



Using Data to Drive Improvements for Children in New Jersey

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NJ Department of Children and Families

- 3 Divisions
 - Youth and Family Services
 - Child Behavioral Health
 - Prevention and Community Partnerships
- State Administered – 21 Counties
- Youth and Family Services
 - NJ Spirit is the SACWIS system
 - 48,000 children under supervision
 - 7,200 children in placement



~~~~~ TIMELINE ~~~~~

2004

1ST CFSR

Lawsuit

SafeMeasures Introduced

Limited SACWIS



2006/2007

New Administration

Modified Settlement Agreement

SACWIS (NJ Spirit) Implemented

SafeMeasures Transition

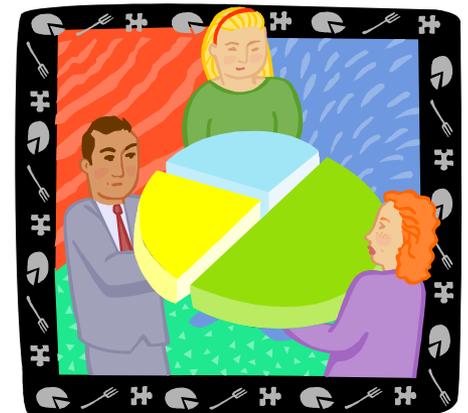


2010/2011

Data Infusion

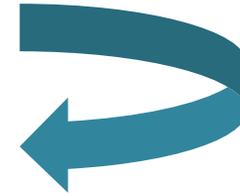
- Executive Management
- Area Director's Meetings
- Local Manager's Meetings

NCIC Managing by Data Project

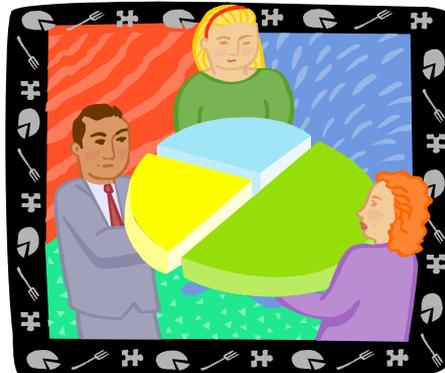




Data Collection



Building a Data Culture



Utilizing Data &
Building Capacity
at All Levels

Building a Data Culture

✓ NJ Spirit (SACWIS)

-System stabilized

-Transparency added

-Direct Worker Input

✓ CFSR & MSA requiring data production

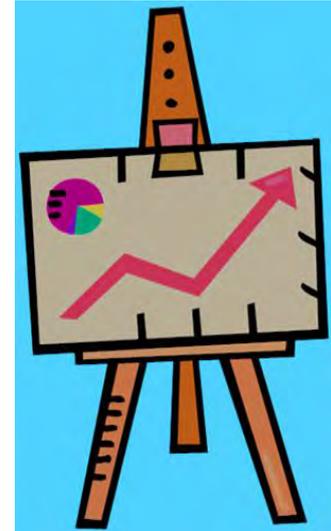
✓ Management utilizing data

-No more manual counts

-Data Accountability Surfacing

✓ Different Data for Different Users

✓ Accessible, Real Time Data



Different types of data for different uses and users

- ✓ **Point in Time Data** - simple, timely, easy to understand and produce

As of May 31, 2011, NJ DYFS had 7,100 children in placement

- ✓ **Process Measures** - familiar to staff, relevant at a caseworker level, current

In June, 92% of the children had a face-to-face contact with their caseworker

- ✓ **Outcome Data** – the “big picture” measure of system performance, especially when looked at longitudinally

The median length of stay for children who entered placement in 2003 was 12.4 months. In 2009, the median had declined to 9.5 months.

The median length of stay for infants who entered placement in 2003 was 21 months. In 2009, the median had declined to 15.8 months.

All of which adds up to:

There is no bad data.

The data is your data.



Self-
Assessment

Ownership

Accountability

Performance

Transparency

Competition

Quality
Improvement

Pride

Leveraging our Analytic Capacity

6 DCF Data Analysts



SafeMeasures



Chapin Hall
University of Chicago

- Real-time data in a user friendly format
- Flexible tool with great capacity
- Supported by IT and child welfare expertise
- Responsive to changing needs and practices

- National expertise and perspective
- Skills and infrastructure to support longitudinal work
- Consultation on an as-needed basis

1 DCF Data Coordinator – Hybrid of Analyst & User Support

NJ Spirit Help Desk



Data Culture Continues...

CFSR PIP leads to sharing data with Local Courts

Using Chapin Hall lengths of stay quartiles (median) to show one county how different they were from others, leads to a special task force to examine their practices

ChildStat

Uses data to analyze systemic issues as to why performance on a key Case Practice Model component (Family Team Meetings) is not where we expected it to be

Monitor reviews key metric data from SafeMeasures at Site Visits

Helpful in assessing case practice model implementation, and reviewing the emergence of quality improvement processes at the local level

Lessons Learned in Building a Data Culture

- ✓ **Availability and timeliness of data are key**
- ✓ **Users respond best when the data is personalized to their own work**
- ✓ **Don't dismiss process measures – many users start there**
- ✓ **Stratify by age and race**
- ✓ **Tie directly to the case practice model**
- ✓ **Quantitative & qualitative data should be used**
- ✓ **Educate on the value of cohorts and longitudinal data**
- ✓ **Try to be simple - edit!**
- ✓ **Acknowledge – new skill, not why they became social workers**



And, remember there is such a thing as too much data.

The NCIC Technical Assistance Project

An opportunity to utilize data and build capacity...

But how to do it?



