A New Child Welfare Case Review Process: Using Data to Inform Systems Change

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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Today's Goals

- Brief history of Wisconsin Child Welfare Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

- Transition to a revamped CQI process

- Tool development, design and implementation

- Data analysis and quality assurance

- Lessons learned

- Key takeaways

# Brief History of Wisconsin's Child Welfare CQI process

- Quality Service Review (QSR) process
  - 2005 to 2014
- Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process:
  - Designed an inclusive CQI process from the grassroots that focused on county engagement
  - Moved to an approach that allowed for a representative statewide sample, that allowed for hypothesis development and analysis

Wisconsin Child Welfare CQI: Moving Toward A Learning System

- **Child and Family Safety**
- **Permanency**
- **Child Well-being**

- **Define and assess improvement needs**
- **Develop projects specific to needs**
- **Implement and monitor progress**

OUTCOMES → **DATA**

IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS ← **INFORMATION**
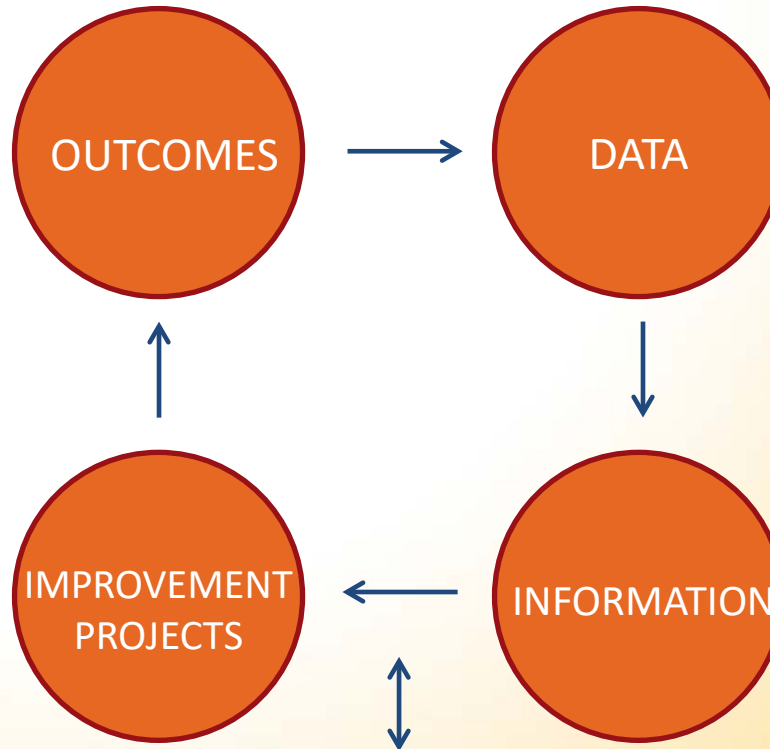
Multiple sources:
- Data systems
- **Case reviews**
- Worker surveys
- Legal system

Turning data into information and knowledge useful to the field and community

CONTINUALLY IDENTIFYING AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Tool Development

- Determine what it is that you want to learn
  - Are Standards what they should be? Are there areas that should be prioritized?

- Collaboration is key
  - Combination of survey experts, policy and program experts, input from county and tribal representatives

Tool Design

- One construct per question
- Valid and Reliable
  – Remove opportunities for human error
  – Ensures reviewers answer all questions and answer questions relevant to report type
- Flow of instrument
  – Based on templates utilized in the field

b. Does the report contain information on family functioning, strengths and current stressors?

(i). Family functioning?

▦ Yes

▦ No

Is the information about family functioning contained in the appropriate section?

▦ Yes

▦ No

Does the report adequately document that the reporter was asked and did not know the information?

▦ Yes

▦ No

Is the information about family functioning adequately documented?

▦ Yes

▦ No

(ii). Family strengths?

▦ Yes

▦ No

Is the information about family strengths contained in the appropriate section?

▦ Yes

▦ No

Does the report adequately document that the reporter was asked and did not know the information?

▦ Yes

▦ No

Is the information about family strengths adequately documented?

▦ Yes

▦ No

(iii). Family stressors?

▦ Yes

▦ No

Is the information about family stressors contained in the appropriate section?

▦ Yes

▦ No

Does the report adequately document that the reporter was asked and did not know the information?

▦ Yes

▦ No

Is the information about family stressors adequately documented?

