

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT IS 2002 STERLING AWARD WINNER

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Miami, Florida

The Miami-Dade County Health Department (MDCHD) is the largest of 67 County Health Departments within the state under the Florida Department of Health. Although the MDCHD dates back to the 1940s, the current organizational structure dates to 1997 when the Legislature created the Department of Health and the Department of Children and Families from the former Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services. MDCHD provides services to the county's 2.2 million residents and over 12 million annual visitors and is responsible for assessing, maintaining, and improving health and safety within the county.



Due to the size, demographics, and diversity of Miami-Dade County, the eighth largest in the United States, Miami-Dade County is generally categorized with the nation's largest cities in terms of public health issues. MDCHD is at the forefront of public health departments by quickly responding to and anticipating changes taking place in the public health arena on a national and international level. Examples of current challenges include bioterrorism, identification and treatment of emerging diseases due to immigration and drug resistance, and the development of a Public Health Institute to further public/private community partnerships and public health research.

In 1997 the Competitive Technologies, Inc. (CTi) consulting team, led by Bob Seemer, conducted a Florida Sterling and Malcolm Baldrige based assessment and developed an action plan to significantly improve MDCHD performance as measured by the Key Performance Indicators of the Executive Director's Scorecard. Elements of the CTi Success Plan included:

1. A Strategic Plan to position MDCHD to be a leader in performance excellence among all Florida County Health Departments. The CTi Golden Thread process was used to connect every employee to strategic goals.
2. Process management to define and systematically improve all key processes.
3. Six sigma training to include the use of statistical tools and CTi's Quality Improvement and Control (QIC) Storyboard methodology.
4. Systematic management reviews, based on CTi's QIC Story to evaluate progress and recognize success.

Following is a summary of the MDCHD management system.

MDCHD established its original mission statement, vision, and values in 1997 upon the restructuring of the department and re-examines them each year. The organizational culture of the MDCHD is as old as the concept of community public health: employees working together in the spirit of public service to prevent and resolve any of the significant health concerns that may impact the community.

Miami-Dade County Health Department's Mission:
A Healthy Community is the Heart of Public Health.

Miami-Dade County Health Department's Vision:

To Be A World-Class Public Health System.

Miami-Dade County Health Department's Values:

Creativity, Can-do Attitude, Compassion, Competency, Customer/Community Focus.

Miami-Dade County Health Department's Strategic Priorities:

- Prevention
- Return on Investment
- Customer-Driven Excellence
- Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response

In order to best achieve its mission and vision, the organization is divided into a number of program areas that focus on the surveillance, prevention, detection, and treatment of the most significant health and environmental issues within the county. Major services provided by the MDCHD include:

- **Disease Control and Prevention**
 - HIV/AIDS Prevention
 - Immunization
 - Sexually Transmitted Diseases Prevention
 - Tuberculosis Control
 - Epidemiology (Communicable Disease Control, Prevention, and Surveillance)
 - Health Promotion
- **Health Services to Targeted Populations**
 - School Health
 - Women's Health Services
 - Healthy Start (pregnant women; children ages 0-3)
 - Special Supplemental
 - Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
 - Tobacco Prevention
 - Refugee Health
- **Environmental Health Services**
- **Public Health Preparedness**
 - Emergency/Disaster Response
 - Special Needs Evacuation Centers
 - Bioterrorism Response

The MDCHD has utilized the Sterling Criteria for Organizational Performance Excellence as the basic framework of its quality improvement initiative since 1997. The MDCHD is in the advanced stages of building a fact-based performance improvement system and has made considerable progress in the areas of Strategic Planning, Customer Focus, and Human Resource Focus. The Sterling model has been invaluable in assisting the MDCHD on its quality journey and will continue to do so in the future.

