



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**CHICAGO**

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION

# Quality Monitoring in the Social Services

*Curtis McMillen, Ph.D.*

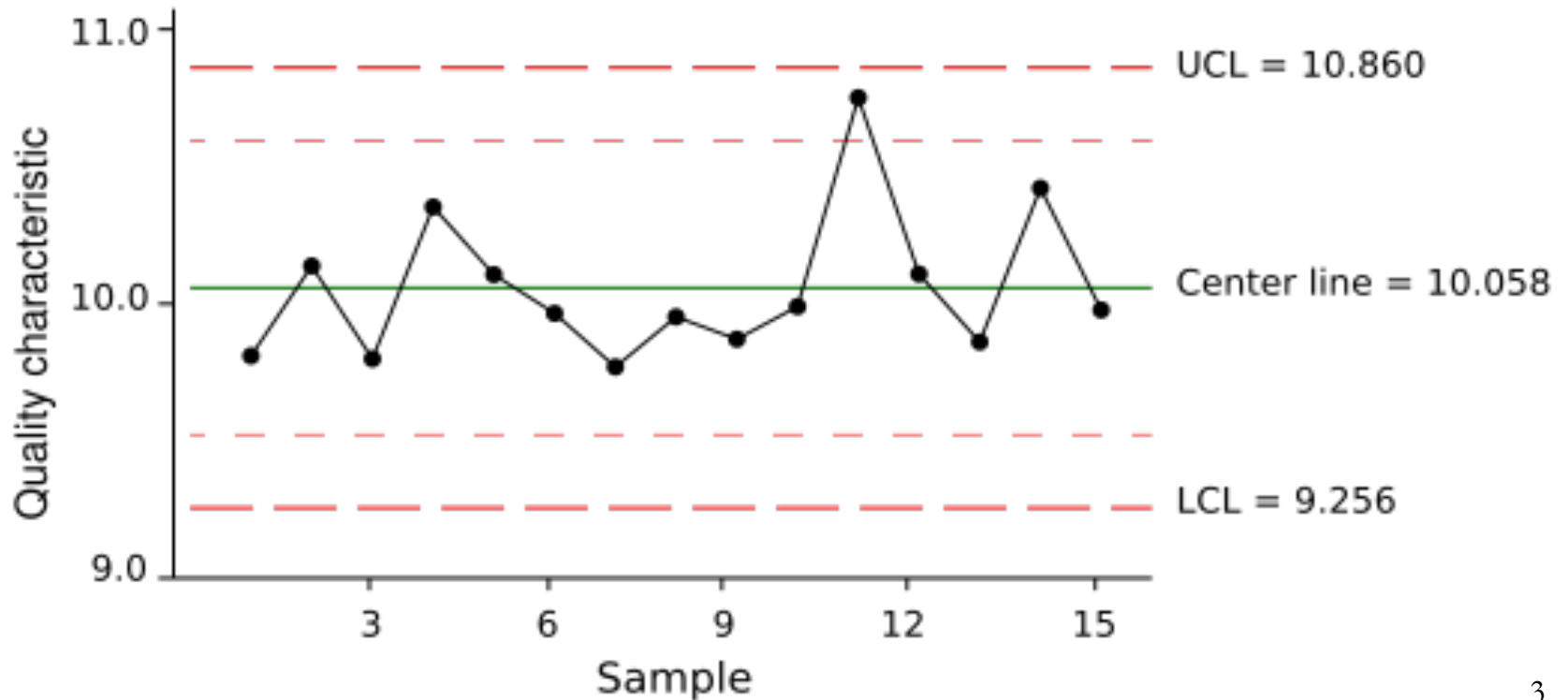
# We'll talk about...

---

- Why we need to monitor for quality in the social services, and
- How to do it.

# The of Quality Management

## 1. Monitoring



# What Do Agencies Monitor?

## 1. Monitoring ...

*outcomes*

*processes / fidelity*

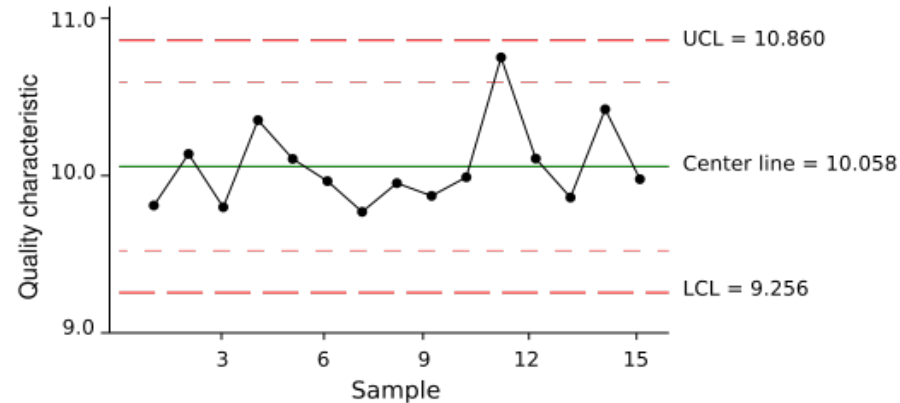
*adverse events / failures / errors*

*safety*

*consumer or employee satisfaction*

*community perception / reputation*

*finances*



# Becoming A Data Driven Agency

---

*“I have good people working here. They want to do a great job. I think they would respond well to data telling them how they are doing and how to do better. I want my agency to become a data driven agency. But I have no idea where to start, how to make that happen, what that really looks like.”*