▦ Yes

▦ No

Training

- Ensures consistency of case reviewers & quality results

- Set standards and pre-requisites for certification

- Developed online modules that could be completed remotely and self-paced

- Extensive coaching & mentoring, interactive communication

- Created county buy-in and promoted grassroots CQI initiatives in individual counties

Methods

- Quality management plan for data collection/analysis:

  - ✓ Quality assurance

    - Preventative measures to avoid errors and verify data quality

  - ✓ Quality control

    - Consistent monitoring for accurateness and completeness

- Final review data were cleaned/merged and analyzed using SAS (Statistical Analysis Software).

  - Analysis beyond general calculations and percentages

  - Developed hypotheses to test correlations and anecdotes

  - Conducted statistical tests to evaluate relationships between questions
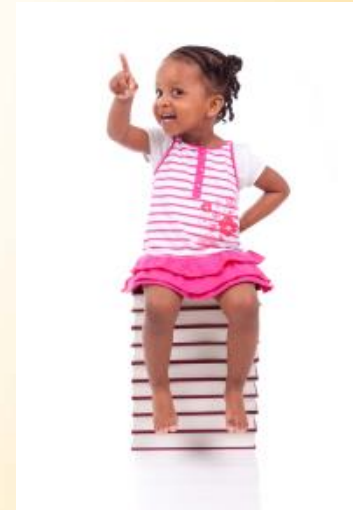
Methods

- Representative, statewide sample of cases chosen to have adequate statistical power for Access, Initial Assessment & Ongoing (n= 271)

- Review of electronic case files only (no paper files or interviews)

- A dedicated research analyst collaborated with DCF program and policy staff to evaluate findings and develop reports

Results of Access Case Reviews

Correct Household Identified — 91.9%
Participants Tab: Required Individuals — 80.8%
Wisconsin Court System (CCAP)‡ — 79.0%
Alleged Maltreater Relationship to Child(ren) — 77.9%
Identity of Alleged Maltreater — 77.5%
Current Maltreatment Allegations — 73.8%
Access to Alleged Victim(s) in Next Five Days — 71.6%
Surrounding Circumstances — 64.9%
Response to Agency Intervention — 61.3%
Child Injury/Condition∞ — 57.2%
School/daycare — 55.4%
Circumstances/CPS Responsibilities — 55.0%
ICWA Status∞ — 54.2%
Domestic Violence∞ — 54.2%
Previous Initial Assessments‡ — 51.3%
Access to Alleged Victim(s) at Time of Report — 50.2%
Past Maltreatment Allegations — 47.2%
Prior CPS Referrals‡ — 45.8%
Frequency of Alleged Maltreatment — 44.3%
Names/Contact Information of Collaterals — 42.4%
Current Location of Child(ren) — 40.6%
Sex Offender Registry‡ — 36.9%
Current Whereabouts of Alleged Maltreater — 36.2%
Special Needs — 34.7%
Child Functioning: Behavioral — 26.6%
Vulnerability — 23.2%
Child Functioning: Emotional — 22.1%
Child Functioning: Cognitive — 21.8%
Parental Protective Capacities: Behavioral — 17.3%
Parental Protective Capacities: Emotional — 13.7%
Parental Protective Capacities: Cognitive — 12.9%

Percentage of CPS Reports Documenting Required Information (N=271)

∞ Results obtained prior to secondary review (See Appendix E)
‡ Indicates required records searches for alleged maltreater(s)

- There was a wide range of information gathered and documented at Access (from 92% - 13%).
- The vast majority of screening decisions (92%) were consistent with WI Standards.

