

Writing an Aim Statement

What is an Aim Statement?

Your quality improvement team will need to create an Aim Statement that defines:

- The specific measure which you are using in your project (e.g., # falls, etc)
- The baseline data for that measure
- The target your team sets to achieve for that measure
- The date by which that goal will be accomplished

Example

An example of an Aim Statement would be:

“We will reduce the average process time for documentation on Unit 3 from its current baseline of 45 minutes per shift by 50% to 22 minutes, by December 2010”

When does my team write the Aim Statement?

After the Analyze phase, your team will have an idea of where to focus their improvement efforts. At this time, the team will decide the measure they want to work on, and the target they want to achieve. Thus, the Aim Statement should be completed before the Improve phase starts (as the Action Plan will depend on the Aim Statement).

What are the characteristics of a well-written Aim Statement?

- **Clear** – to create a clear plan, you need a specific and unambiguous aim
- **Time-specific** – set a realistic target date for when you want to achieve your aims
- **Stretchable** – to support your aim, establish a stretch target. Aiming for small, incremental change (e.g., moving from below average to above average, or changing by 10%) does not represent a real breakthrough in quality or performance, and may not justify the investment in resources and peoples’ time to participate. To help you set a stretch goal, look at what visionary leaders in the field are doing. If there are no clear examples of leading practices, aim to decrease suboptimal care, adverse events or undesirable wait times by no less than 50% as an initial step
- **Provide real value** – ensure that your aim is meaningful to your residents

Examples

- **Poor aim statement:** *“through the implementation of an electronic medical record, our residents at risk of pressure ulcers will get better care”*
- **Poor aim statement:** *“we will create a truly interdisciplinary team to provide specialized resident-centred care for those with pressure ulcers.”*
- **Good aim statement:** *“we will improve the prevention of pressure ulcers for residents in our home; by May of 2011, we aim to decrease the prevalence and incidence of pressure ulcers by 75%; prevalence from the current 20% to below 5%, and incidence from the current 10% to below 2.5%”*

Additional Facilitator’s Notes for “Writing an Aim Statement”

- An Aim Statement should answer “What” “By How Much” “By When”