

WHA Quality & Patient Safety Story Submission Guide

Thank You for Your Interest in the Excellence in Quality and Patient Safety Award!

We're thrilled that you're considering sharing your quality improvement story with us.

Application Deadline:

Please complete the [WHA Quality & Patient Safety Story Submission Form – Fill out form](#) no later than **Tuesday, December 15, 2026, 5:00 p.m. (CT)**.



For questions or assistance, please reach out to quality@wha.org or megle@wha.org.

Award Information:

The Excellence in Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety Award recognizes hospitals that demonstrate exemplary improvements in quality, patient safety and outcomes.

Eligibility:

- Hospital must be a member of the Wisconsin Hospital Association
- Multiple applications per organization are welcomed

Note: Previous award winners are not excluded and can apply each year.

Award Categories: Four hospitals will be awarded based on these categories:

- 1 to 25 beds- Critical Access Hospital
- 26 to 99 beds
- 100+beds
- Specialty Hospital

Topic Examples:

- Patient and family engagement
- Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health
- Access to care
- Behavioral Health
- Maternal child health
- Transitions of Care across the continuum
- Engage Partners and community in care.
- Supporting Healthcare Worker resiliency

To learn more, please visit our Excellence in Quality and Patient Safety Awards webpage: <https://www.wha.org/Quality-Patient-Safety-Awards>.

Instructions for Completing the WHA Quality & Patient Safety Story Submission

This guide will directly follow the questions you are answering on the submission form.

Submission Tips

Please provide clear, concise, and specific responses that describe your improvement journey, the actions taken, and the impact achieved. Reviewers may not be familiar with your organization or care setting, so include enough context to help them understand the significance of your work. Whenever possible, support your narrative with data and measurable outcomes.

Before submitting, ensure your story:

- ✓ Clearly describes the problem and why it mattered
- ✓ Explains the improvement approach and interventions
- ✓ Demonstrates measurable results
- ✓ Includes supporting data or evidence
- ✓ Shares lessons learned and sustainability plans
- ✓ Stays within the word limits for each section

Remember that reviewers will evaluate both the quality of the improvement work and the clarity of the story being told. Focus on describing your improvement journey, the impact achieved, and what others can learn from your experience.

Section 1

Quality Story Title

Provide a brief, descriptive title that clearly reflects the focus of your improvement effort.

Tips:

- Keep the title concise and memorable.
- Highlight the primary topic, outcome, or innovation.
- Avoid unexplained acronyms.

Example: Reducing Emergency Department Sepsis Mortality Through Rapid Response Protocols

Section 2

Organization Information

Provide organization and contact information for the individual responsible for the submission.

Include:

- Organization name
- Primary contact name, title, and email address
- Optional project team members who contributed to the work

Tips:

- Ensure contact information is accurate.
- List key contributors if recognition of the broader team is desired.

Section 3

Identify the Need

Problem Statement (100 Words Maximum)

Clearly summarize the challenge, opportunity, or performance gap that prompted the improvement effort.

Focus on:

- What problem was identified?
- What outcome needed improvement?
- Why was action necessary?

Tip: Write this section as a concise problem statement rather than a detailed history.

Background and Description of the Problem (300 Words Maximum)

Provide context that helps reviewers understand the issue and its significance.

Describe:

- Why the issue was important to address
- Who was impacted (patients, staff, providers, community, etc.)
- Contributing factors or circumstances
- Baseline performance prior to implementation

Tips:

- Include relevant data or trends.
- Demonstrate why the issue mattered to your organization and stakeholders.
- Explain the urgency or opportunity for improvement.

Section 4

Improvement Approach

What Actions Were Taken? (500 Words Maximum)

Describe how your organization addressed the identified problem.

Include:

- Improvement methodologies used (PDSA, Lean, Six Sigma, Human-Centered Design, etc.)
- Interventions or changes implemented
- Stakeholders involved
- Timeline of major activities
- Challenges encountered and how they were addressed

Tips:

- Focus on what was actually done.
- Explain how interventions were selected.
- Highlight collaboration and leadership engagement when applicable.

