Challenges and Expected Benefit from the Introduction of Public Health Quality Management System

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SUMMARY

In early 2007 the decision was made to start the project to implement quality systems according to ISO 9001:2008 at the Cantonal Institute for Public Health in Zenica. Gaining certification in June 2009 completed the first phase of project implementation. This initial stage, besides commitment to building quality, and the formation of the department for the quality lead by a quality manager, has marked the preparation of project documents: the Rules of quality, quality policy, objectives, functional and process models of the Institute, and procedures that detail the processes of the Institute. Also, the drafting of accreditation standards for public health in cooperation with the Federal Agency for Quality and Accreditation in Health Care was started. With these activities the Cantonal Institute for Public Health in Zenica will improve their work processes. With the acquired experience the Institute wants to help and encourage other National Institutes of Public Health on the implementation of quality systems. This would contribute to strengthening the field of public health in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Keywords: quality management, benefits, public health

1. PUBLIC HEALTH AND QUALITY

Given that the factor that affects all aspects of life–the preservation and promotion of public health as well as the extension and improvement of quality of life, represents a major public health strategic objective, and one of the ways to achieve this goal is the introduction of quality systems in health care. In addition, in the reform of the health care system in the Federation B&H, reform in the field of safety and quality of health care is one of the special imperatives for our country's integration into the European Union. Modern approach to quality is reflected in the constant effort to improve the use of research on the causes and places where discrepancies and errors occur and their elimination by preventive action, which prevents their formation. The basic concepts of quality are: Quality Control, Quality Assurance, Quality Improvement and Quality Management. (1)

1.1. Accreditation

Accreditation is a model of external evaluation of health care organizations on collegiate basis and a for-mal process in which one independent, typically non-governmental agency defines, evaluates and monitors achievement of published quality standards in health care organizations, in addition to the effects of the standards organization, recognized and/or recommended measures for quality improvement. (1)

With the exception of Great Britain, Europe is not yet established a framework for internal and external measurement, evaluation and improvement of public health activities, nor was accreditation scheme established institutions of public health. Because of that the accreditation standards for public health domain in our country, as well as in surrounding countries, does not exist. This is the reason why, wishing to begin the process of dealing with quality management at the Cantonal Institute for Public Health in Zenica opted for the well-known methods of implementation of quality systems (ISO).

The activities which include accreditation, which is planned, we decided to cooperate with the Agency for Quality and Accreditation in Health Care of F B&H (AQAH). Cooperation of Institute in Zenica and AQAH resulted in drafting public health accreditation standards based on the experiences of developed countries in dealing with this issue. These standards would be implemented at the Institute in Zenica, evaluated and subsequently, if necessary reprocessed, and implemented in practice. Activities to be conducted with the consent of the other Institutes in FB&H. In order to implement these standards, it is necessary to fulfill all previous preconditions that are ones relating to harmonization with existing or future legislation.

Draft of accreditation standards of public health

The first draft of accreditation standards for cantonal institutes of public health relies on the ten essential services of so called *new public health*, which includes the following chapters:

