

Strategic Lean Project Report



For Reporting Period: January 1, 2016 through June 30, 2016

I. General Information:

Lead agency name: Department of Social and Health Services

Partner agencies: NA

Improvement project title: Improving the FamLink Pending Case Closure Process

Date improvement project was initiated: 2/29/2016

Project type: New Project

Project is directly connected to:

If applicable, specify the alignment:

Other

A waste reduction, quality improvement, and employee satisfaction effort.

Report reviewed and approved by: Shawn Prescher

II. Project Summary:

The Department of Social and Health Services Children's Administration decreased the amount of time between processing batches of child welfare cases ready for closure in its FamLink database from 24 hours to 15 minutes: a 96 percent improvement. More frequent processing of case closure submissions allows for timely identification and resolution of problems and improved accuracy of information in the database. Social Service Specialist time has been freed up for more consequential work, which has improved employee satisfaction.

III. Project Details:

Identify the problem: When a Social Service Specialist indicated in FamLink that a case was closed, the system identified the record as "pending case closure". Every 24 hours, the database ran batches of these entries through a script to determine if they qualified for closure. When the script identified issues, the pending case closure would fail, but the worker would not be automatically notified. This left unprocessed submissions in a queue, unless the worker returned to the FamLink record at a later date to confirm its status.

Problem statement: FamLink case closure took at least 24 hours, resulting in significant delays to finding and resolving unsuccessful case closure submissions. The target was real-time case closure by 7/9/2016.

Improvement description:

- Resolved FamLink case closure denials affecting more than 368 old cases.
- Reassigned two IT employees who had been devoting time to resolving old case closure errors.
- Improved identification of unsuccessful FamLink case closures. Denials now are automatically returned to the Social Service Specialist's primary database screen. Social Service Specialists then review the submission, fix the errors and resubmit.

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Improvement description:
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- Timelier resolution of unsuccessful FamLink case closures. Pending case closure batches run every 15 minutes, rather than once a day, reducing the likelihood that unsuccessful submissions will be left unresolved for long periods of time.
- Saves Social Service Specialists time by resolving database issues in the moment, rather than days later.
- Improved accuracy of FamLink records as closures are processed more timely.
- Improved staff morale through reducing closure time.

Customer involvement:

Seven employees representative of those affected by the batched case closure process were engaged in this problem solving-event. Following implementation of improvement ideas, a sampling of staff was surveyed regarding improvement efforts. Their responses were overwhelmingly positive and included additional suggestions for building on the project's success.

IV. Project Details:

Improved process as measured by: <i>(Click those that apply)</i>	Specific results achieved: <i>(Complete the narrative boxes below)</i>	Total Impact: <i>(Actuals; Current Reporting Period)</i>	Results status:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cost	Cost avoidance: two FTEs returned to their prior IT duties as did supervisors and Social Service Specialists supporting closure of historic denials.	Unknown	Final
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quality	More timely resolution of denied case closure submissions has improved the quality of some FamLink data, such as the number of cases assigned to each worker. The greatest impact is seen by Child Protective Services workers when children are re-referred. Information on whether a child has an active case is more accurate as pending case closures process quickly.	Unknown	Final
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Time		Unknown. Data not available. Different types of Social Service Specialist report significantly different time savings. For example, CPS notes the greatest	Final

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		impact due to the high number of case closures it processes.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employee Engagement	Qualitative data was collected from a sampling of Social Service Specialists and supervisors. Responses were overwhelmingly positive. Staff is thankful a barrier to providing timely and accurate case closure information has been removed and for the time saved by the new process.	Unknown.	Final

V. Contact information:

Name: Michael T. Smith

e-mail: SmithMT@dshs.wa.gov

Phone number: (360) 412-3913