All Supervisors?

Coach

Performance Management

Mentor

Dashboard

Executive Management

Analysis of National Promising Practices

Interview with Linda Mitchell and Peter Watson based on their CFSR work

Surveying states identified as standing out – usually in the broader QI arena or some data work

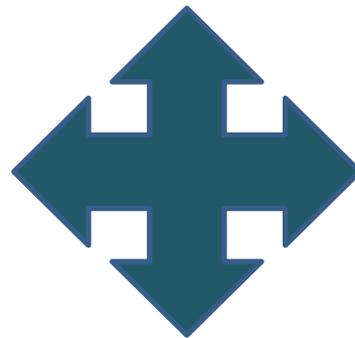
Common themes

- ✓ Data champions
- ✓ Mentoring
- ✓ Coaching
- ✓ Supporting the practice model
- ✓ Linking it to child and family outcomes at the local level
- ✓ Personalizing the data

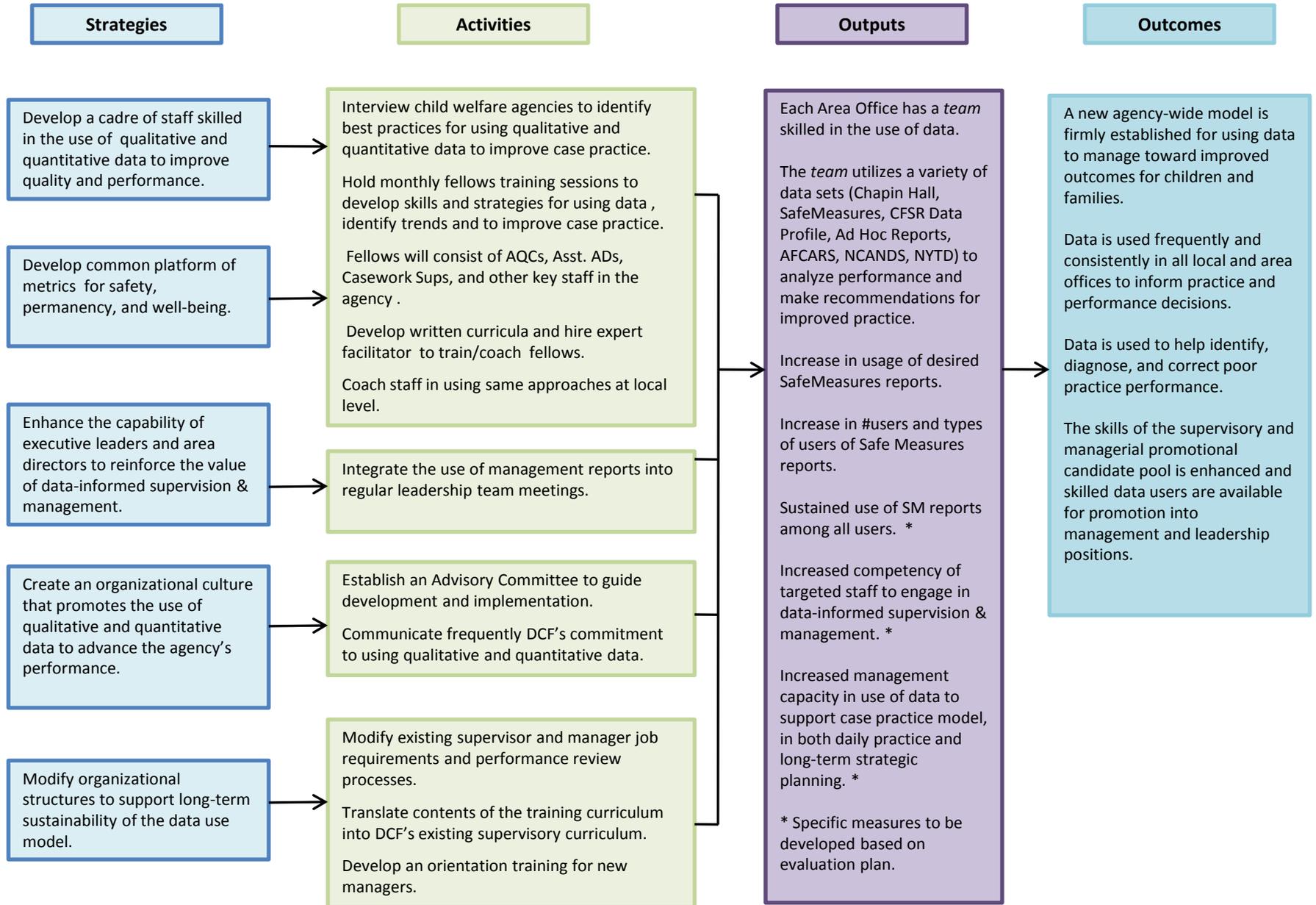
Findings available at <http://www.muskie.usm.maine.edu/ncic/>

Translated into NJ's "Managing by Data NCIC Project"

An approach that builds internal capacity throughout the organization to use data to measure and improve performance -- in a public child welfare setting -- thus facilitating a cycle of continuous quality improvement.



**New Jersey DYFS "Manage by Data" Project Logic Model
September 2010**



Our Partners

- ✓ Child Welfare Policy & Practice Group – Curriculum design
- ✓ Public Catalyst Group – Curriculum design and training
- ✓ Action Research – Program Evaluation

The DCF Fellows Program

- Invite 100 mid-level staff to become “Fellows” through a competitive application process
- 18 session course of interactive and applied learning
- Designed to connect data analysis and qualitative assessment
- Develop staff to be analytic consumers of data that is applied in daily work
- Secondary skills as Leaders, Presenters, and Team Builders



DCF Fellows Objectives

Grounded in good
case practice
model principles

Develop
presentation skills

Understand &
demystify data

Master qualitative
& quantitative
tools

Recognize
challenges

Celebrate good
practice

Support positive
change

Act as a local
resource

Grow as managers
& leaders

Fellows...

