

# **Best Practices for Enhancing Access to Services: A Process Benchmarking Exercise**



**2011 SAAS National Conference/  
NIATx Summit**

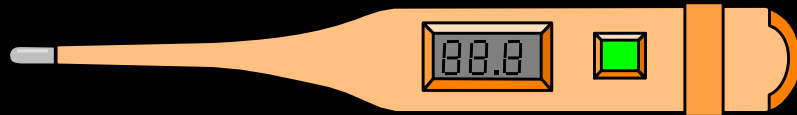
**Paul M. Lefkovitz, Ph.D.**

**July 13, 2011**

# *Why Benchmark?*

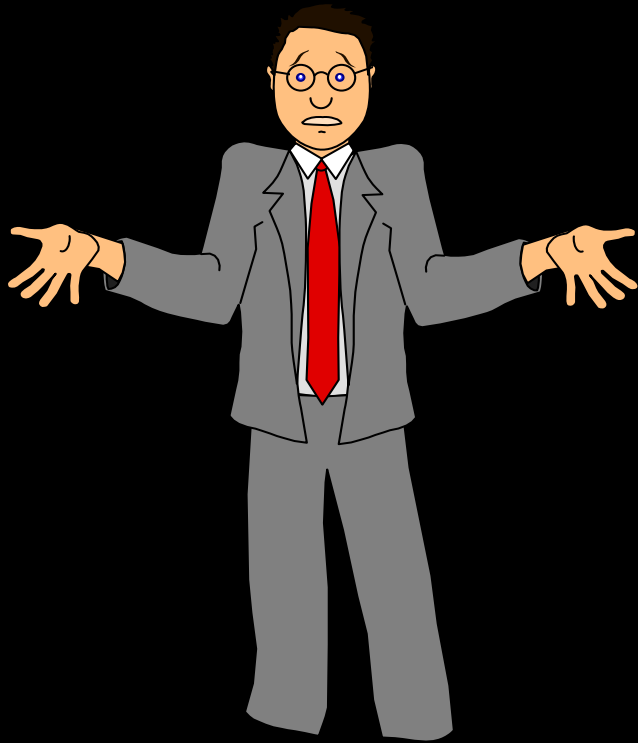
- Benchmarking commences with performance measurement
- Operational, financial, effectiveness measures
- How helpful is performance data?
- Does performance data shape organizational vision?
- Does performance data drive organizational decision-making?

# *The Limitations of Performance Data*



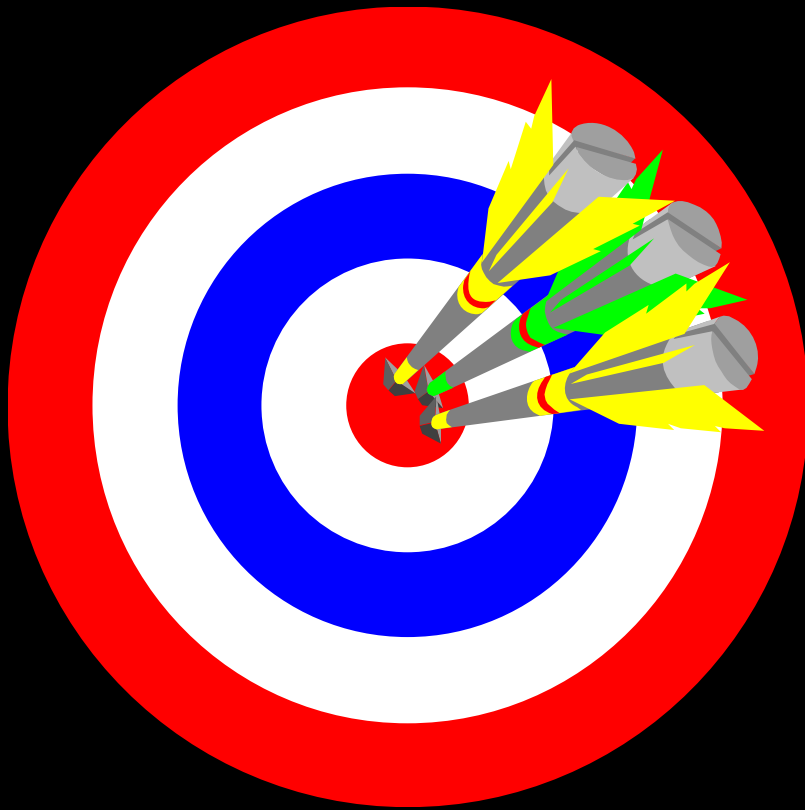
- A thermometer reading would be of no value as a measure of your health...
- *If you didn't know that 98.6 is the “average” temperature!*

