CQI BENEFITS PATIENTS IN COMMUNITY PHARMACIES
The College, as outlined in the Standards of Practice (SOP), sets clear expectations for community pharmacies to ensure that medication incidents and near misses – identified in their pharmacy and those shared from external sources – are used to strengthen the safety of the medication delivery system and improve patient outcomes. The application of a defined process for identifying and resolving systemic issues allows pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to share learnings with all staff members and observe that the changes implemented are effective.

Continuous quality improvement (CQI) consists of systematic and continuous actions that lead to measurable improvements in healthcare services and the health status of targeted patient groups. The release of the Institute of Medicine’s report “To Err is Human” in 2000 has resulted in increased attention to CQI in healthcare in North America. The report detailed the number of medical errors that occur in the healthcare system each year, and identified the need for increased efforts to create a safer healthcare delivery system.

To achieve safer care for patients, CQI must focus on systemic improvements and not just the tasks that individual practitioners perform. An organization must understand its own delivery system, and the key processes involved in providing services to patients to make improvements. Change can be affected by influencing either what is done or how it is done (i.e. when,
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1. PLAN
- Develop specific objectives for change
- Make predictions about what will happen and why (define your beliefs about the processes and operation of your pharmacy)
- Answer questions specifically and include a data collection plan
  i. Who will be responsible for implementing change and collecting data?
  ii. What is the change that will be implemented and what data will be collected?
  iii. When will implementation and data collection begin?
  iv. Where will implementation occur (i.e. physical location or point in workflow) and where will data be recorded?

2. DO
- Carry out the change
- Document the outcomes through data collection and subjective observations (both positive and negative)

3. STUDY
- Review data to see if changes are similar to your predictions
- Discuss what has been learned with all staff

4. ACT
- Depending on results, decide whether to adapt, adopt or abandon change
- Start preparing for the next PDSA

REFERENCES