

# Strategic Lean Project Report

## Certificates of Coverage Process Improvement

**Agency:** Health Care Authority

### Partners and Customers:

All Washington State public and school employees.

### Project Impact

The Health Care Authority is responsible for writing and editing the annual Uniform Medical Plan (UMP) Certificates of Coverage (COCs), which outline the terms of public employee and school employee medical and prescription drug coverage in the UMP plans. The team leading this effort was able to increase their workload by 155% while streamlining their work processes and providing more in-depth expertise.

### Project Summary

Every year, the Health Care Authority (HCA) is responsible for producing UMP COCs for each UMP plan. Prior to 2019, HCA staff, in collaboration with outside contractors, wrote, edited, and finalized four COC documents annually, each about 150 pages long.

In 2020, UMP plans were offered to school employees through HCA’s School Employees Benefits Board (SEBB) program. As a result, the number of UMP COCs that HCA had to review in 2019 for the 2020 benefit year increased from four to nine. In addition, the length of each COC document increased to 170 pages, representing a total workload increase of 155% with no additional communication staff available to assist.

During the previous yearly cycles in which COCs could be produced, edited or modified, HCA staff were already working at maximum capacity. With the added responsibility of more UMP plans, the staff would not have met the deadlines.

The HCA Continuous Improvement Office (CIO) facilitated a process improvement project that completely revamped the COC editing and reviewing system. As a first step, the project team developed a current state map to identify opportunities for improvement. Then the team analyzed the improvement opportunities, developed and implemented an action plan, and created a future state map.

A key component of the change was the decision to move all editing work to SharePoint. With the assistance of SharePoint experts from the Planning and Performance Division (PPD), the COC team set up a SharePoint site that allowed both HCA staff, stakeholders, and vendors to edit documents concurrently and track any changes. Prior to this change, documents were emailed out to those who needed to provide edits. This was a major change to the COC process and, once implemented, greatly increased the team’s efficiency.

The improvement resulted in the following changes from 2019 to 2020.

<b>2019 BENEFIT YEAR COC COMMUNICATION STAFF HOURS (3 staff total)</b>	<b>2020 BENEFIT YEAR COC COMMUNICATION STAFF HOURS (3 staff total)</b>
Version control & edits: 35 hours/COC	Version control & edits: 6 hours/COC
Reconciling edits & logging decisions: 30 hours/COC	Reconciling edits & logging decisions: 9 hours/COC
Other edits/design/formatting: 8 hours/COC	Other edits/design/formatting: 7 hours/COC
Combined work: 73 hours/COC	Combined work: 22 hours/COC
Total work for four COCs: 292 hours for all three staff combined.	Total work for nine COCs: 198 hours for all three staff combined.

The new process allowed the teams involved with drafting the COCs, including Portfolio Management, Clinical, Pharmacy, Legal, Contracts, Policy and Rules, and the Assistant Attorney General’s Office, to increase their efficiency as well. The workgroup estimated that these teams saved 96 hours of work for all nine COCs.

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While these time savings were crucial to success, some of the most important savings were more subjective. In the past, the communication staff focused on cutting and pasting edits and their work was mostly administrative in nature. After the improvements, they were able to undertake more substantive work and use their subject matter expertise as communication consultants to: help craft new content and plain-talk current content; focus on style, grammar, and formatting; and facilitate discussions between reviewers on content. Furthermore, with the time saved, the communication staff and other team members were able to take on other projects on very short notice, including reviewing twice the amount of open enrollment documents and assisting Regence in setting up a new UMP website. The team also had greater predictability in their workflow.

Most importantly, the COC team believes they had a positive cultural change, resulting in the work being more efficient overall. The team was so impressed with the results, that they are now considering ways to make their work even Leaner.

## Project Results



**Cost**

Double workload completed with no increase in cost.



*Number of COCs completed increased by 155% with no additional cost.*



**Quality**

Prevented a reduction of quality of COC edits.



*Output more than doubled; quality increased.*



**Time**

Average time to for COC writers to complete a COC decreased from 73 hours to 22 hours.



*Time required to complete a single COC decreased by over 300%, allowing staff to complete more COCs.*



**Customer Satisfaction**

Customers saw no negative affect.



*Doubling of workload accomplished with no negative effect on customers.*



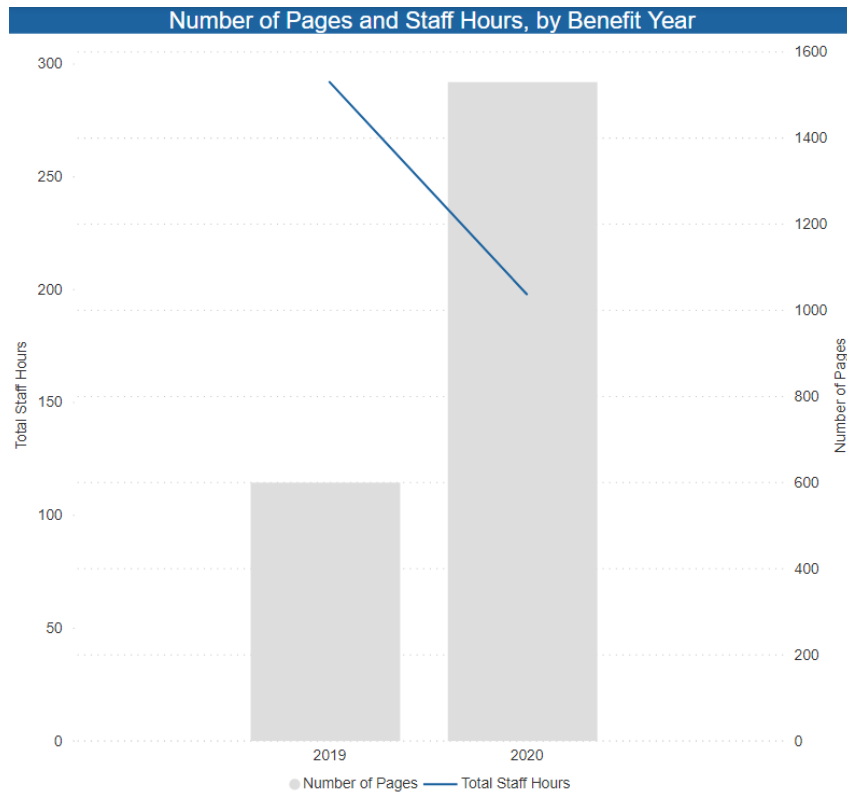
**Employee Engagement**

Staff moved from focusing on administrative-type work to subject matter work.



*Staff experienced a positive shift in culture of their work.*

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## Project Details

**Date improvement project was initiated: 11/28/2018**

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