The newly formed Quality Improvement Team at Lincoln Trail District Health Department (LTDHD) identified implementing a “Going Green” Project as one area of improvement to address in developing a culture of Quality Improvement at LTDHD. The group decided to implement the project at the central office initially and then expand to the county offices throughout the district.

Team members were members of the Quality Improvement Team at the central office in addition to the purchasing agent for the district. Linda Sims, Director David Johnson, IT Pat Flanagan, Human Resources Wendy Keown, School Health Program Glenda Bastin, Director of Nursing Shelly Greenwell, HANDS Director Sara Jo Best, Environmental Director Beverly Embry, Home Health Director Lisa Pollock, Finance Director Steve Montgomery, Purchasing Agent Stefanie Goff, Project Facilitator

AIM Statement:
An opportunity exists to improve the internal and external environment by reducing the carbon footprint created by LTDHD, beginning with the implementation of a “Going Green” Project at LTDHD Central Office and ending with an agency-wide Going Green Initiative as evidenced by an Agency Going Green Policy adopted and enacted by the LTDHD Board of Health in November 2012. This project should improve the recycling efforts of materials, move towards a “less paper” work environment, and reduce the use of non-recyclable products in the agency. This project is important to LTDHD to decrease agency costs for paper, toner, waste pick up, decrease energy consumption and conserve natural resources to improve the environment.

1. Getting Started
The recycling bins are being used at the central office with staff volunteering to take them to local recycling centers. Through the elimination of Styrofoam cups and the change in size of dumpsters and frequency of pick up, cost savings have been demonstrated while helping the environment. Supervisors report an increase in use of electronic forms that have been distributed.

2. Assemble the Team
Team members were members of the Quality Improvement Team at the central office in addition to the purchasing agent for the district. Linda Sims, Director David Johnson, IT Pat Flanagan, Human Resources Wendy Keown, School Health Program Glenda Bastin, Director of Nursing Shelly Greenwell, HANDS Director Sara Jo Best, Environmental Director Beverly Embry, Home Health Director Lisa Pollock, Finance Director Steve Montgomery, Purchasing Agent Stefanie Goff, Project Facilitator

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3. Examine the Current Approach
Currently, the central office is recycling aluminum cans; however, there is no system in place for recycling plastic bottles. The soft drink and water machine in the building dispenses plastic bottles. These bottles have been going into the regular trash. It was also determined that most of the trash in the dumpster was cardboard boxes and not trash. The central office staff uses Styrofoam cups in the break room for coffee and other drinks. There is limited use of electronic forms and many staff have personal copiers.

4. Identify Potential Solutions
A tree diagram was created to generate an action plan for the “Going Green” Initiative.

5. Develop an Improvement Theory
If we educate staff on the benefits of recycling to the environment and the potential money saved, they will start recycling.

6. Test the Theory
Staff were informed and educated on the importance of the project through staff meetings and emails. Recycling bins labeled with Plastic Bottles and Aluminum Cans were placed in the employee kitchen and in the large meeting room. The current 8 cu. yd. dumpster was reduced to a 4 cu. yd dumpster and an 8 cu. yd. cardboard dumpster was placed on-site. The pick-up frequency has been reduced from once weekly to once every other week. Styrofoam cups have been removed from break room. Electronic forms for leave requests, purchase orders have been created and distributed to staff for use.

7. Check the Results
The project has now been implemented in the county offices. Based on the initial results, the Going Green Policy will be presented to the LTDHD BOH in November 2012 for adoption.

8. Standardize the Improvement or Develop New Theory
The project has now been implemented in the county offices. Based on the initial results, the Going Green Policy will be presented to the LTDHD BOH in November 2012 for adoption.

9. Establish Future Plans
Due to the positive feedback, a staff survey via survey monkey has been distributed to all staff to solicit more suggestions for recycling and/or saving energy and costs. These will be analyzed by the QI Team. Staff were given the option to put their name on the survey for recognition if their proposal was adopted.