Antibiotic Stewardship Sustainability Planning Guide
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Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship Program (ASP) Sustainability

Sustainability is the ability to maintain benefits of a program over time. Processes and structures need resources to continue a program such as planned evaluations, funding, partnerships, capacity, organization of the program, communication, and environment. Antibiotic stewardship is the effort to measure antibiotics, antivirals and antifungal prescribing; to improve clinician prescribing and requests by patients to ensure antibiotics are only prescribed and used when needed; to minimize misdiagnoses or delayed diagnoses leading to underuse of antibiotics; and to ensure the right drug, dose, and duration are selected when an antibiotic is needed.

Sustainability also includes the simple concept of not using more resources than needed as conservation of resources such as antibiotics is essential. “The primary goal of antibiotic stewardship is to optimize outcomes while minimizing the unintended consequences.” “A secondary goal is reducing healthcare costs without adversely affecting the quality of care,” according to the Infectious Diseases Society of America and the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America Guidelines for Developing an Institutional Program to Enhance Antimicrobial Stewardship. Program sustainability is a key concept in achieving these goals and improving the health outcomes of our communities. This guide was designed to assist your team in sustaining the important improvements in Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship.
Steps for Building Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship Program (ASP) Sustainment

**STEP 1**
Prepare and Assess Your Program
- Define Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship Program
- Identify and gather participants
- Complete the Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship Sustainability Assessment

**STEP 2**
Develop a Plan of Action
- Assemble a planning team
- Review program’s mission, vision and purpose
- Review results of the Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship Sustainability Assessment
- Determine which program elements strengths, or opportunity for improvement
- Prioritize the areas of primary focus
- Write an action plan focusing on which elements to strengthen and build your program’s sustainability capacity

**STEP 3**
Take Action
- Implement the action plan

**STEP 4**
Evaluate Outcomes
- Reassess your program at a predetermined interval
Step 1: Prepare and Assess Your Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship Program

Define the Program Being Assessed—Outpatient ASP

In today’s world of rapid improvement, we are inevitably making changes to several programs at the same time. It is important to clearly identify which program you are assessing for sustainability, as some programs may overlap each other.

Key documents may include chapter administrative support and committee documents. Validate your organization has defined Outpatient ASP. If this has not been completed, take the time to do this now.

Identify and Gather Participants

When completing a program sustainment tool, it is vital to have frontline participants working with the ASP team to complete the assessment as they are key in establishing feedback related directly to the program’s functionality. Patient or beneficiary representation should be considered.

Complete the Program Sustainment Tool

Knowing both the strengths and opportunities for improvement are essential to creating a sustainable program. Areas of strengths can be replicated and opportunities for improvement need to be recognized and addressed. Both are lessons that can be used when moving forward. The Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship Sustainability Assessment can help determine specific areas of focus within your program. Upon completion of this assessment, you will move into Step 2 - Develop a Plan of Action.

Adapted from: https://www.cdc.gov/getsmart/community/improving-prescribing/core-elements/core-outpatient-stewardship.html
# Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship Sustainability Assessment

1. Does your outpatient antibiotic stewardship champion actively advocate and support the program?
   - Yes
   - No
   Comments

2. Does the Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship Program (ASP) have the following in place? Select all that apply.
   - A formal board-approved statement on the importance of the ASP
   - Importance and outcomes are included in an annual report
   - Dedicated salary support for ASP leaders
   - Established antibiotic stewardship targets and goals
   - Outcome measures are included in the facility's reports with periodic updates (e.g., dashboard reports)
   - All leaders and prescribers agree and implement the ASP strategy
   - When resources are not readily available, funding includes remote consultation or telemedicine with experts in antibiotic stewardship (e.g., infectious diseases physicians and pharmacists)
   - Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and assigned
   - Training in antibiotic stewardship is provided (e.g., new employee orientation, annual, on-line course)
   - Information technology is supportive
   - Microbiology data and laboratory is supportive
   - Ancillary departments are supportive

3. Does your Outpatient ASP have a communication plan to share information with stakeholders, including providers?
   - Yes
   - No
   Comments

4. Does your Outpatient ASP have an annual evaluation to determine if goals and measures were met?
   - Yes
   - No
   Comments

5. Was the program updated if goals and measures were not met?
   - Yes
   - No
   Comments

6. Are gaps, barriers or challenges identified and addressed?
   - Yes
   - No
   Comments
Step 2: Develop a Plan of Action

Assemble a Planning Team
Once you have completed the Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship Sustainability Assessment, the same or new team can assemble to review and prioritize results and build an action plan. Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety (TeamSTEPPS) and TeamSTEPPS 2.0 Change Management are great resources for building and facilitating effective and efficient teams.

Review Program’s Mission, Vision and Purpose
During the first team meeting, it is important to review the program's mission, vision and purpose. This will assist in establishing future strategic focus, as ASP should align with the mission, vision and purpose of your organization for it to be successful and sustained.

Review Your Results of the Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship Sustainability Assessment
Keep an open mind as you review the results of the Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship Sustainability Assessment. This tool is a guide to help you determine your program capacity for sustainability while determining area(s) to focus improvement.

An easy way to review the results is to classify the items into categories such as strengths or opportunities for improvement. These two categories will help your team to determine next steps and identify areas on which to focus. The Sustainability Assessment Management Tool is an additional support spreadsheet to help your team organize and categorize these items. This tool is also useful for determining if elements need to be maintained, eliminated or improved. Finally, your team can prioritize focus topics.

