

How Do I Evaluate Workflow?

How do I evaluate workflow?

- The Workflow Assessment for Health IT Toolkit provides access to dozens of different tools that can be used.
- Here we walk you through the *most common way* to evaluate your workflow – ***flowcharting***.
- At the end of this presentation, you will be able to start evaluating your workflow.

Goals of a flowchart

- To show how processes *really* happen, as opposed to how they are supposed to happen or how we expect they happen.
- To understand what contributes to different types of flows for the same processes.
- To find ways to improve the flows.
- To identify ways that health IT will affect workflows.

Five steps

- Step 1: Decide what processes to examine
- Step 2: Create a preliminary flowchart
- Step 3: Add detail to the flowchart
- Step 4: Determine who you need to observe and interview
- Step 5: Do the observations and interviews

Step 1: Select processes

- Decide what process or processes will be the subject of the evaluation.

Step 1: Select processes (cont.)

Examples of clinic workflows

Those with * come from : http://healthit.ahrq.gov/portal/server.pt/document/897942/tool-know_your_processes.pdf

- Answering Phones*
 - Flows for different types of phone calls
- Appointment System*
 - Flows for new vs. existing vs. continuity vs. non-continuity patients
- Messaging*
 - To different types of staff and for different reasons
- Scheduling Procedures*
 - Flows for new vs. existing vs. continuity vs. non-continuity patients
- Order Diagnostic Testing*
 - Flows for different kinds of tests
- Reporting Diagnostic Test Results*
 - Flows for different kinds of tests or normal vs. abnormal
- Ordering medications, including
 - Prescription Renewal*
- Making Referrals*
- Billing/Coding*
- New Patient Work-ups*
- Chronic Disease Management*
- Receiving and processing patient information from outside providers
- Confirming insurance or pay status

Step 1: Select processes (cont.)

- Because implementing health IT will affect ALL of your processes, we recommend you select several processes to assess.
- We highly recommend that a team make the decision. The team should include at least:
 - A physician
 - A patient care associate, such as the RN or MA
 - Clinic manager
 - Administrative staff involved in billing, coding and payment
 - Someone who has analyzed workflow before

Step 2: Create preliminary flowchart

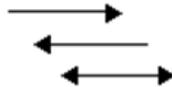
- The purpose of the preliminary flowchart is to identify the steps and activities involved in the process.
- This helps you determine where the process begins and ends.
- After creating this chart, you can better decide who else should be represented on the analysis team.

Step 2: Flowchart symbols

Create these by hand or with software.



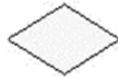
A rounded rectangle is used at the beginning of a process, with the word “start” inside and at the end of a process with word “end” inside. It is not used for any other reason.



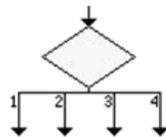
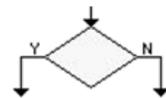
Arrows represent direction and sequence between process steps.



Put a **single** step inside of a rectangle. You should not put more than one step in a rectangle.



Use a diamond for all decision points or questions. Place the question or decision inside of the diamond.



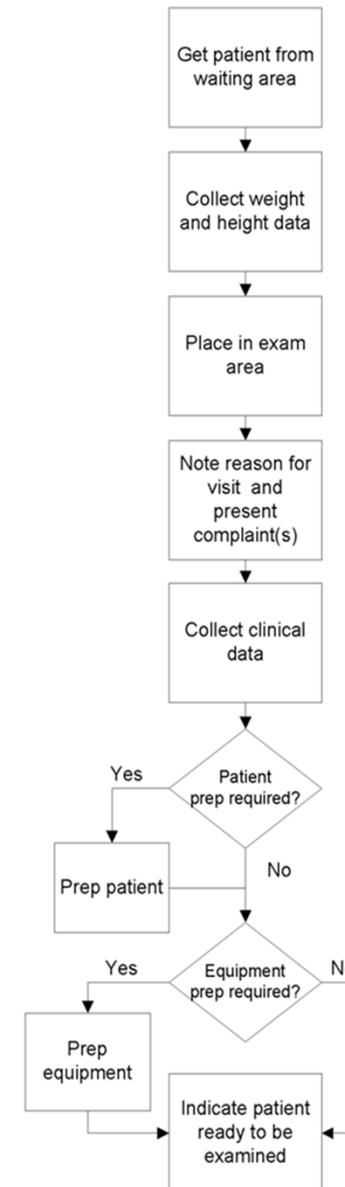
From the diamond, you can branch in multiple ways, depending on the nature of the decision or question.



Use a circle to indicate that you need to “go to” another page. Inside of the circle, write, for example, “go to page 4”. The circle indicates that you are needing to connect a flowchart on one page to where it continues someplace else.

Flowcharting Example: Rooming a Patient

- The process begins when the MA gets the patient from the waiting area; this is represented by a rectangle.
- The following steps of the process are all represented by rectangles: collect weight and height data, place patient in exam area, note reason for visit and present complaint(s), and collect clinical data.
- Then, a question about whether patient preparation is required is represented by a diamond.
 - If yes, the flowchart continues with patient preparation and then goes on to the next question.
 - If not, the flowchart skips to the next question.
- The next question is about whether equipment is available.
 - If yes, the flowchart continues with equipment preparation and then goes on to the final process step.
 - If not, the flowchart skips to the final process step.
- The final step of the process is to inform the provider that the patient is ready to be seen; this step is also represented by a rectangle.