- ✓ Participation is voluntary but requires commitment
- ✓ Fellows brought a range of skill levels to the class
- ✓ One day a month in class, one day a month on homework or project
- ✓ Individual as well as team work
- ✓ Emphasis on focusing, and asking the right questions
- ✓ Provide lunch to keep them engaged and in place
- ✓ Coaching and Mentoring take more time than envisioned
- ✓ 5 classes in a month are an intense workload for the instructors



DCF Fellows Seminar Series Overview

Becoming Knowledgeable Consumers of Data

- Data point
- Focus on safety case practice
- *Seminars 1-6*

Utilizing Data to Manage Change

Business process & data flow
Focus on permanency & well-being case practice
Seminars 7-12

Improving Outcomes

Data in a systemic context
Deploying data & information as leadership tools
Seminars 13-18

Curriculum To Date

- ✓ Seminar 1 – The DCF Fellow as Storyteller
- ✓ Seminar 2 – Data as a Diagnostic Tool
- ✓ Seminar 3 – Asking Questions and Challenging Assumptions
- ✓ Seminar 4 – Understanding Quantitative Data Etiquette and Presenting Qualitative Information
- ✓ Seminar 5 – Finding Bright Spots & Building a Diagnostic Plan
- ✓ Seminar 6 – Moving Data into Action (1st project presentations)
- ✓ Seminars 7 – From One to Many – Learning to Analyze Flow and Process

Curriculum Ahead

- ✓ Seminar 8 - *Analyzing Business Process & Permanency Metrics in Context – the Challenge of Improving Parent-Child Visitation*
- ✓ Seminar 9 - *Permanency & Well-Being: Mastering the Core Metrics*
- ✓ Seminar 10 - *Accessing, Evaluating, and Applying Promising and Best Practices*
- ✓ Seminar 11 - *Formulating Recommendations & Piloting Implementation*
- ✓ Seminar 12 - *Baselines, Interim Targets, Goals & Outcomes: Tracking & Adjusting to Improved Outcomes*
- ✓ Seminar 13 - *Thinking Systemically - Utilizing Data to Improve Our Service Array*
- ✓ Seminar 14 - *Exploring Leadership & Understanding the Federal Data Landscape*
- ✓ Seminar 15 - *Exercising Leadership: Data, Transparency & Strategic Alliances*
- ✓ Seminars 16 & 17 - *Striving for Case Practice at Its Best: Utilizing Data to Manage the Fellows' Graduation Projects*



Lessons from the Curriculum

- ✓ Utilizing case studies has been helpful and well received
- ✓ Course work is strengthened by homework and presentations
- ✓ Bringing in management for presentations adds energy, renews commitment
- ✓ Individual coaching is critical

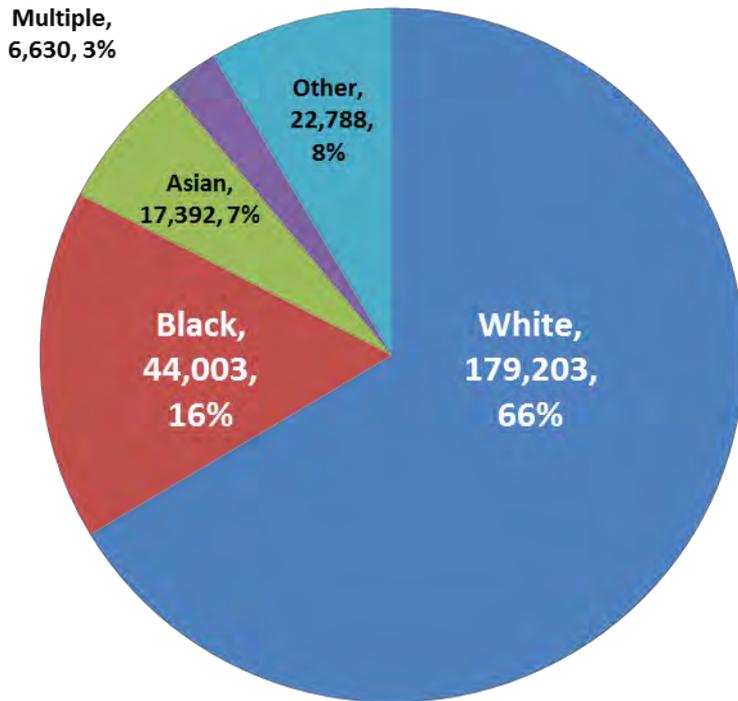


We learned the importance of racial and ethnic data.
Here we compare the racial composition of all residents in Atlantic
County v. a small cohort of long placed children.