Determine Which Program Elements Need to be Maintained, Eliminated or Improved
After you have classified your results into the categories of strengths and opportunities for improvement, it is important to review each item to determine which items should be maintained, eliminated or improved. As you work through and discuss items with your team, the following questions will assist you:

- What is working
- What is not working
- If it is not working, why not
- How can we make it better
- Is the item essential

This process will help your team eliminate unnecessary items. This process of elimination will allow your team to focus on important items to boost your programs sustainability and improve health outcomes within communities.
Prioritize the Areas of Primary Focus

Now that your team has clarified the direction and scope of your program, it is time to prioritize which items your team will focus on first. It is essential the team decide, as a group, which of these items would provide the largest gain with the least resources. The team should prioritize each item. If your team is struggling to identify the program's long term goal(s) it may be useful to begin by addressing strategic planning and program evaluation items first.³

Write an Action Plan Focusing on Specific Elements to Strengthen and Build Your Program’s Sustainability Capacity

The action plan is your roadmap for improvement. The action plan contains specific steps (actions) the team must take to reach a specific goal. As your team builds an action plan, consider using a template such as the Sustainability Assessment Management Tool along with the SMART Goals Template to assist you in your action planning.

These resources will organize your information in one place for easy reference during future meetings and the process of implementation.

As you move through the action planning stage, you will need to identify specific goals related to program sustainability. The SMART Goals Template (on pages 9-11) can help identify goals that are:

- Specific
- Measureable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time-bound
SPECIFIC
Specifically define what you expect the employee to do/deliver. Avoid generalities and use action verbs as much as possible.

MEASURABLE
You should be able to measure whether the Outpatient AS is meeting the goals or not.

ACHIEVABLE
Make sure that accomplishing the goal is within the team's realm of authority and capabilities.

RELEVANT
Where appropriate, link the goal to a higher-level departmental or organizational goal, and ensure all team members understand how their goal and actions contributes to the attainment of the higher level goal.

TIME-BOUND
Specify when the goal needs to be completed (e.g. by the end of Quarter 2, monthly).
### SMART Goals Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMART</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INITIAL GOAL— Write the goal you have in mind.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECIFIC— What do you want to accomplish? Who needs to be included? When do you want to do this? Why is this a goal?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEASURABLE— How can you measure progress and know if you’ve successfully met your goal?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACHIEVABLE— Do you have the skills required to achieve the goal? If not, can you obtain them? What is the motivation for this goal? Is the amount of effort required on par with what the goal will achieve?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELEVANT— Why am I setting this goal now? Is it aligned with overall objectives?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME-BOUND— What’s the deadline and is it realistic?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMART Goal— Review what you have written, and craft a new goal statement based on the answers above.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**SMART Goals Template Example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMART</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INITIAL GOAL— Write the goal you have in mind.</td>
<td>Educate patients about antibiotics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECIFIC— What do you want to accomplish? Who needs to be included? When do you want to do this? Why is this a goal?</td>
<td>Provide and teach clinic and pharmacy staff communication strategies through scripting on how to educate patients about when antibiotics are and are not needed, and document in the EHR that the topic was discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEASURABLE— How can you measure progress and know if you’ve successfully met your goal?</td>
<td>Monitor the staff education plans and attendance to ensure all clinic, MDs, PACs, NPs and housing staff have attended and completed the education. Monitor patient education through documentation in the EHR.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ACHIEVABLE— Do you have the skills required to achieve the goal? If not, can you obtain them? What is the motivation for this goal? Is the amount of effort required on par with what the goal will achieve? | We have the resources available to provide education and materials to staff:  
  - Print and laminate scripts  
  - Include reasons in patient summary of visit  
  - Printed brochures on display in the exam room |
| RELEVANT— Why am I setting this goal now? Is it aligned with overall objectives? | I am setting this goal now because cold and flu season will be upon us in the fall and it is necessary for my team to have the proper tools to educate patients. |
| TIME-BOUND— What’s the deadline and is it realistic? | • Education completed by August 31  
  • Support material in exam rooms by September 3  
  • Documentation report from EHR by September 15  
  • Entire process active by October 15 |
| SMART Goal— Review what you have written, and craft a new goal statement based on the answers above. | Use effective communication strategies to educate patients about when antibiotics are and are not needed (e.g. provide information on methods to reduce symptoms if antibiotic are not appropriate, recommend contacting primary provider if antibiotics may be appropriate.)  
Patient education on antibiotics will be provided 100% for all respiratory illness regardless if antibiotix are ordered. |
Step 3: Take Action

Implement the Action Plan
The action plan is complete, now it is time to put the plan into practice. The first step is discussing the problem, solutions, rationale and actions program staff and stakeholders. Second, you must monitor the progress of your program and action implementation. Be sure to celebrate successes along the way, as well as discuss the barriers or constraints your team is facing. It is important to face these challenges together and come up with solutions to remove barriers as a team.

Step 4: Evaluate Outcomes

Reassess Your Program’s Sustainability Capacity
Sustainability is not a one-time assessment. Assessing the program’s sustainability capacity, identifying strengths and challenges along with taking concrete steps to improve the sustainability capacity are all essential steps in this process. Consider utilizing an assessment tool annually and compare results from the year prior.³

Summary
The concept of sustainability is complex and can be challenging at times. When building an ASP, keep sustainment in mind and allow the team to discuss strengths and weaknesses on the forefront.

References
1. Understand Sustainability. https://sustaintool.org/understand/

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success!” —Henry Ford

Additional Resources
• TeamSTEPPS: Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety
• TeamSTEPPS 2.0 Change Management
• Lake Superior QIN Antibiotic Stewardship Website
• Lake Superior QIN Antibiotic Stewardship Toolkits: Outpatient Clinical and Community Pharmacy
• The Lake Superior QIN Antibiotic Stewardship Program Sustainability Assessment Management Tool
• PIP Guide: LSQIN Action Plan Template
• IHI White Paper: Sustaining Improvement