Results of Initial Assessment Case Review
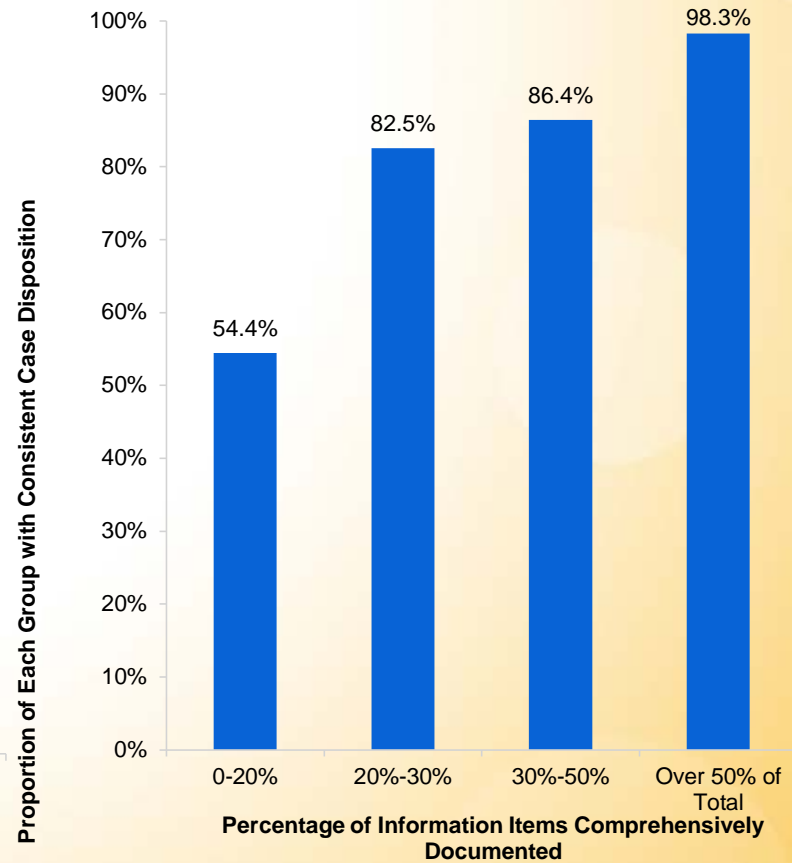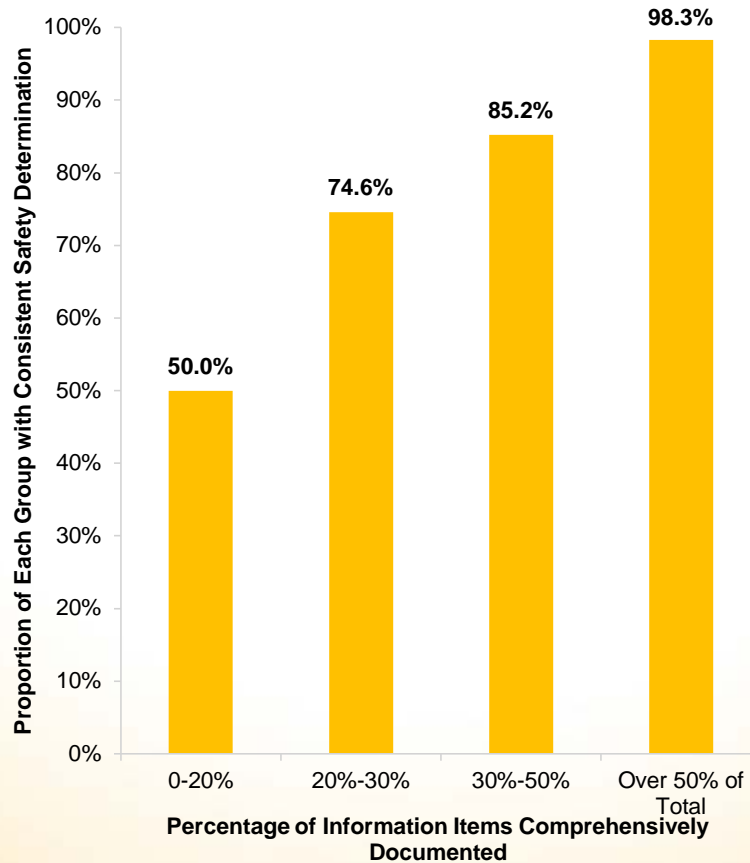
- When more than 50% of Information Items were comprehensively documented in the case file, 98% of Initial Assessments were found to be consistent with safety determinations and case dispositions.

Lessons Learned - Development

- Start small (Access/Intake)
- Self-reflection
  - Designing a tool forces staff to reflect on Standards
- Change takes time
- County engagement had multiple benefits
- Transparency of expectations
- Be strength-based

Lessons Learned - Methods

- An efficient way to collect the information to be used for data analysis is critical

- Develop a system that meets multiple needs (CQI, county-specific, critical incidents)

- Objectivity and transparency are crucial

- Ensure reliability of data and findings through strong Quality Management

- Data may support or debunk anecdotal information

Key Take Aways

- This process can be replicated
  - Review Tools Developed
  - Statewide Sample
  - Analysis
  - Counties helped build the tool & county engagement through case reviewers

Published Reports Available

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cqireports

Questions?

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