LEADERSHIP:

MDCHD has moved from a traditional government bureaucratic organization to a more flattened organization that utilizes a team-based leadership structure. Within the leadership structure are three leadership teams – Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Expanded Leadership Team (ELT) and Leadership Team (LT). The SLT is responsible for setting direction, executing the mission and making high-level policy decisions for the MDCHD. Recent reorganization of core and support programs under respective Directors promotes cross-functional teamwork, thus eliminating programmatic “silos.” Monthly business reviews are conducted to ensure the MDCHD is meeting local and state strategic priorities. Quarterly business reviews are held with all leadership level staff and an Annual Employee Education Conference is held with all employees. The Director holds quarterly Town Hall meetings open to all employees.

STRATEGIC PLANNING:

MDCHD’s annual strategic planning process is designed to align MDCHD’s Strategic Priorities with those of the State Department of Health, coupled with needs, expectations and recommendations of various customer and stakeholder groups. It also ensures the alignment of services, resources, and capabilities with its vision and mission statements to ensure future success. Performance indicators and action plans are established for each Strategic Priority. Monthly performance reviews of program performance as it aligns with the Strategic Priorities are held at the Senior Leadership Level. A Senior Leader is assigned the role of “Champion” for each strategic priority. The MDCHD has identified four peer counties within Florida and five nationally for benchmark comparisons with its performance indicators. MDCHD’s performance is targeted to meet or exceed the performance of other comparable providers. In addition, national benchmarks are set by the Centers for Disease Control’s Healthy People 2010.

CUSTOMER AND MARKET FOCUS:

Customers of the MDCHD fall into two categories: the public at large and direct service recipients of the MDCHD. Customer requirements and service needs are determined by state statutory mandates as well as by the MDCHD’s approach to targeting services to those with the greatest need based on statistical data. MDCHD employs various listening and learning approaches to understand customer needs. This includes an annual external customer satisfaction survey conducted in three languages, random client interviews and comment cards, an automated Client Complaint/Inquiry System, a website that allows the general public to submit inquiries or comments, and input from advocacy groups. Employee quality teams are often utilized to respond to customer issues identified through these techniques.

INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS:

MDCHD participates in statewide outcome measures and criteria established by the federal government to assess performance. These measures link either to strategic priorities or are drivers for core processes. Data used to drive performance improvement include key health indicators such as low birth weight infants, teenage pregnancy and reportable diseases. An internal database has been established to track these indicators. Statistical analysis is used to track and analyze epidemiological data throughout the county’s 72 zip code areas. MDCHD programs are linked through a local area network and a state intranet system.

HUMAN RESOURCE FOCUS:

MDCHD promotes individual initiative, innovation, and flexibility among employees. Employee quality teams are utilized as a major strategy for involving employees in decision-making. Quality teams are formed to address issues of concern to clients and employees and all team members to resolve problems utilizing a structured problem solving methodology. Various communication strategies are used with staff including multi-level business review meetings, quarterly town hall meetings, employee newsletters, and an annual employee-driven educational conference. The key factors that affect employee satisfaction and motivation are determined and addressed through an annual employee satisfaction survey, which has shown improvement each year.

PROCESS MANAGEMENT:

The MDCHD utilizes a systematic process to develop new services or improvement activities to enhance customer satisfaction and service. Process and outcome measures are utilized to manage core and support processes. MDCHD has invested in training its workforce in process management techniques in order to improve outcomes and achieve greater efficiencies.

BUSINESS RESULTS:

MDCHD is proud of its achievements in key areas that impact the health of Miami-Dade County residents. For example, immunization rates for children under age two are among the highest in the country, the infant mortality rate has been reduced significantly, more people are living past age seventy-five, and fewer high school students are using tobacco. These accomplishments have been made while attaining a 96% customer satisfaction rating and an employee opinion rating that has increased from 48 to 62% in five years. There are many opportunities and challenges that confront the MDCHD in achieving its mission of a healthy community. MDCHD is constantly raising the bar by setting high standards for excellence and investing in training its workforce.

The entire staff of the MDCHD is honored to have won the recognition of the 2002 Governor's Sterling Award for Performance Excellence. We look forward to the opportunity to share our knowledge and experience with other organizations striving to improve their organizational performance.

For More Information, Contact:

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