Racial Makeup of Atlantic County Residents

n=263,386

Source: US Census, 2009



Focus:

Children Ages 3 to 6 in care in
Atlantic 36+ months

n=14

- White: 3
- Black: 7
- Multiple: 2
- Missing: 2

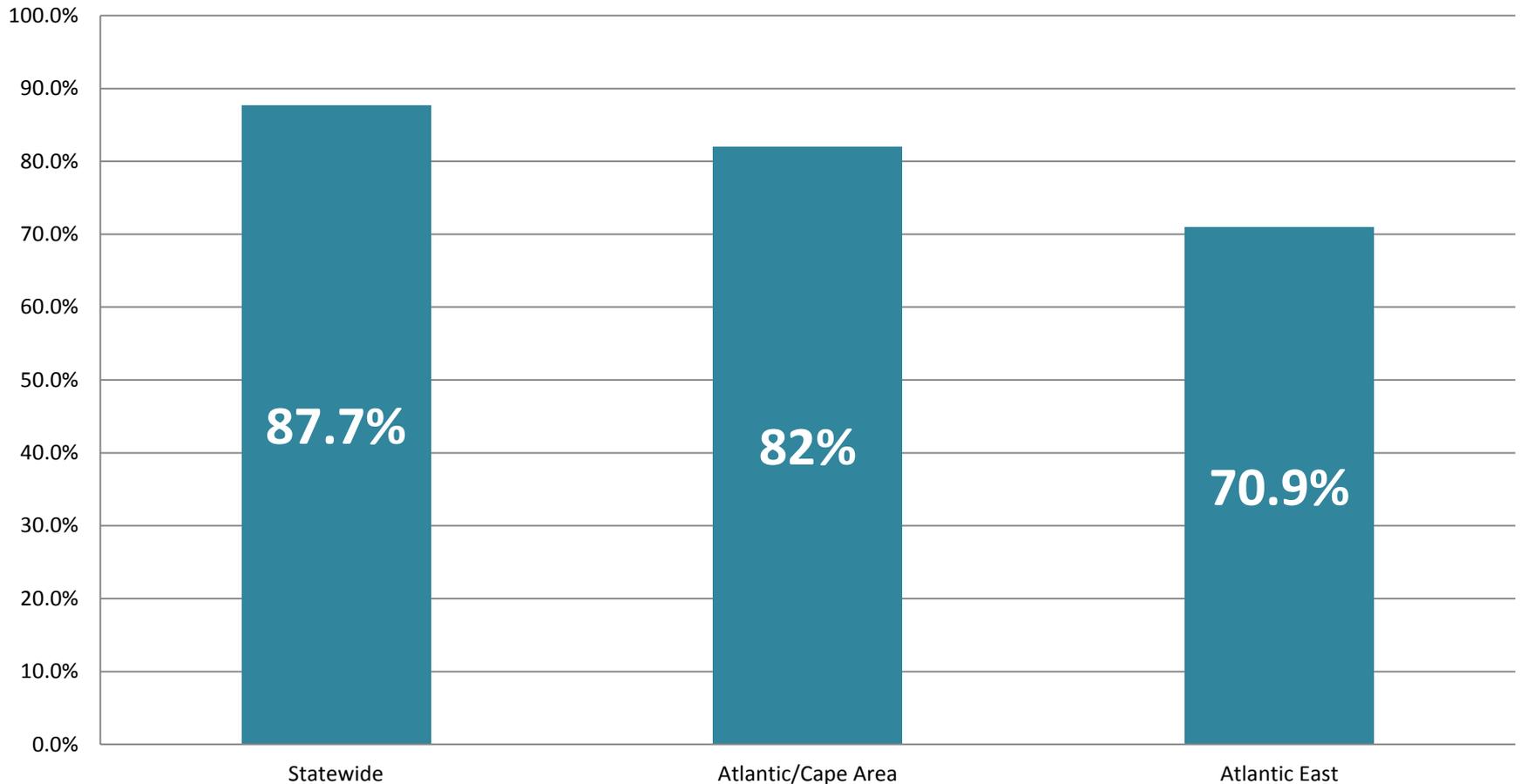
We learned the value of looking at measures on the statewide, area, and local level.

CPS Referrals within Response Time

March 2011

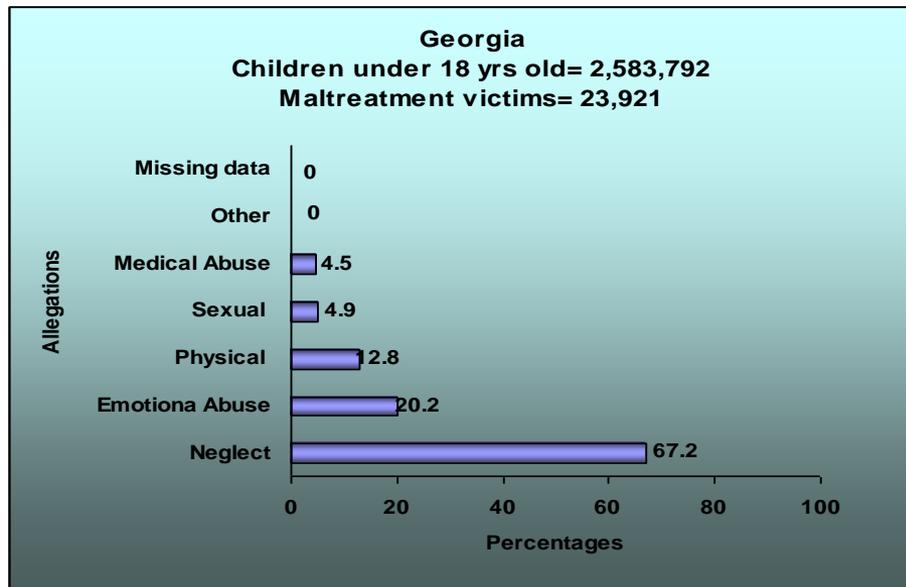
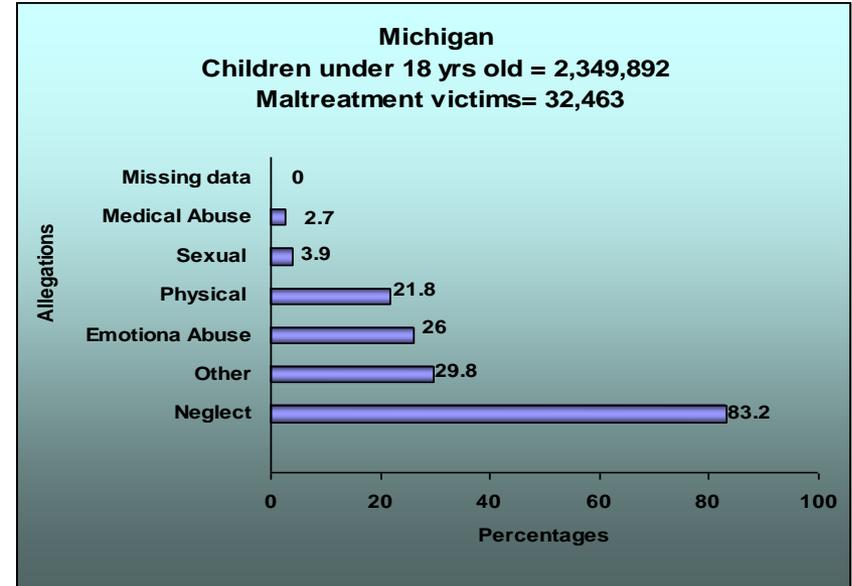
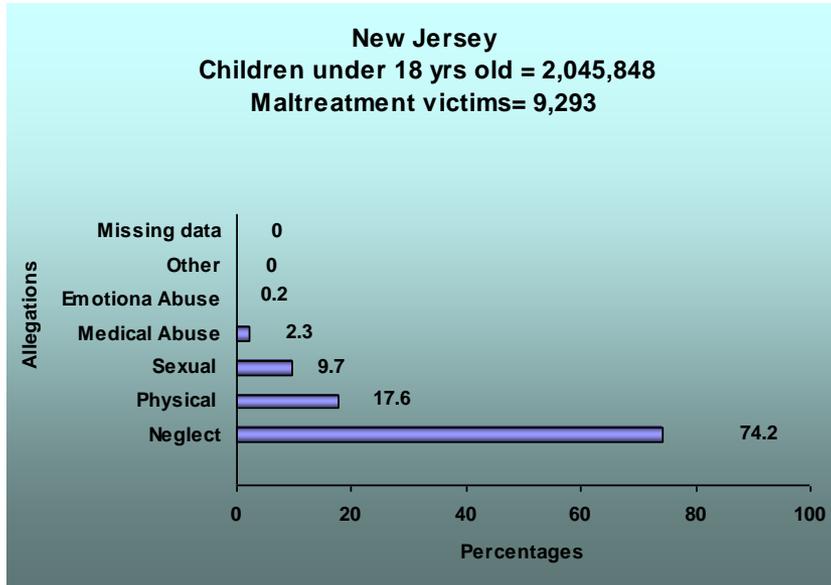
Source: Safe Measures

n's: statewide=5,963; area=323; Atlantic East=139