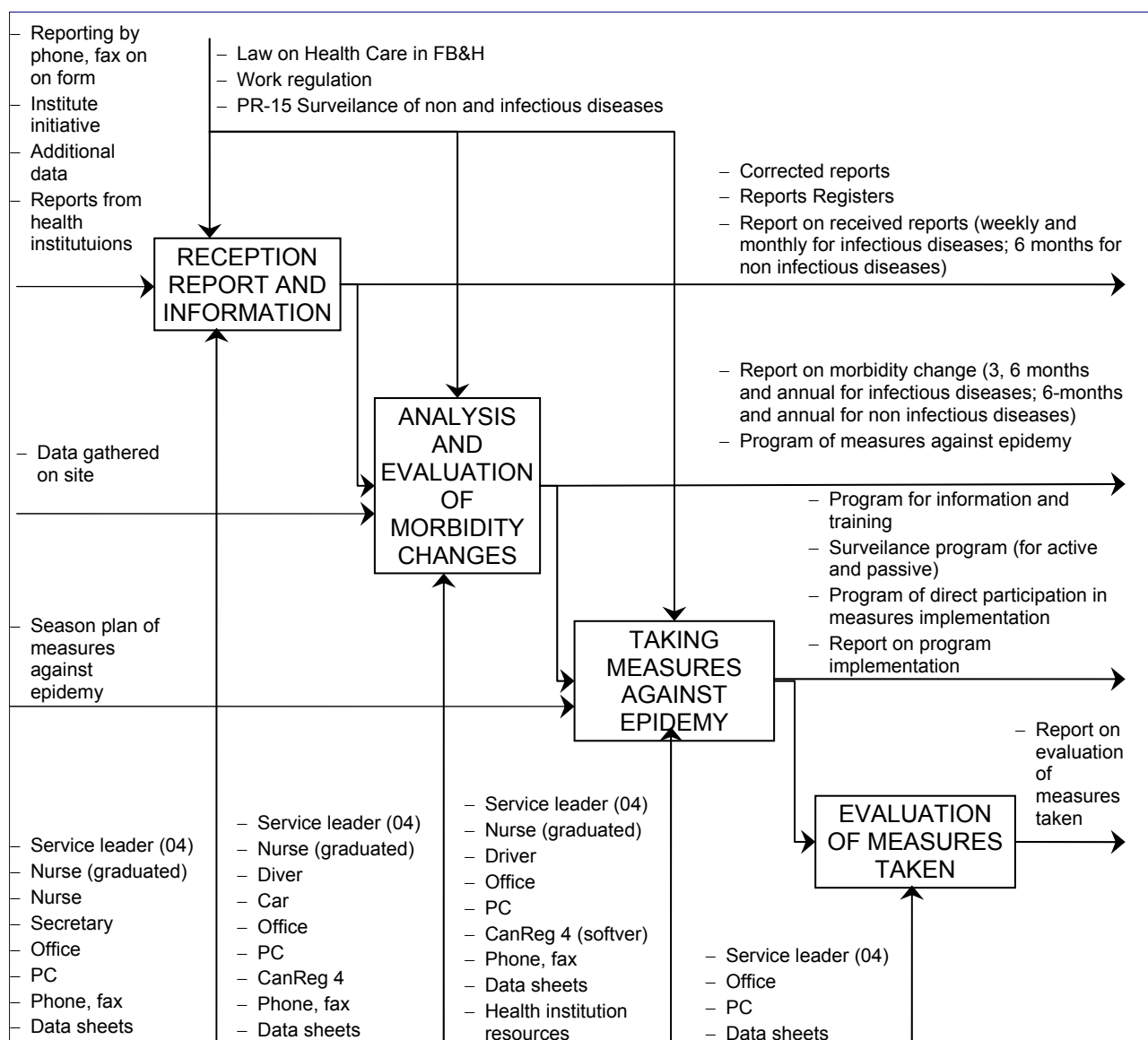- Monitoring the health of the community in order to assess health problems;

Figure 1. Sub processes of the process, "Control of infectious and non infectious diseases"

- Research and diagnosis of health problems and health risks in the community;
- Informing, educating and strengthening the role of user protection in health issues;
- Start of partnership in identifying and solving health problems in the community;
- Development of policies and plans in addressing community health problems;
- The application of laws and regulations in providing health protection and safety;
- Connecting people to access essential health services and the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable;
- Insurance of professional and trained workforce for public health;
- Evaluation of the effectiveness, accessibility and quality of personal and population health services;
- Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems. (4)

1.2. Certification

Certification is a process of external quality assessment of an organization in relation to ISO standards. Established ISO 9000 series is a model for quality management system of organizations, generally accepted throughout the world, which offers the possibility of building a successful integrated system of quality management organization, quality processes, product quality, and results in continuous improvement (5).

