

TITLE: THE TISSUE GROWTH COLLABORATIVE: INCREASING TISSUE APPROACHES USING THE FOCUS-PDSA MODEL

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BACKGROUND: Early in the 2020 COVID crisis, the call center contracted by Mississippi Organ Recovery Agency to conduct organ/tissue intake abruptly ended the contract with MORA. Seeing an opportunity to create an in-house call center, MORA leadership team acted and on September 1, 2020, the Donation Communication Center (DCC) opened. As the acute phase of the pandemic subsided, the number of calls to the DCC increased dramatically. Subjectively, growth felt exponential. Yet, by mid-year 2022 it was apparent that the number of tissue approaches was not keeping pace with the rest of MORA's growth.

METHODOLOGY: To address the deficit, we formed the Tissue Growth Collaborative. Guiding methodology was the FOCUS-PDSA, a model is widely used across disciplines to analyze and improve the quality of processes.

F-FIND A PROBLEM: The identified problem was the need to increase tissue approaches.

O-ORGANIZE A TEAM: A team of ≥ 12 individuals from among the Tissue Recovery Team and the DCC formed the Collaborative and agreed to meet weekly via TEAMS for solution-focused but open dialogue with an end goal of increasing tissue approaches.

C-CLARIFY THE PROBLEM: Revelations during this stage included misunderstandings and inconsistencies around why potential tissue cases were ineligible. This led to frustration and an unintended but costly tendency to over-screen and rule out unnecessarily. Thus, the core problem leading to too few tissue approaches was premature rule-outs.

U-UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM: We realized we had not developed an organized way to communicate changes in tissue acceptance criteria. The written Job Aid (JA-002) was no longer adequate to support DCC staff needs for information about rule in/rule out criteria. DCC staff did not believe they were adequately privy to processor acceptance information and therefore could not always make informed decisions about donor eligibility.

S-SELECT AN INTERVENTION: A Job Aid with new screening criteria will include supporting information about why rule outs for selected medical conditions exist. Tissue leads will make the latest criteria from processors accessible to call center staff responsible for screening cases. We will commit to fostering a sense of "Every tissue-

every time” and “Always seek to rule in” rather than worrying so much about what needed to be ruled out.

The team implemented this intervention through many iterations of the PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) from January 2022 through June 2024.

OUTCOMES:

Number of approaches in 2021 was use as a baseline against which to measure improvement.

Calendar year 2022 yielded a 12.4 % increase in number of tissue approaches made over 2021.

Calendar year 2023 yielded at 15.7% increase in number of tissue approaches made over 2022.

Calendar year 2022 yielded at 24.6% increase in number of tissue donors over 2021.

Calendar year 2023 yielded a 10.3% increase in number of tissue donors over 2022.

The Collaborative appreciated myriad qualitative outcomes, the most important of which was vastly improved communication and camaraderie between the Tissue and Donation Communication Center teams. The consistent upswing in numbers of tissue approaches continues in the first two quarters of 2024.

THE TISSUE GROWTH COLLABORATIVE: INCREASING TISSUE APPROACHES USING THE FOCUS-PDSA MODEL

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BACKGROUND

- On September 1, 2020, MORA changed from a contracted call center and opened its own Donation Communication Center (DCC). DCC staff members served as both intake coordinators and tissue requesters. As the COVID pandemic began to subside, the number of viable tissue intakes increased dramatically. Subjectively, growth felt exponential. Yet, by mid-year 2022 it was apparent that the number of tissue approaches was not keeping pace with the rest of MORA's growth.

METHODOLOGY

- To address the deficit, we formed the Tissue Growth Collaborative. Guiding methodology was the FOCUS-PDSA, a model is widely used across disciplines to analyze and improve the quality of processes.

FOCUS-PDSA

- **F-FIND A PROBLEM:** The identified problem was the need to increase tissue approaches.
- **O-ORGANIZE A TEAM:** A combined team of ≥12 individuals from the Tissue Recovery Team and the DCC staff formed the Tissue Growth Collaborative. They met weekly via TEAMS for open, solution-focused dialogue with an end goal of increasing tissue approaches.
- **C-CLARIFY THE PROBLEM:** The group uncovered misunderstandings and inconsistencies between the tissue team and the DCC staff about why potential tissue cases were ineligible. These issues had caused unexpressed frustrations and an unintended, but costly, tendency to over-screen and rule out unnecessarily. Thus, the core problem leading to too few tissue approaches was premature rule-outs.
- **U-UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM:** We realized we had not developed an organized way to communicate changes in tissue acceptance criteria. The written Job Aid (JA-002) was no longer adequate to support DCC staff needs for information about rule in/rule out criteria. DCC staff did not believe they were adequately privy to processor acceptance information and therefore could not always make informed decisions about donor eligibility.
- **S-SELECT AN INTERVENTION: (Plan)** A Job Aid with new screening criteria will include supporting information about why rule outs for selected medical conditions existed. Tissue leads will make the latest criteria from processors accessible to call center staff responsible for screening cases. We will commit to fostering a sense of "Every tissue-every time" and "Always seek to rule in" rather than focusing on what needed to be ruled out.
- The team implemented this intervention through many iterations of the **PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act)** from January 2022 through June 2024.

OUTCOMES

- Number of approaches in 2021 was use as a baseline against which to measure improvement.
- Calendar year 2022 yielded a **12.4 % increase** in number of tissue approaches over 2021.
- Calendar year 2023 yielded a 15.7% increase in of tissue approaches made over 2022.
- Calendar year 2022 yielded a 24.6% increase in number of tissue donors over 2021.
- Calendar year 2023 yielded a 10.3% increase in number of tissue donors over 2022.
- The consistent upswing in numbers of tissue approaches and tissue donors has continued in the first two quarters of 2024.
- Qualitatively:
 - Increased understanding by DCC regarding tissue rule-outs
 - List of automatic rule outs sent to tissue team when significant changes occur
 - Greater clarity among both teams about how to screen and rule in "special circumstance" cases
 - Program directors quicker response time to releasing updated tissue acceptance guidelines
 - Increased detail and clarity in online tissue screener
- MOST IMPORTANTLY, vastly improved trust, communication, and camaraderie between the Tissue and Donation Communication Center teams.