# *The Limitations of Data in Your Organization*



- Similarly, knowing that your no-show rate is 17% is of limited value in evaluating the health of your organization...*if you don't know how others are performing*

# *The Role of Benchmarking*



- Benchmarks provide the vital external context for understanding your measured organizational performance

# ***Benchmarking for Organizational Excellence in Addiction Treatment***



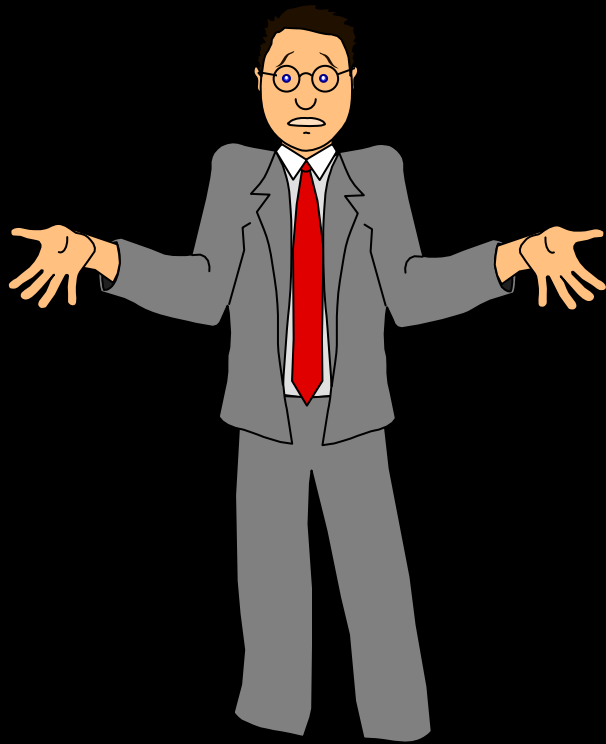
- National benchmarking initiative sponsored by SAAS, NIATx and Behavioral Pathway Systems
- Provides individualized comparative clinical, operational, and financial benchmarking data to participating organizations
- Provides necessary context for understanding measured performance

# *Benchmarking*



- Benchmarking data is valuable in suggesting what areas would benefit from improvement
- BUT.....

# Improve? How?



- It does not suggest how to improve
- Process benchmarking identifies potential best practices that can improve performance

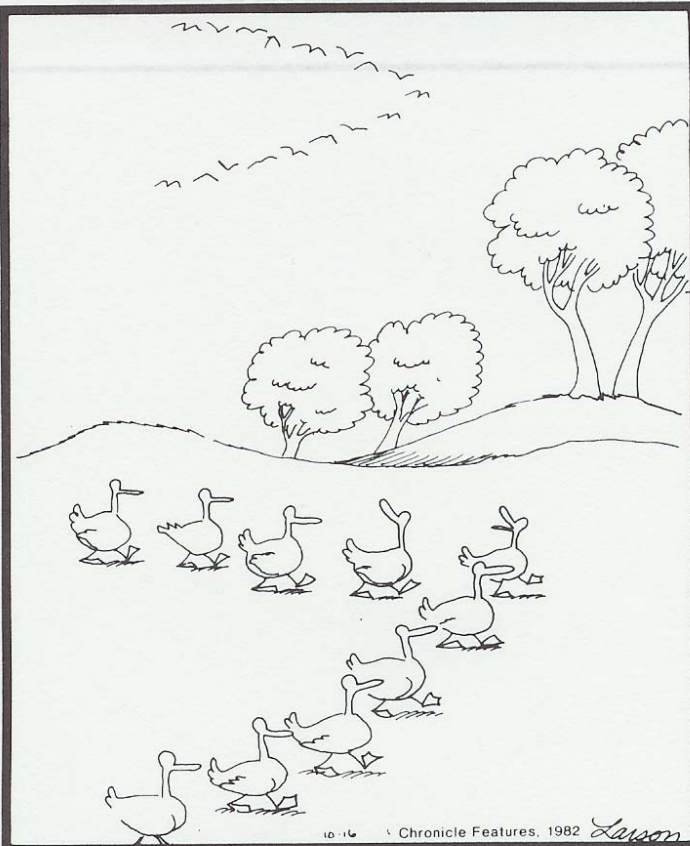
# *Basic Principles of Process Benchmarking*