2. INTRODUCTION OF SYSTEM FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACCORDING TO STANDARD ISO 9001:2008 AT THE CANTONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH ZENICA

Development is inevitable, and there is no development without change. If the change in an organization is not going to take place under control then they are chaotic. Because of that we want to manage change. (3) At the
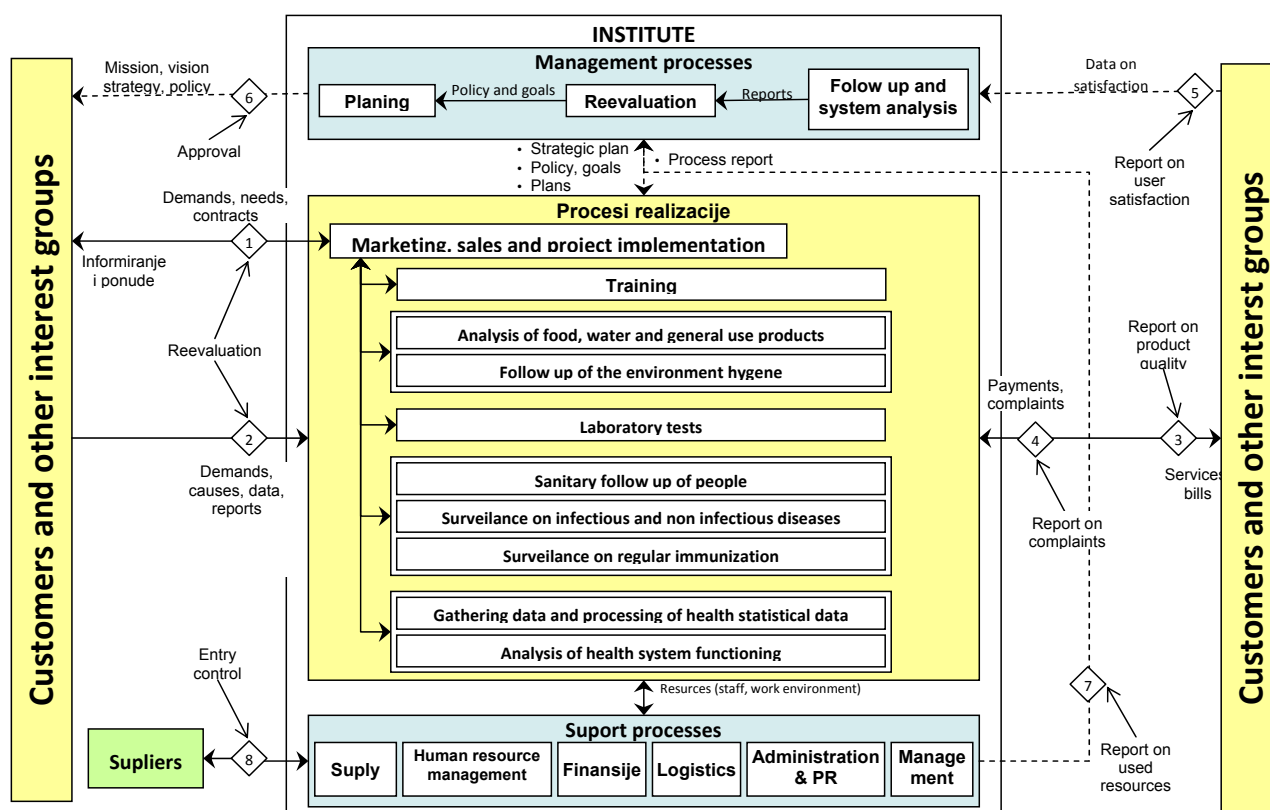
Figure 2. Process model-Relational map of the Institute according to ISO 9001:2008 standard.

Cantonal Institute for Public Health Zenica, we decided to use (i) for certification. The project began by decision to introduce quality management systems in early 2007 with the completed external audit or the awarding of the certificate EN ISO 9001:2008 in June 2009. This method, which is already known, is implemented as successfully as in the economy and in health, and provides a good basis for the planned accreditation of the Institute.

The reasons why the management of the Institute opted for an active approach to improving quality lies in the fact that the current situation could be characterized as a practice that does not work in an optimal way. Established practice includes traditional approach in relation to the execution of tasks that do not prefer responsibility (1), and oppose to the system improvements. Because of that the project was not easy to implement. After an initial phase, to raise awareness of the employees in terms of looking at the benefits of dealing with quality, followed by a second, more demanding and difficult phase, building the so-called *"Quality culture"*.

