

Component IV: Systems

Module A: Operations

Topic 6: Benchmarking

**I. Statement of Purpose**

To contribute to the student understanding of the performance improvement process by describing the process of benchmarking as a mechanism for performance improvement, discussing the benefits of benchmarking to the organization and identifying the process utilized when developing a benchmarking project and the applicable performance standards.

**II. Terminology**

1. Common cause variation
2. Special cause variation
3. The Joint Commission
4. AAAHC- Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care
5. AAAASF-American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities, Inc.
6. AHRQ- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
7. CMS- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

**III. Performance Standards**

1. Spell and define key terms
2. Describe how the benchmarking process is incorporated into an organization's performance improvement program utilizing current standards from regulatory agencies
3. Identify the steps utilized in the benchmarking process
4. Discuss the benefit to the organization when using the benchmarking process and the different types of benchmarking that could be utilized

**IV. References**

1. Byers, J.F., and White. S.V. (2004) *Patient Safety: Principles and Practice*, New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.
2. Laughlin, C.B., (2006) *Core Curriculum for Ambulatory Care Nursing*, (Second ed.), Pitman, NJ: AACN.

Content Outline Theory Objectives	Suggested Learning Activities/Evaluation
<p><b>Objective 1</b>  <b>Spell and define key terms</b>  A. Review the terms listed in the terminology section.  B. Write down the definition.</p>	<p>Explain each term to the class, using the correct definition and context relating to benchmarking</p> <p>Create a Jeopardy game to review key terminology, the definition and use in discussion of benchmarking</p>
<p><b>Objective 2</b>  <b>Describe how the benchmarking process is incorporated into an organization's performance improvement program</b>  A. Benchmarking: Benchmarking is a way to continuously compare an organization with their toughest, comparable competitor or another organization that is considered to be an industry leader. It is a way of comparing yourself with the "best of the best." Benchmarking can be used to evaluate a process, product or service. Benchmarking with another organization provides the opportunity to make changes or improvements that provide for better outcomes and change the way an organization does business. Benchmarking is more than comparing numbers; it is about developing a deeper understanding of the relationship between the organizational structure, the organizational process and the desired outcome.  B. Standards: Ambulatory settings have fewer regulatory agencies overseeing operations than in the acute care setting; however, there is a greater complexity in the ambulatory setting with more loosely-linked components than in the acute care setting.  1. TJC: The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations launched the initial set of standards in 2001. These standards are only applicable to ambulatory settings that are accredited. The standards emphasize attention to issues related to patient safety, staffing, customer service, improving care, improving health and responsible leadership. (27)  2. AAAHC: Private non-profit organization established in 1979 which has developed standards for patient safety, quality and value for performance through a peer evaluation process utilizing education and research. <a href="http://www.aaahc.org">www.aaahc.org</a>  3. AAAASF: Largest not-for-profit accreditation</p>	<p>Read the section on Benchmarking in the Core Curriculum for AACN Ambulatory Care Nursing.</p> <p>Discuss an opportunity to improve a patient process issue in your organization that could be improved through benchmarking and identify the regulatory agencies that could be utilized for this project</p> <p>Discuss the process of developing this project and any common cause or special cause variation that should be considered.</p>

<p>organization in the US utilizing standards that promote patient safety and medical/surgical care in the ambulatory setting. This organization was established in 1980. <a href="http://www.aaaasf.org">www.aaaasf.org</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. AAACN: Founded in 1978 as a not-for-profit educational forum for nurses interested in ambulatory and telehealth nursing.</li> <li>5. AHRQ: Formerly known as the Agency for Healthcare Policy and Research under the US Department of Health and Human Services; has developed a set of quality indicators that are based on inpatient admission data that suggest failures of ambulatory services and can be used to assess primary care access or outpatient services.</li> <li>6. CMS: Supports ambulatory care quality for Medicare beneficiaries to reduce morbidity and mortality.</li> </ol> <p>C. Determining Key Performance Standards: Performance standards as outlined by the JCAHO 2010 and 2012 Standards for Ambulatory Care provide a framework for process and performance improvement in the ambulatory care setting. These standards are related to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Patient Access and Assessment</li> <li>2. Patient Care and Continuity of Care</li> <li>3. Patient Rights and Responsibilities</li> <li>4. Patient Record and Information Flow</li> <li>5. Patient Service Contracts</li> <li>6. Patient and Family Education</li> <li>7. Patient Anesthesia and Surgery</li> <li>8. Improvement in Quality and Patient Safety</li> <li>9. Infection Control and Facility Safety</li> <li>10. Human Resource Management</li> <li>11. Governance and Leadership</li> </ol>	<p>Discuss an opportunity to improve a patient process issue in your organization that could be improved through benchmarking and identify which potential external organizations or regulatory agencies could be utilized for this project</p> <p>In the above project, discuss the process of developing this project and any common cause or special cause variation that should be considered.</p>
<p><b>Objective 3</b>  <b>Identify the steps utilized in the benchmarking process</b></p> <p>A. Benchmarking Process: There are key steps in the benchmarking process but the most important point to remember is that benchmarking is an ongoing process. A benchmarking process is only in its final phase when the changes have become consistently incorporated into the day-to-day organizational process.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planning Phase: The planning phase includes the process of identifying what to benchmark, who the comparative companies will be, what data collection methods will be utilized and the collection of the data</li> <li>2. Analysis Phase: The analysis phase involves comparing the gaps between the organization and the</li> </ol>	<p>Analyze a new process implemented in your organization and discuss if all steps in the benchmarking process were followed.</p> <p>Discuss how acceptance of this process into daily practice could have been improved in the Action Phase.</p>

<p>comparative company and the identifying the future performance levels</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Integration Phase: The integration phase involves communicating the gap analysis and establishing some measurable incremental goals for the organization</li> <li>4. Action Phase: The action phase involves developing a process/plan to reach the new goals, implementing this plan and monitoring the progress toward changing the organization and the culture. Benchmarks can be re-calibrated at this point</li> <li>5. Final Phase: The final phase occurs only when the organization has consistently incorporated the change into the day-to-day organizational process.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Objective 4</b>  <b>Discuss the benefit to the organization when using the benchmarking process and the different types of benchmarking that could be utilized</b></p> <p>A. Benefits of benchmarking</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifies organizational strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>2. Improves competitive advantage</li> <li>3. Identifies strategies for customer satisfaction</li> <li>4. Identifies areas for innovation</li> <li>5. Provides opportunities to improve outcomes/performance improvement</li> <li>6. Provides opportunities to improve organizational culture</li> <li>7. Promotes motivation and enthusiasm within the organization</li> <li>8. Provides opportunities for networking</li> </ol> <p>B. Types of Benchmarking</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Internal: Internal benchmarking occurs within the organization and measures improvement in performance over time</li> <li>2. External or Competitive: Benchmarking which occurs with another organization deemed as an industry leader or similar organizational competitor, using valid measurement indicators</li> <li>3. Functional: Comparison of a similar process in a dissimilar organizational setting</li> </ol>	<p>Compare and contrast your organization's most significant competitor and how that organization can be utilized in the benchmarking process</p> <p>Analyze why strategies in your organization to improve customer satisfaction may not be well-accepted into daily practice. What changes could be made to improve acceptance?</p>