We looked at placing our own CPS practice into context by examining practice in other states

Allegation Type / Comparison of States
Source :Child Welfare Outcome Report Data,2009

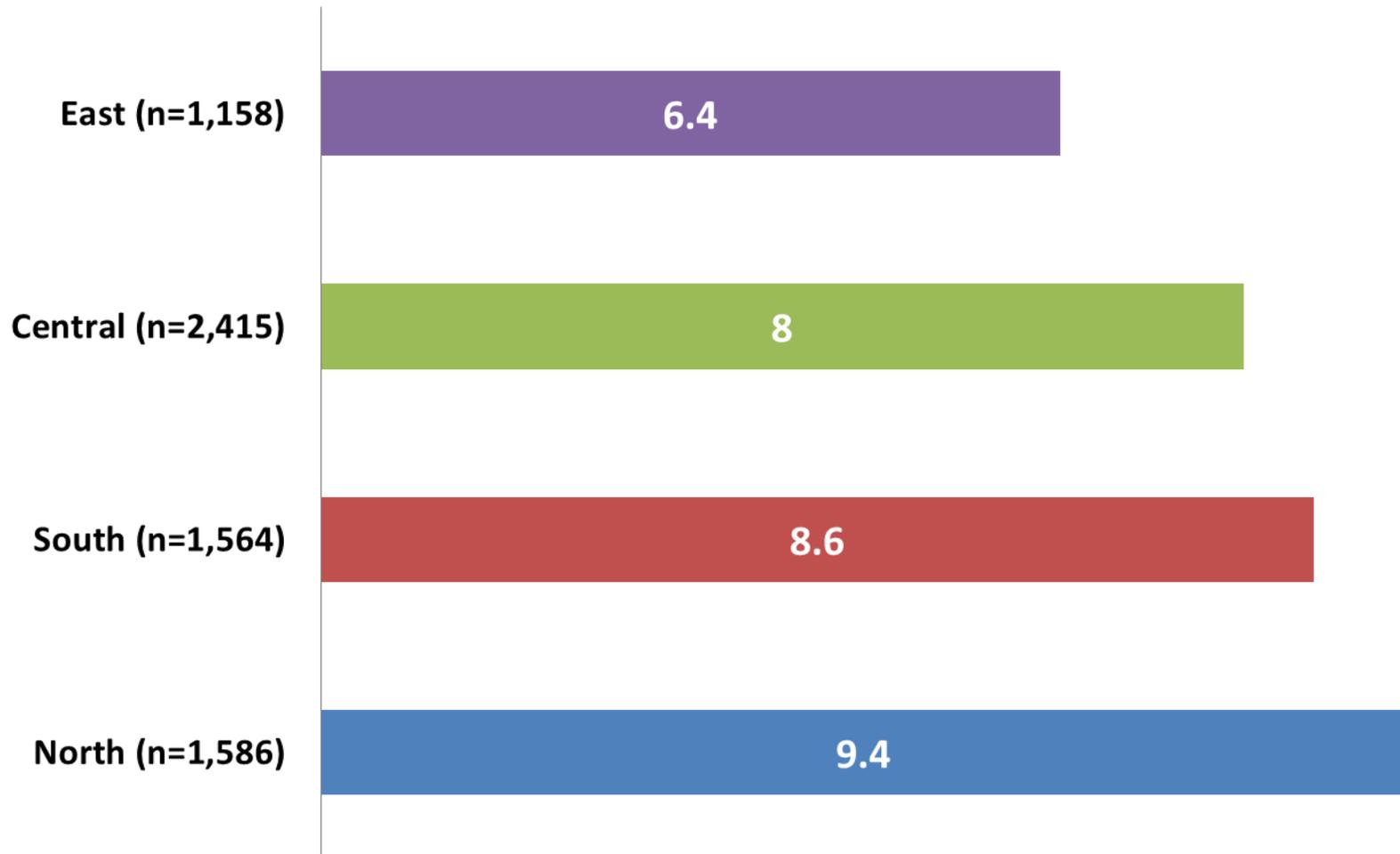


*Level of evidence required
for all three states: Preponderance

We looked at average workload for referrals in the Camden local offices last year and then realized average was NOT the right way to analyze this information given the sharp peaks and valleys in the volume of referrals from month to month. We need to look at range and at peak periods.

