

# PUBLIC HEALTH CONNECTION



## Quality Improvement

### The Crow and the Pitcher

Quality Improvement (QI) is a central focus at the Scott County Health Department. It was a very important part of our recent PHAB Accreditation. While Quality Improvement may seem complex, you can find the principles and use them in all kinds of situations. You can even see QI and how it can be used within fables and fairy tales!



Take the story of The Crow and the Pitcher from Aesop's Fables. Dying of thirst a crow sees a pitcher and lands near it. The pitcher only has a small amount of water, and the crow's beak isn't long enough to reach it. The crow desperately thinks and tries multiple ways to get to the water, but nothing worked. He even thought about breaking the pitcher. But then, the crow saw some small pebbles and started dropping them in the pitcher one by one. Soon, the water rose high enough for him to drink.

How does this story relate to Quality Improvement? Our department uses something called PDCA or Plan, Do, Check, Act as an outline for our QI. In the story, the crow also used PDCA by identifying his problem, brainstorming possible solutions, and testing solutions until he found one that was successful in reaching his goal. Necessity was and is the mother of invention.

A problem can look too difficult at first. It becomes easier to understand if you break that problem down with questions, causes and their effects. Then you can release your creativity to come up with possible solutions, trying out those that can address the problem. Later, you can check to see if any of the changes worked and are sustainable. That is QI at work!



### OUR MISSION:

The Scott County Health Department promotes, protects, and preserves health through leadership, services, education, and partnerships.

### OUR VISION:

Scott County—  
A safe and healthy  
community.



## SPECIAL EVENTS

- *Office Closed in Observation of Labor Day, Monday, September 2, 2019*
- *Scott County Board of Health Meeting, Scott County Administrative Center, 1st Floor Boardroom, 12:00 PM, Thursday, September 19, 2019.*

## Links

- For more on Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA): <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/resources/phgitoolbox/pdsa.html>
- Check out a crow solving the water problem: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGaUM\\_OngaY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGaUM_OngaY)
- To learn more about workforce development in Public Health, visit the Public Health Foundation's website: <http://www.phf.org/focusareas/workforcedevelopment/Pages/default.aspx>

# Workforce Development

## Focusing on Building Employee Skills and Knowledge for a Healthier Community

According to the Public Health Foundation (2019), "a well-prepared public health workforce is the foundation of a healthy community." As such, workforce development efforts that boost staff training and skills are a key priority for the Scott County Health Department (SCHD). SCHD's learning philosophy "is to support and retain a capable and qualified workforce." SCHD staff are surveyed every two years to determine the top areas for targeted public health training needs. A Workforce Development (WFD) committee (consisting of staff from all areas of SCHD) meets regularly to support and implement WFD planning and training goals. Staff are encouraged to: receive continuing education (a minimum of 12 hours each year), have mentorship relationships, job shadow, participate in professional organizations, and work on special projects. SCHD also supports the future of the public health workforce by partnering with colleges to offer interested students exposure to educational public health experiences. Ultimately, by focusing on WFD, SCHD can offer high quality services that better meet the public health needs of the Scott County community.



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