We recommend you use SMART goals and the PDSA cycle to make your QI project more effective. Before you begin, take time to consider the following:

- What available data sources are available? EMR (both clinical and schedule data), Netcare, PIN, vaccine registry, Alberta Health Services dashboard, feedback from peers/learners/patients, prescribing data through MD Snapshot-Prescribing, Health Quality Council of Alberta's Primary Healthcare Panel Reports, Canadian Primary Care Sentinel Surveillance Network
- What is the gap or opportunity?
- Who is your team? Identify your team which includes local members such as MOAs (Medical Office Assistants) and distributed members such as community pharmacists.
- What resources are available to support you in making a change, from Choosing Wisely Canada, your Primary Care Network or your professional association, to name just a few?

1. **SMART goals are Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely.** Create a SMART goal which will move you towards closing the gap. Once you have a SMART goal, you can write out your Action Plan using the template provided or another QI Action Plan template.

Specific	Be clear, precise and sensible
Measureable	What evidence will determine your progress? Progress should be easy to track, meaningful and motivating
Achievable	Attainable
Relevant	Align with your long-term objectives
Timely	Be realistic. Defined start and end date

2. **PDSA cycle – Plan-Do-Study-Act** attempts to capture the iterative nature of QI.

Plan	Write an action plan
Do	Start doing the work
Study	Pause at regular intervals to study your data
Act	Act on the results by modifying your action plan
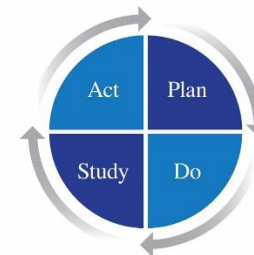
3. **The action plan** will ask you to think about the problem. Try to anticipate barriers and write down how you will take action towards your SMART goal. Try to start the 'Do' portion as soon as possible after making your plan. The Action Plan will also ask how you will monitor your progress.

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Action Plan Template

Identify up to three opportunities for improvement that would be beneficial to you or your group.

	Goal
1. What is the opportunity or gap?	
2. What is your SMART goal?	
3. Who will lead the change?	
4. Who will help implement the change and how will they need help?	
5. How will you identify the root causes of the issue?	
6. Considering root causes, what is a potential intervention which may be tested to improve the challenge you are facing?	
7. What resources are needed?	
8. What is the timeline?	
9. What barriers may compromise success?	
10. What strategies will you employ to mitigate the barriers identified?	
11. How will achieving the goal be identified or measured?	
12. What strategies will you employ to evaluate and sustain the change?	