Camden Referrals per worker for 2010

Source: Safe Measures for volume of referrals & for number of intake staff



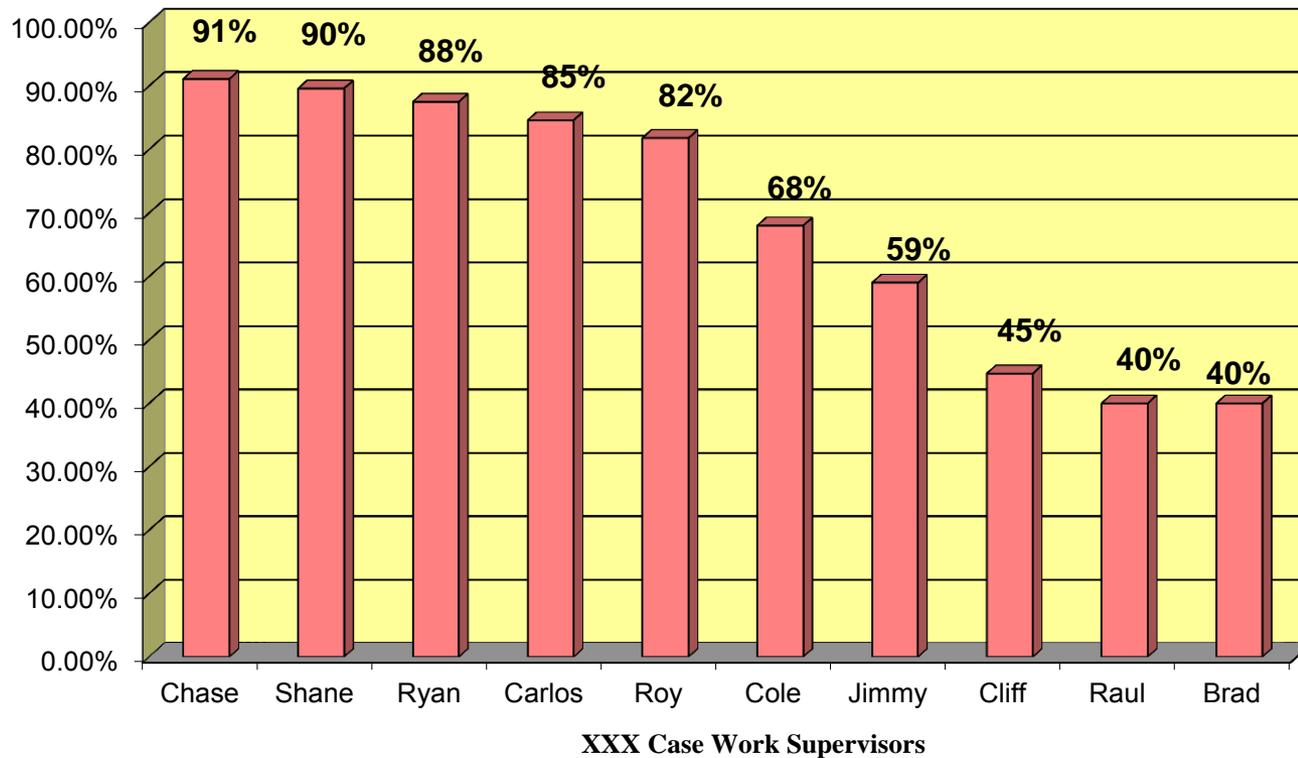
We also compared safety assessment completions by case work supervisor in XXX and saw significant differences.

Note: the CWS names have been changed in the chart below.

Safety Assessments Completed per CPS Referral

All CPS referrals should have a safety assessment completed

Source: Safe Measures--Cases open from 4/1/11 through 4/27/11



CWS names have been changed.

Keys to Implementation

- ✓ Building on Promising Practices
- ✓ Leadership Commitment
- ✓ Stakeholder Involvement -- Communication & Participation
- ✓ Culture & Climate -- Organizational Readiness
- ✓ Effective Partnership of NCIC, Child Welfare Agency & Contractors
- ✓ Operational Details
- ✓ Frequent Monitoring and Evaluation
- ✓ Coaching

**The Fellows Program is much more
than the training curriculum!**



Building Stakeholder Support

- ✓ Advisory Committee
- ✓ Commissioner and Upper Management Support
- ✓ Area Director/LO Manager Meetings
- ✓ Leadership Summit
- ✓ Project Selection
- ✓ Home Teams



Operational Details

- ✓ Resource fellows at the project meetings, and all Fellows classes
- ✓ Monthly meetings with the trainers and the Resource Fellows
- ✓ Added in Excel class, and will be adding in 10-15 minutes more of excel instruction in future classes
- ✓ Provided SPSS to some of the more advanced students
- ✓ Making mapping available
- ✓ Training Academy staff observing, thinking about how to integrate this into existing and future agency classes

Live Data!!!!

- ✓ Invaluable!
