



January 2013

Continuous Improvement on display at Governor's Awards

Five state agency teams were recently recognized by the Governor for their outstanding achievements in continuous improvement. On Friday, Dec. 7, Chief of Staff Tina Smith and Commissioner Spencer Cronk of the Department of Administration announced the winners of the 2012 Governor's Continuous Improvement Awards, honoring and highlighting the teams and their work during a short ceremony attended by leaders from across state government.

The awards celebrate individual and organization achievements that have increased the productivity and efficiency of state government services. In total, 44 state agency teams were nominated for the awards. The Lean Steering Team reviewed the nominees and selected finalists, with Governor Dayton choosing the final winners.

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Happy Birthday to us!

Minnesota's Lean Program just celebrated its fifth birthday! The program originally launched in late December 2007. When did you get involved?



Winners of the 2012 Governor's Continuous Improvement Awards are pictured following the ceremony on Dec. 7.

Teams from the Metropolitan Council, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Revenue, and the Department of Veterans Affairs were honored for a diverse set of impressive achievements, which are saving the state money, improving levels of customer service, and driving higher performance. A multi-agency team, made up of individuals from six state agencies and the University of Minnesota was also recognized. Finally, the Lean program received accolades in the form of a special achievement award given to Tom Baumann for his work developing and supporting the program since its launch five years ago.

You can read all the details about the ceremony and the award winners on the [Governor's website](#).

Department of Veterans Affairs uses Lean principles and techniques to assess pharmacy processes at Minneapolis Veterans Home

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) recently took part in a process analysis of pharmacy systems at one of its five veterans homes in the state, partnering with three students from the University of St. Thomas MBA program on the project. In working to assess how medications were being administered to residents at the Minneapolis Veterans Home, nursing staff there are now in a position to greatly enhance their central pharmacy operation.

The exercise relied on many different Lean principles and techniques, including numerous types of process mapping. As part of that, a mini-kaizen event was held, and among the team's numerous recommendations they hope to organize a full kaizen event focused on pharmacy operations.

The main challenge for nursing staff at the home is ensuring that the correct residents receive their prescribed medication on the right schedule each day and that all unused medication is documented. This can be easier said than done with the home's 291 residents, some of whom take 15 different types of medication multiple times per day.

By conducting thorough process analyses, staff identified sources of bottlenecks and defects, and subsequently laid out a number of recommended solutions to address them. The current data showed about 5.3 percent of medication going to waste without a documented reason.

Upcoming Events

Jan. 14, Dept. of Health Lean 101

Jan. 22, Lean 101, Full

Jan. 23-24, Kaizen Facilitator Training, Full

Jan. 28, Wright County Lean 101

Feb. 4-7, Dept. of Education Kaizen Event

Feb. 12, MN Public Defenders Lean 101

Feb. 13, Dept. of Public Safety Lean 101

Feb. 14, Lean 101, Full

Feb. 19-20, Kaizen Facilitator Training, **Open**

Feb. 27-March 1, Assoc. of MN Counties Lean Training

March 12 and 13, DNR Lean 101s

March 14, and 27-29, MCTC Kaizen Event

March 19, Lean 101, Full

March 20-21, Kaizen Facilitator Training, **Open**

April 9, Lean 101, **Open**

April 10-11, Kaizen Facilitator Training, **Open**

View all Lean events at www.lean.state.mn.us/calendar



The MDVA team engages in a process mapping exercise, using the colorful post-it notes familiar to any Lean expert.

Proposed solutions to address these challenges include standardizing and simplifying cart organization of medication and pharmacy supplies, simplifying cards and forms used when administering medication, and overhauling staff training.
