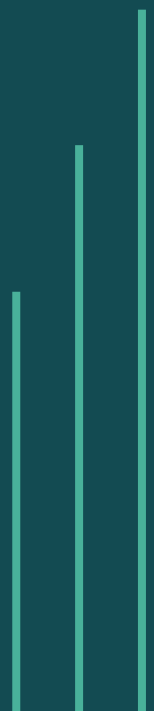


# ACT: Actions Create Transformation

A Unified Path to Continuous Healthcare Improvement



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# Introduction Summary

01

## It is time to Change how Healthcare Improves

The national spotlight on patient harm, quality gaps, and poor patient and caregiver experiences has led to an overwhelming flood of improvement approaches and activities. Although these disparate and often heroic efforts have produced pockets of success, systemic healthcare transformation remains elusive, and previous gains prove difficult to maintain.

Healthcare is at a turning point. Amid increasing pressures to achieve higher performance and market forces limiting available resources, healthcare organizations must do more with less. Well-intentioned leaders face significant challenges in implementing lasting changes that achieve the rates of improvement both expected and needed.



### Healthcare at a Crossroad



Tracking and executing dozens of improvement targets

Learning from past successes and failures for future planning

Limited real-time visibility into improvement actions, progress, and barriers

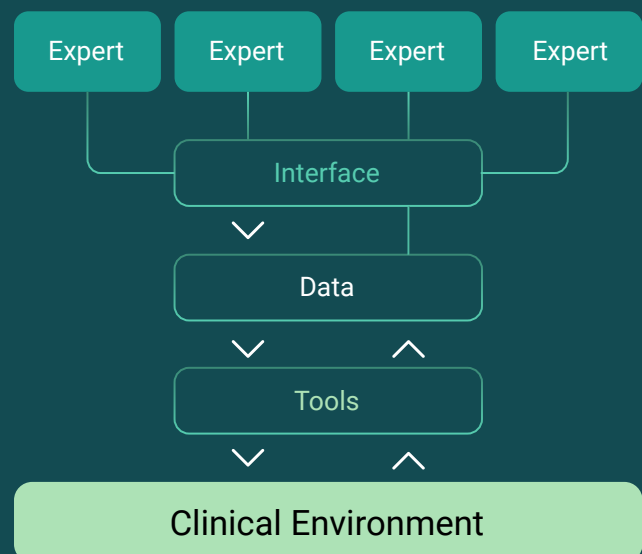
## Breaking Silos to Empower Frontline Leaders

Healthcare organizations will need to work smarter, not harder, to survive and thrive. Efficiency begins by consolidating improvement silos that lead to duplicative efforts and variable success. Improvement efforts are typically driven by data streams and led by experts who “own” each data set. These experts then provide fragmented insight, support, and tools to frontline teams. This model puts an immense burden on frontline clinical leaders, who struggle to make systematic progress when faced with moving targets and actions.



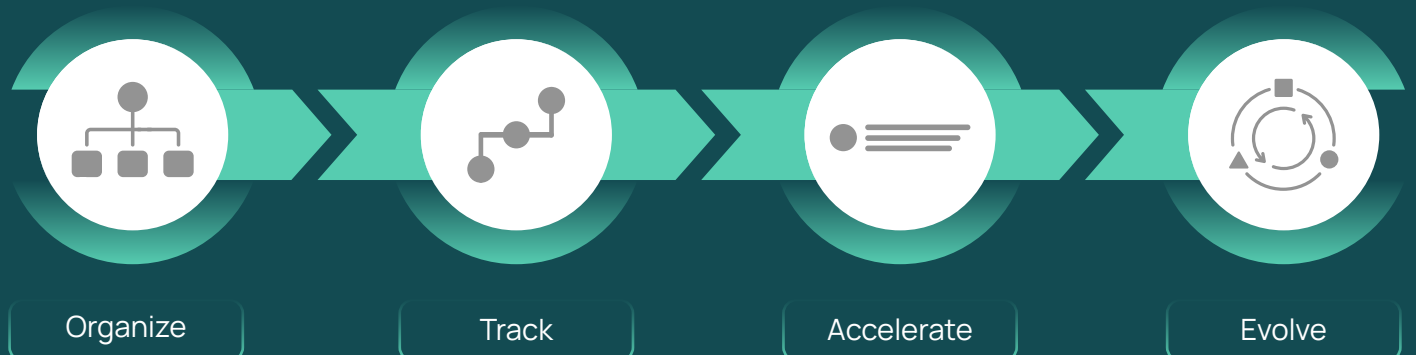
- ✓ Centralized Data
- ✓ Streamlined Processes
- ✓ Identify Barriers
- ✓ Empower Frontline Leaders
- ✓ Continuous Support

To fix this siloed system, healthcare organizations should integrate their improvement initiatives, performance data, and toolkits to provide clear and achievable goals for frontline leaders. In addition to this consolidation, new feedback and support mechanisms are required to empower those closest to the patients to elevate key improvement barriers and keep senior leaders informed of progress.



## A Unified Approach to Continuous Healthcare Improvement

Regardless of a healthcare organization's core improvement aim (High Reliability, Zero Harm, etc.), this four-pronged approach will set a framework for accomplishing higher rates of improvement.



## Organize



Taking inventory of current improvement teams and initiatives can be a significant undertaking with improvement objectives and plans scattered across SharePoint sites, PowerPoint files, and Word documents.

Initial attempts to organize teams and initiatives start in the simplest forms, such as combining patient safety and patient experience improvement efforts.

Conduct a broad stakeholder analysis to identify active initiatives and existing teams.

Identify dedicated sponsors to guide and support each improvement team.

Consolidate overlapping efforts, and postpone or discontinue those of lower priority.

Conduct a broad stakeholder analysis to identify active initiatives and existing teams.