- ✓ Adds intensity to the work
- ✓ Takes resources, but the value is immense
- ✓ Staff own the data – indescribable
- ✓ They experience bad data or coding issues
- ✓ Setting limits on how much data is important
- ✓ Make recommendations on changes – practice, policy, SACWIS systems
- ✓ See the value of disaggregation
- ✓ A new avenue of self-assessment



Monitoring and Evaluation

- ✓ Feedback loops – Advisory committee, Resource Fellows, Monthly Meeting with trainers
- ✓ Participation of the Executive Staff, Area Directors and Managers at the project presentations – support as well as informal feedback
- ✓ Project evaluation – focus groups, observations, surveys
- ✓ Technical assistance and participation in the Implementation Center's own evaluation are times for reflection
- ✓ Class evaluation at every Fellows session



Emphasizing Quantity over Quality

- ✓ Needless fear
- ✓ The Fellows brought this balance to the table on their own
- ✓ One class and homework assignment focused on qualitative work
- ✓ Reinforced by their projects
- ✓ Using data as a quality improvement tool coming from within
- ✓ Asking questions, drilling down, validating
- ✓ Complemented the system level ChildStat sessions that started just before the Fellows classes

Fellow's Projects

✓ Analysis of Multiple Referrals

- Timeframes for re-referrals
- Age of children involved
- Levels of risk
- Did the first or second referral also involve a placement, and of what duration
- Was the family's previous involvement closed at intake, or after receiving in-home services?
 - Identify service providers where families have fewer reopens. Are their services different and how so?
 - 19 cases where families had been referred 2x, and children under age 4 had been placed as a result of both reports



Fellow's Projects

- ✓ Analysis of Referral Pool & Case Status When Intake Received
 - Causes of increased number of reports
 - Coding issues
 - Relationship to substantiation rate of a particular county

- ✓ Analysis of IAIU Referral Patterns & Opportunities for Practice Improvement
 - Referral sources
 - Re-referrals
 - Substantiation Rates

- ✓ Investigation Timeliness & Quality
 - Tension between completing the investigation and doing a thorough investigation
 - County that is struggling with timeliness plans to compare their practice and outcomes with a county or office that is doing better on compliance

Fellow's Projects

✓ Children & Youth with Long Stays in Placement