- Based on simple premise/observation that methods used by top performers differ from others
- Process benchmarking systematically contrasts methods used by top performers with others
- Methods that distinguish top performers from others may be viewed as potential best practices

# Process Benchmarking In Action

## THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"Say ... Look what **THEY'RE** doing."

- The identification of “best practices”

# *Process Benchmarking Exercise*



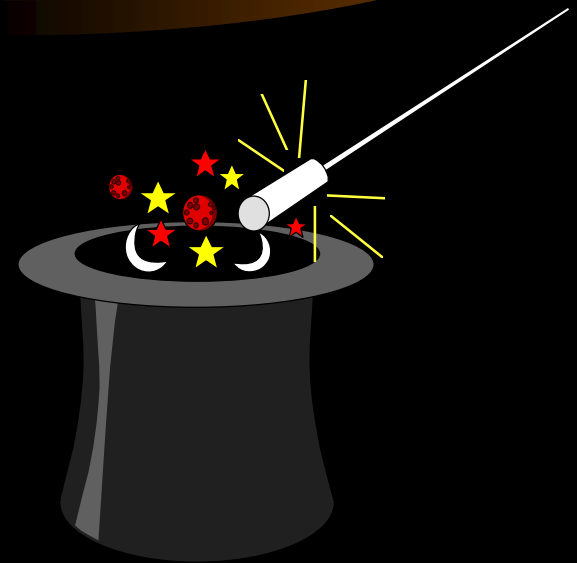
- Real hands-on investigation
- Will produce data and new insights
- Topic is Access to Services
- Top performers with timely access will be identified via anonymous audience polling technology
- Questions will be posed and data will anonymously be collected to identify the methods that distinguish top performers from others
- Those methods will be regarded as potential best practices and will be discussed

# *Why is Timely Access Important?*

- Clinical reasons
- Marketplace reasons
- Legal reasons

# *Surprises Abound*

- What is expected usually does not materialize
- Top performers do not know why they perform well
- Subtle factors often prove to be powerful





***The Six Commandments of  
Process Benchmarking***

# *Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbor's performance*

Process benchmarking identifies organizations that are “best performers” in a particular area. This should not evoke envy, for every organization is a “best performer” in some area. If enough process benchmarking exercises were to be carried out, every participant here would have his or her time in the limelight. Do not feel awkward about not being a “best performer” in this exercise.

# *Thou shalt not bear false witness in responding to the questions*

It is tempting to answer questions on the basis of what appears to be the “right” answer. In fact, there are no “right” answers in process benchmarking...only truthful ones. The purpose of process benchmarking is to determine what the right answers really are. And that will not be known until the exercise concludes. Time after time, process benchmarking reveals surprises in what the “right” answers turn out to be. Please be truthful!

# *Honor thy Creativity*

In this exercise, creative ideas from all group participants are valued and encouraged. Speak out so we can examine many diverse perspectives and experiences.

# *Thou shalt not duplicate thy vote*

In order to avoid biasing the data, only one vote per organization can be counted. If more than one person per organization is present, please designate a voting representative.

*Thou shalt not steal...*

*thy keypad*

Please do not forget to return your keypad at the conclusion of the exercise...it will not change your TV channels or open your garage door.

*Thou shalt not kill...  
the guy conducting the exercise*

Process benchmarking involves examining issues that may be controversial. Accept that the purpose of the exercise is to generate hypotheses, not establish facts. Each person will be exposed to fresh ideas and then is free to experiment with them.



***Let the Games Begin!***

# *Conducting Internal Process Benchmarking*

- Identify a measurable focus area
- Gather performance data & identify “top performers”
- Develop list of potential best practices in the form of questions
- Conduct a discussion and systematically ask questions of participants
- Identify differences between responses of top performers and others--explore differences

# Questions?



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BPS is booth #7 in Exhibit Hall