Although a unified approach to improvement is advantageous for frontline leaders, combining historically separate efforts can be uncomfortable for senior leaders. Begin by engaging all leaders early in the process and giving each the time to articulate their various initiatives and concerns with the new approach. Clearly defining teams (departmental, special committees, etc.) and what each is working on is critical at this stage.

Identify dedicated sponsors to guide and support each improvement team.



Successful improvement teams require ongoing support and accountability. Although senior leaders are involved in improvement efforts in many ways, identifying a key senior leader for each improvement team will avoid further confusion down the road.

Consolidate overlapping efforts, and postpone or discontinue those of lower priority.



As organizations take inventory of ideal initiatives, most will find an unachievable amount of work to be done. Whenever possible, consolidate similar initiatives and drop or delay plans that are not of the utmost priority. This will give leaders and improvement teams the space to make significant traction on the top priorities.

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## Track



Healthcare organizations are skilled at developing action plans; however, consistent follow-through often becomes difficult — and sometimes nearly impossible. Maintaining clear, regularly updated plans allows senior leaders to better support frontline teams, stay aligned with evolving priorities, and intervene early to address roadblocks across departments.

Cascade simple action plans to improvement teams.

Consistently track process and accountability metrics.

Keep plans current as priorities change.

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Cascade simple action plans to improvement teams.



With a clear structure developed in the Organize phase, local improvement team leaders should be asked to participate in various initiatives. Provide an action plan template and senior-level support in selecting improvement goals and corresponding initiatives. Avoid cumbersome templates or rigid structures that support a “check the box” mentality.

Consistently track process and accountability metrics. \_\_\_\_\_



Organizational transformation doesn't happen overnight, and outcome metrics won't improve simply by having action plans in place. In the long, but expected, lull between initial action plans and outcomes, leaders should track process metrics against their original plans. These metrics will hold leaders accountable for their improvement actions and provide real-time data to executives about the progress of various initiatives.

Keep plans current as priorities change. \_\_\_\_\_



Priorities in healthcare organizations are continually shifting. Mergers, leadership changes, and workforce shortages are just some of the disruptive forces that can derail improvement efforts. When these events occur, update initiatives and plans to reflect the new reality. Proactively drop old plans to refocus teams instead of waiting for them to fizzle out.

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## Accelerate



Organizing, consolidating, and maintaining action plans is only of value if that information is actively used to accelerate the pace of improvement. Large repositories of stagnant data will frustrate improvement team leaders and create more work with no additional benefit, but leveraging information in real time will make the organization more agile and make core aims more achievable.

Provide ongoing information on progress, barriers, and enablers to team sponsors.

Engage executive leaders in regular progress updates.

Intervene early when initiatives or improvement teams get stuck.

Provide ongoing information on progress, barriers, and enablers to team sponsors. \_\_\_\_\_



The role of improvement team sponsor is often underutilized. With no insights into improvement progression, sponsors resort to scripted questions or small talk during

rounds and check-ins. Real-time information on progress, barriers to improvement, and required resources will enable sponsors to meaningfully coach and support teams.

Engage executive leaders in regular progress updates. \_\_\_\_\_



Executive teams should review aggregate process and accountability metrics regularly. The ultimate responsibility for improvement initiatives falls on the executive team who will welcome close monitoring of successes and failures to course correct and support stalled initiatives.

Intervene early when initiatives or improvement teams get stuck. \_\_\_\_\_



Sometimes improvement efforts fail to achieve the desired result despite full support and resources, but more often, intended or planned improvement activities never achieve full implementation. Initiatives can stall at an organizational level, such as a delayed HRO training program, or a team level, such as the turnover of an ICU manager. In either case, senior leaders should quickly intervene to ensure initiatives don't stall completely.

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## Evolve



While the Organize, Track, and Accelerate phases create meaningful progress, the true power of this model lies in maintaining long-term commitment to a unified improvement methodology. Organizations that consistently follow these principles can continuously refine their approach based on real outcomes rather than assumptions, learning from past actions with clarity and confidence.

Connect actions to outcomes to learn from prior efforts.

Identify key barriers, enablers, and other factors that led to success.

Leverage success within the organization for learning, recognition, and best practices.

Connect actions to outcomes to learn from prior efforts. \_\_\_\_\_



Reviewing actions taken in the context of outcome metrics leads to data-rich, highly informed conversations about what is and is not working. These conversations should occur within individual improvement teams, with initiative leaders, and at the executive leadership level.



Identify key barriers, enablers, and other factors that led to success.



With a robust set of improvement action data, significant barriers, enablers, and other factors can reveal deeper insights about how to move forward. For example, an organization may find that having a physician champion led to higher success rates, or that being involved in more than four improvement initiatives led to missed goals. Utilize these specific insights to evolve the improvement approach further.

Leverage success within the organization for learning, recognition, and best practices.



Within every healthcare organization, teams are taking significant and successful strides to improve quality, safety, and experience. Many of these efforts fail to gain the recognition they deserve across the organization. A systematic approach will support the easy identification and recognition of improvement exemplars, leading organizations to look for best practices within their four walls before consulting externally.

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## Closing Summary

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The ever-growing list of healthcare improvement aims, teams, and initiatives demands a fresh, more coordinated approach. By simplifying and systematizing improvement processes, organizations can remove complexity and empower leaders to take decisive action. When supported by integrated information systems, these efforts gain clarity, accountability, and momentum—delivering both immediate impact and long-term transformation.

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## About Beterra

Beterra is a healthcare technology company focused on building tools for safety and quality management.

Our solutions help clients accelerate improvement via collection, analysis, sensemaking, and safety and quality data utilization.

Scan the QR code to explore our website or contact us at [hello@beterra.com](mailto:hello@beterra.com)