- clusters of youth in placement -- both adolescents and younger children
- relationship to adoption practice and opportunities for improvement
- looking at low placement rates but long lengths of stay in another location

✓ Resource Family Practice

- designing the next generation of metrics with a focus on retention

✓ Family Engagement

- link to placement practice and see if the impact family engagement has had can be demonstrated

✓ Parent-Child Visitation

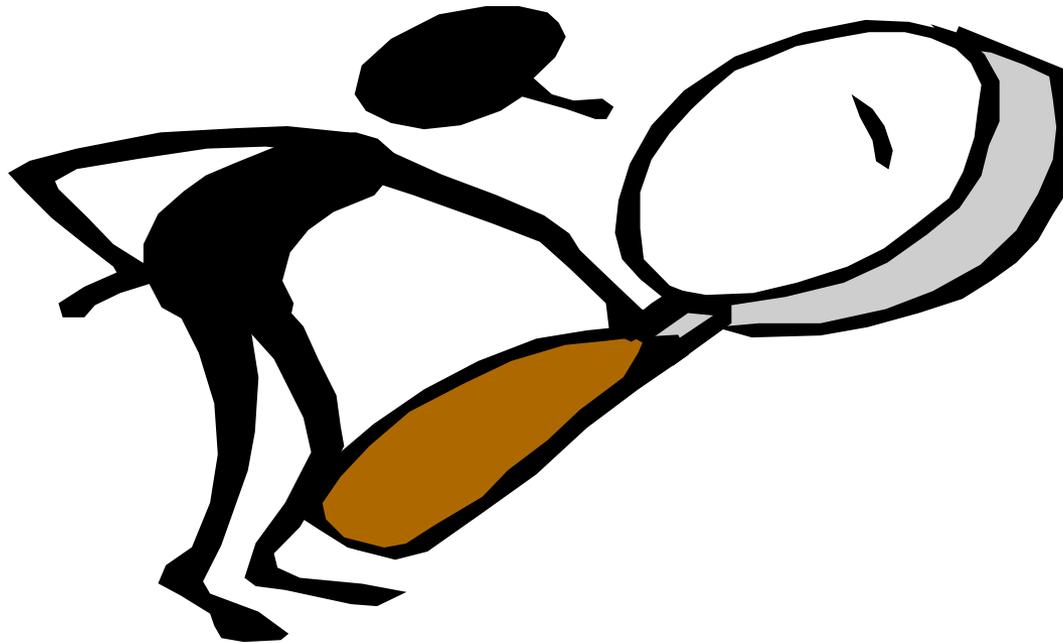
- when and how it is occurring
- documentation issues
- what works
- recommended improvement opportunities



Initial Cohort Analysis

Cases Closed *4/1/2009 -3/31/2010* then subsequently re-opened in **XXX County**

There were 591 cases closed in XXX County during this
period and 195 re-opened as of 5/10/11



Hypothesis

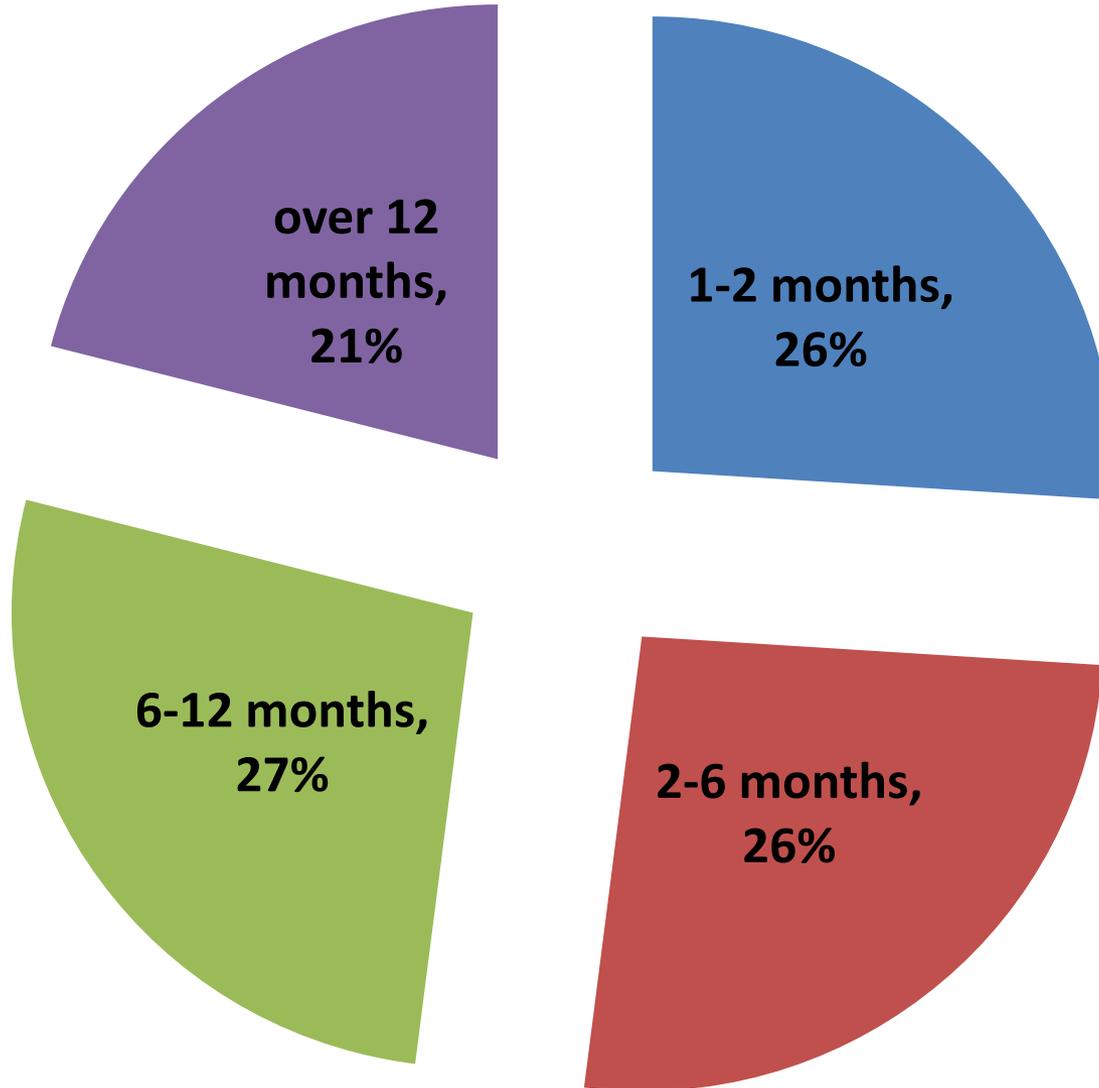
Factors that may be associated with re-opens:

- Policy
- Case practice
- Local standards
- Population characteristics
- Information systems glitches
- Resources and services



75% of cases re-opened within a year and 26% within 2 months

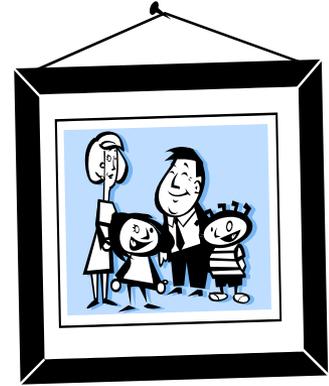
NJ Spirit n = 195



Hypotheses

- SCR is generating “duplicate” reports
- Use of the allegation based system and the level of substantiations has hindered the Division’s ability to work with families
- The engagement process may not always begin at intake and progress during the life of the case as it should per case practice
- Workers may not be tracking and adjusting case plans
- Workers may not be documenting accurately leading to repeat reports coming to the agency on open cases

Impacts to date



- ✓ Need for more Spanish speaking staff & services
- ✓ Cape May Service needs
- ✓ “I think differently” “I don’t have data to back this up”
- ✓ More requests for data, data quality important
- ✓ More data terms used in day to day business
- ✓ Quality improvement more than the QSR
- ✓ Quality improvement rooted at the local level

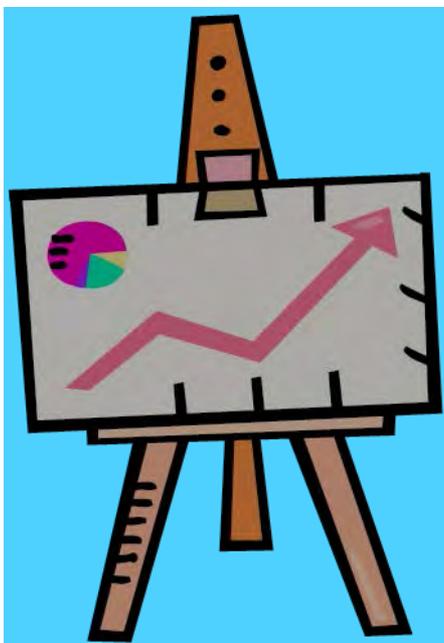


At the end of the day, it is more than just data!

What is ahead?

- Will be paying attention to the learning curve in the next 12 months – is it as steep?
- How do we sustain this momentum?
- Post-Fellows – how can we best continue to support and give them data?
- Where does this go in our training plan for DCF?
- How do others replicate this, or build upon it?





Thank you for
your time and
interest!

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