Building a new culture of quality require a schedule of responsibilities regarding implementation of quality throughout the organization. The organizational culture includes a set of opinions, beliefs and norms of behavior within the group. (2) The task of management was to convince employees to the benefit of leaving the steady old determination for a new, more efficient way of performing work tasks and activities. Resistance to change can be defined as any opposition to change the existing situation and it is a normal reaction to change. The greater the change is in relation to the current situation, it will be more resistance. (2) In overcoming resistance to change,

employees are familiar with the essence and purpose of the changes which fostered their participation, inclusion at all levels, particularly the inclusion in the development of procedures, given the fact that they are thoroughly familiar with the work process. To break prejudice necessary is building of a positive attitude towards the system of quality and readiness for the implementation process by the employees, in addition to quality manager, to whom this is a basic task, active participation took the management of the Institute, without whose participation the project certainly will not give the desired result.

Invested efforts resulted in the creation of preconditions for successful implementation of the project. Appointed is a manager of quality, formed a team for quality, made education and training of employees for the quality system, favored a team approach–involving all employees in the project of introducing the quality system. In addition to the staff of the Institute, who provided the largest contribution to the success of the project certainly contributed external collaborators, who in their work has dealt with the planning and implementation of quality systems primarily emphasizing the benefits of potentiating and the introduction of quality systems, as well as direct participation in the development and implementation of project documentation.

Benefits, which we achieved with introduction of quality systems are related to increased customer satisfaction, achieving better business results, reduce the appearance of discrepancies, establishing the necessary resources (personnel, equipment, facilities, materials, organizational structure, finances etc.), timely provision, development and resources for quality improvement, achievement of

the competence of employees to perform tasks, satisfaction in work, and a number of preventive measures in relation to corrections.

2.1. Documenting the quality management system according to ISO 9001:2008 standard

The basis of the ISO quality approach lies in the fact that the system is documented and can be proved only if it appears in the documented form! (5) In the documentation of quality management systems according to ISO 9001:2008, the Cantonal Institute for Public Health in Zenica, made the following documents: Rules of quality, Quality Policy, Objectives, Functional and Process model of the Institute. Made the following procedures: document management, records management, planning, review, internal audit, control of product, corrective and preventive action, Marketing and sales, the realization of the project, training, analysis of food, water and items of general use, the sanitary-hygienic monitoring state of the environment, laboratory diagnostics, sanitary control of the people, control of infectious and non infectious diseases (shown in shorter form with the relevant scheme), Monitoring of compulsory immunization, collection and processing of health statistical data, analysis of the functioning of health systems, procurement and storage, Management of Human Resources, Finance, Logistics, Administration and Public Relations (PR).

In the appendix, we provide one of the accompanying schemes of created procedures and Process model-relational map of the Institute according to ISO 9001:2008.

PROCEDURE: „CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS AND NON INFECTIOUS DISEASES"

This procedure describes and standardizes the implementation of the process, "Control of infectious and non infectious diseases in the Cantonal Institute for Public Health Zenica.

The Director is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the process. Chief of Epidemiology service is responsible for planning, implementation and process improvement and coordination of work with participants in the process from other organizational units of the Institute. All employees in the process are responsible for the execution of activities in the process in accordance with this procedure.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The introduction of quality systems is a process that is followed by a number of resistances, as goes into all segments of the health sector. Reform in this area requires a radical change in previous ways of thinking and behavior of health professionals. Despite the difficulties listed, an alternative to dealing with the quality does not exist; hence the aim of this paper is to point out the crucial importance of implementing systems to improve the quality of public health and healthcare in general. We point to its basic elements: developing a quality culture as a necessary base for the implementation of quality systems, planning and implementing systems to improve quality, and continuously evaluation and improvement of quality. Described activities on the implementation of quality systems in the Cantonal Institute for Public Health in Zenica should with arguments encourage the determination of other institutes in dealing with quality. In addition to the Institute of Public Health, organized in dealing with the quality should be encouraged other health institutions in B&H.

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