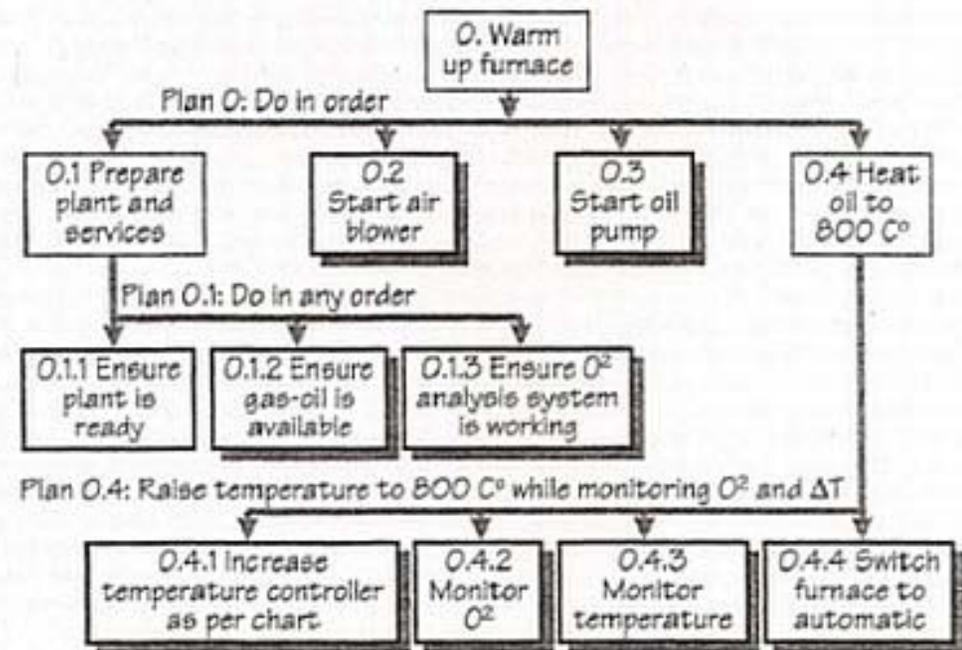
Step 2: Create preliminary flowchart (cont.)

- Use a single numbering system for all of your processes and sub-processes.
- This numbering system will help you keep track of your processes and easily identify the steps you are referring to in other documents you create.

Step 2: Create preliminary flowchart (cont.)

Example of numbering:

- Each major step is numbered
 - For example “0”
- Each sub-step is numbered based on the steps above it.
 - For example, “0.1.3” follows “0.1.”



Step 3: Add detail to flowchart

- Add detail to the high-level flowchart you have created, with the help of the analysis team.
- For each step or decision point in the process, identify:
 - Who does this step? (it can be several people and it may depend on other factors)
 - What technology is used?
 - What policies and rules are involved in determining how, when, why or where the step is executed?
 - What supervision is involved in the step?
 - What environmental factors (e.g. lighting, noise, vibration) might affect the step or how it is executed?
 - What other people might influence the execution of this step or determine whether the step takes place?
 - What information is needed for the execution of this step?

Step 3: Add detail (cont.)

- The additional information can be collected in an Excel spreadsheet that lists the steps by their assigned number and title. (See example below.)
- The additional information is critical because it helps you to understand everything involved in the process, and therefore *how those things will be affected* by a health IT implementation or other change.

Step #	Title	People	Technology	Policies	Supervision	Environment	Others	Information	what might change?
1.1.1	write medication order	MD	Script pad	FDA	NA	Something to write on	NA	What medication to order, the dose, regimen	If we implement e-prescribing, we'll have to decide on desktop or laptops. We'll need to make sure we have room in the exam rooms. We'll now need to know the patients pharmacy.....

Step 3: Add detail (cont.)

- You can also start thinking about how each step might change with health IT and how you would like each step to change.
- Add these statements to your Excel document.

Step 4: Select people to observe and interview

- Decide who on your team will do the observations and interviews.
- Use the Excel document to identify all of the people involved in the process, including all of the steps.
 - If you are studying something that involves the patient chart, you may need to observe and interview staff in medical records.
 - If you are studying a process that involves payment, you may need to study the receptionists entering insurance information, clinicians doing coding, coders, and billing staff.

Step 5: Observations and interviews

- Your flowchart at this point is the “best guess” of your team.
- To really determine the details, you will need to observe and interview the people doing the process.

Step 5: Observations

- Observations
 - Identify the major ways the process may vary.
 - Observe 3-5 episodes of the process for *each* major way it could vary.
 - Record the details of what you see happening
 - What questions are asked?
 - What data are entered?
 - Where are they entered?
 - By who? What happens next?

Step 5: What do you mean by “major ways the process may vary”?

- Examples

- The process of patient registration may vary depending on whether it is a new patient or not.
 - In that case, you’d want to observe registration of 3-5 new patients and 3-5 regular patients
- Patient intake by the RN or MA may vary depending on whether the patient is a continuity or non-continuity patient and whether the patient is there for a procedure or evaluation.

Step 5: Interviews

- To learn the details of the process you are studying, ask the people who contribute to, or are affected by, the process.
- The same questions used to guide the creation of the initial flowchart can be used now during interviews.

Step 5: Observations and interviews (cont.)

- Using your notes from the observations and interviews, update the initial flowchart by adding the steps and decisions you did not know about before.

Conclusion

- Your initial flowchart will likely look like the figure on the left.
- After observations and interviews, it will resemble the figure on the right.

