improvement (QI) and helps them stay on track to meet objectives.

As a GLPTN partner, Purdue Healthcare Advisors is offering Lean training to participating practices. Pramila knew training the faculty and staff using this course would impact QI in a meaningful way at UIC/UIH. Participation received departmental chair buy-in and was met with enthusiasm by the clinics. “Thanks to GLPTN for providing this opportunity,” says Pramila.

The 4-day course lead by Jack Fenton was interactive and engaging. The Lean practitioners (LP) learned how to apply Lean principles, use A3 thinking to create value for patients, and to eliminate waste. A Rapid Improvement event (RIE) is planned at Maxwell Clinic so new faculty and staff can continue to develop and implement individual QI projects.

A3 thinking is a collaborative process management and improvement tool developed by Toyota and it centers on a structured team approach to solving any problems. The name A3 is derived from the use of a simple 11”x17” sheet of paper that is outlined into three structured sections (Scope, Solve, and Sustain) to facilitate group decision making and to tell the story of the improvement activity.

Time was the main constraint experienced by participants for both the in-class training and the upcoming RIE as participants needed two to three days of dedicated time. Also, because LPs were coming from different practice locations, identifying a central location for the RIE was a challenge.

Going through Lean training has certainly helped participants rethink the way they approach problems. Pramila explains, “We tend to jump to solutions right away, but we have to unlearn this approach in order to utilize Lean. Solutions can only arise after the QI team performs a full analysis of the work flow.” The LPs are excited to share newfound knowledge with their practices and start to improve workflow. As Jack puts it, “Lean is doing work in ‘The Best Known Least Waste Way.’”