Section 5

Outcomes and Impact

Results Achieved (500 Words Maximum)

Describe the measurable and qualitative outcomes resulting from the initiative.

Consider including:

- Clinical outcomes
- Patient experience outcomes
- Workforce well-being or staff outcomes
- Operational improvements
- Financial impact
- Community impact

Tips:

- Use specific metrics whenever possible.
- Compare results to baseline performance.
- Highlight meaningful changes and achievements.

Impact on the Organization (300 Words Maximum)

Describe how the initiative benefited patients, staff, providers, and the organization overall.

Consider:

- Improved care quality or patient safety
- Enhanced workforce engagement
- Increased efficiency or reliability
- Strengthened organizational culture
- Improved stakeholder relationships

Tip: Focus on the broader significance beyond the primary metric.

Section 6

Supporting Data

Data Summary Narrative (300 Words Maximum)

Summarize the key data that demonstrates the effectiveness of the intervention.

Include:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • What is being measured | • Time period represented |
| • Why the measure is important | • Baseline performance |

- Current performance
- Key trends or observed changes
- Whether goals were achieved
- Factors influencing results
- Additional benefits or unintended outcome

Tips:

- Reference any charts, graphs, dashboards, or supporting files submitted.
- Explain the story behind the data, not just the numbers.

Supporting Files

To support your narrative, please email data illustrating the results of implemented changes to quality@wha.org with a subject line that matches your Quality Story Title.

- Run charts
- Control charts
- Trend graphs
- Dashboards
- Before-and-after comparisons
- Infographics
- Photographs
- Posters
- Testimonials
- Presentation materials

Section 7

Lessons Learned

Key Insights Gained (300 Words Maximum)

Reflect on your organization's improvement journey.

Share:

- What worked well
- What surprised the team
- Challenges encountered
- Advice for others attempting similar work

Tips:

- Be honest about obstacles and adjustments made.
- Highlight practical lessons that others can apply.

Section 8

Sustainability Plan

Sustaining the Improvements (300 Words Maximum)

Describe how gains will be maintained over time.

Include:

- Ongoing monitoring plans
- Accountability structures
- Policies or standardized workflows
- Staff education and training
- Leadership oversight

Tip: Demonstrate how improvement has become part of normal operations.

Spread and Scalability (Optional)

Describe plans to expand the intervention to:

- Other departments
- Additional sites
- New patient populations
- Different care settings

Tips:

- Share what has been spread already, if applicable.
- Describe opportunities for broader adoption.

Section 9

Key Takeaways

Provide the **top 2-3 lessons, recommendations, or success factors** you would share with other healthcare organizations.

Strong responses often:

- Highlight practical recommendations.
- Describe critical success factors.
- Focus on lessons others can immediately apply.

Section 10

Additional Materials

Supporting materials help tell your story. These materials may include posters, presentations, testimonials, photographs, or other resources that support the narrative and demonstrate

results. Please email supporting materials to quality@wha.org with a subject line that matches your Quality Story Title.

Examples include:

- Posters
- Presentations
- Infographics
- Testimonials
- Photographs
- Dashboards
- Data visualizations
- Educational material

Tip: Select materials that best illustrate your process, results, and impact.

Thank You for Your Submission!

Thank you for taking the time to submit your quality story and for sharing your organization's improvement journey. We appreciate your commitment to advancing quality and patient safety. Each submission will be carefully reviewed and scored by a panel of reviewers.

Should additional information be needed, we will reach out directly. Organizations selected for recognition will be notified in early January 2027.

Save the Date!

We invite you to share your quality story at WHA's **2027 Advocacy Day Quality Showcase**, which will be held on **April 21, 2027, in the Capitol Rotunda in Madison, Wisconsin**. Please reserve the date on your calendar and watch for additional details and participation information, which will be shared in early 2027.

We hope you will join us in showcasing the outstanding quality improvement work taking place across Wisconsin healthcare organizations!