

# Keeping up with COVID-19

## Webinar Series

### Q&A

June 18, 2020

## Applied Lean Six Sigma Methodology Can Help Hospitals Thrive Beyond COVID-19

**Q. Medicare Advantage plans may be at 100% risk by 2025 but I do not see hospitals having 100% risk contracts with those same plans. How can hospitals get comfortable with 100% risk contracts with MA plans using Six Sigma?**

**A.** Lean Six Sigma can help hospitals be more versatile and better positioned to transform into, and succeed with, value-driven programs.

**Q. What is the biggest challenge you have experienced applying Lean Six Sigma to health care?**

**A.** Successfully introducing LSS culture into an organization requires alignment at all levels. From the executive team understanding the value to the providers recognizing that “continuous improvement” is not a critique of their work. That is the biggest challenge. Education, training, and executive presentations will help you introduce LSS into your hospital and or health network. If you would like help with this, please feel welcome to reach out to Moshe Starkman at [mstarkman@nthrive.com](mailto:mstarkman@nthrive.com).

**Q. What lessons learned can you share with implementing Lean Six Sigma?**

**A.** The most significant “lesson learned” that we experienced is ensuring that everyone in the organization is trained, to an appropriate degree, on LSS principles. Even those who are not directly involved with any improvement projects should be aware of “value thinking” and the ideals of “waste elimination.”

In short, a robust training program will both create common “continuous improvement” language across your organization as well as give everyone a chance to offer ideas for improvement opportunities. I know one organization, for example, where an idea coming from someone working in the mailroom literally saved their organization upwards of a \$1,000,000 a year with their idea.

**Q. Since it is important to have successful buy-in at the executive level, how do you suggest getting our leadership team on board with exploring Lean Six Sigma?**

**A.** Demonstrate success and build confidence in the methodology. But note a natural pitfall. Choosing to do a large, “impressive” project with limited experience and or leadership buy-in is a very risky move and often doesn’t end well. On the other hand, starting with a small project that is approved by leadership as a pilot is a great way to introduce LSS.

Don’t be shy about it, cherry pick your first project! Choose a process where there is near universal agreement that it is problem-ridden and something that you believe the potential solution can be implemented by a relatively small, highly motivated team. nThrive CEO Joel Hackney, uses “Think Big. Start Small. Move Fast.” as a guiding model for successful execution.

**Think big**, which I can tell you are from your question.  
**Start small**, find a small project to demonstrate success.  
**Move fast**, start identifying areas for improvement today!