*-- Agency Director*



# Donabedian's Steps to Monitoring for Quality

---

1. Figure out what to monitor
2. Set priorities
3. Selecting an approach to monitoring
4. Formulating criteria and standards
5. Obtain necessary information
6. Choose when to monitor
7. Choose how to monitor
8. Construct a monitoring system
9. Use it to bring about change

Donabedian, A. (2003). *An introduction to quality assurance in health care*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

# A Performance Management System

*A full fledged information system*

- *A data infrastructure –*
  - Thoughtful decisions on what to collect and why;
  - Routinized processes to capture this data;
  - Ways to store and maintain and clean that data;
  - People who can work the data
- *A way to turn that data into something usable.*
- *Processes in place that promote use of that data to maintain high quality service and improve lower quality service.*



# The Bar Keeps Getting Raised

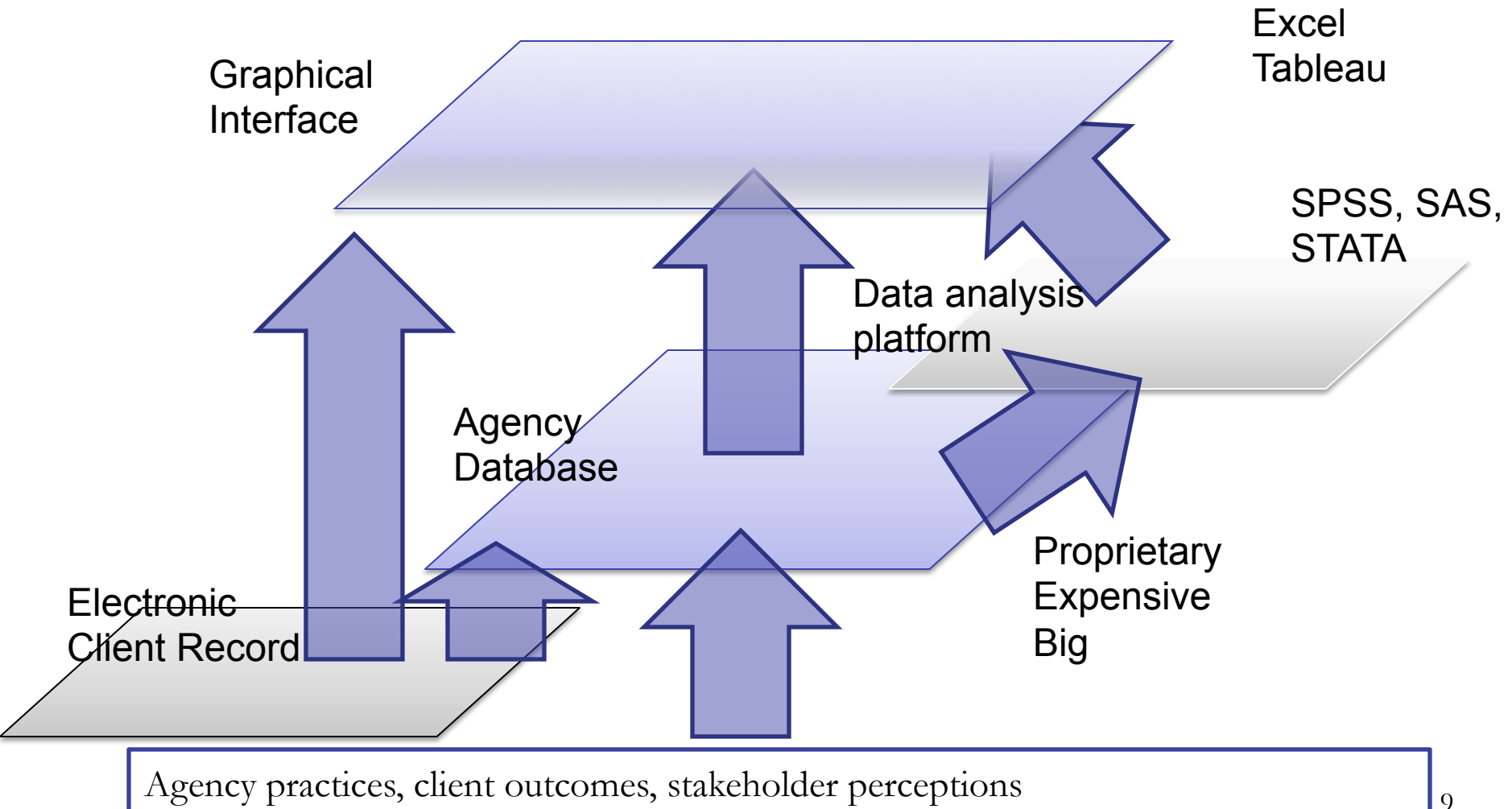
*Monitoring systems typically look for exceptions – where things are going especially well and especially poorly.*

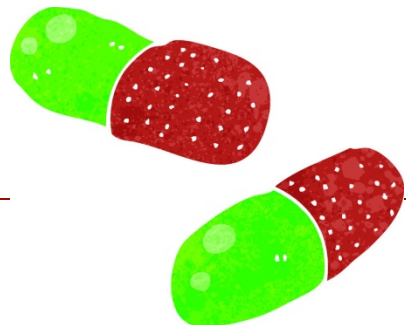
Businesses now want systems that allow them to dig deeper, to explore and analyze information that sheds light on exceptions, reveals hidden trends.





# Data systems behind a Performance Mgt System





# Sunshine Substance Abuse Treatment

- *Operates three 90-day residential treatment homes for adults with drug addiction (serves ~ 20 each; 3 counselors, 20 shift workers)*
- *Operates an aftercare program for adults from the residential program (3 caseworkers, large caseloads).*
- *Operates an outpatient treatment program for adults and youth with substance abuse problems (10 counselors)*

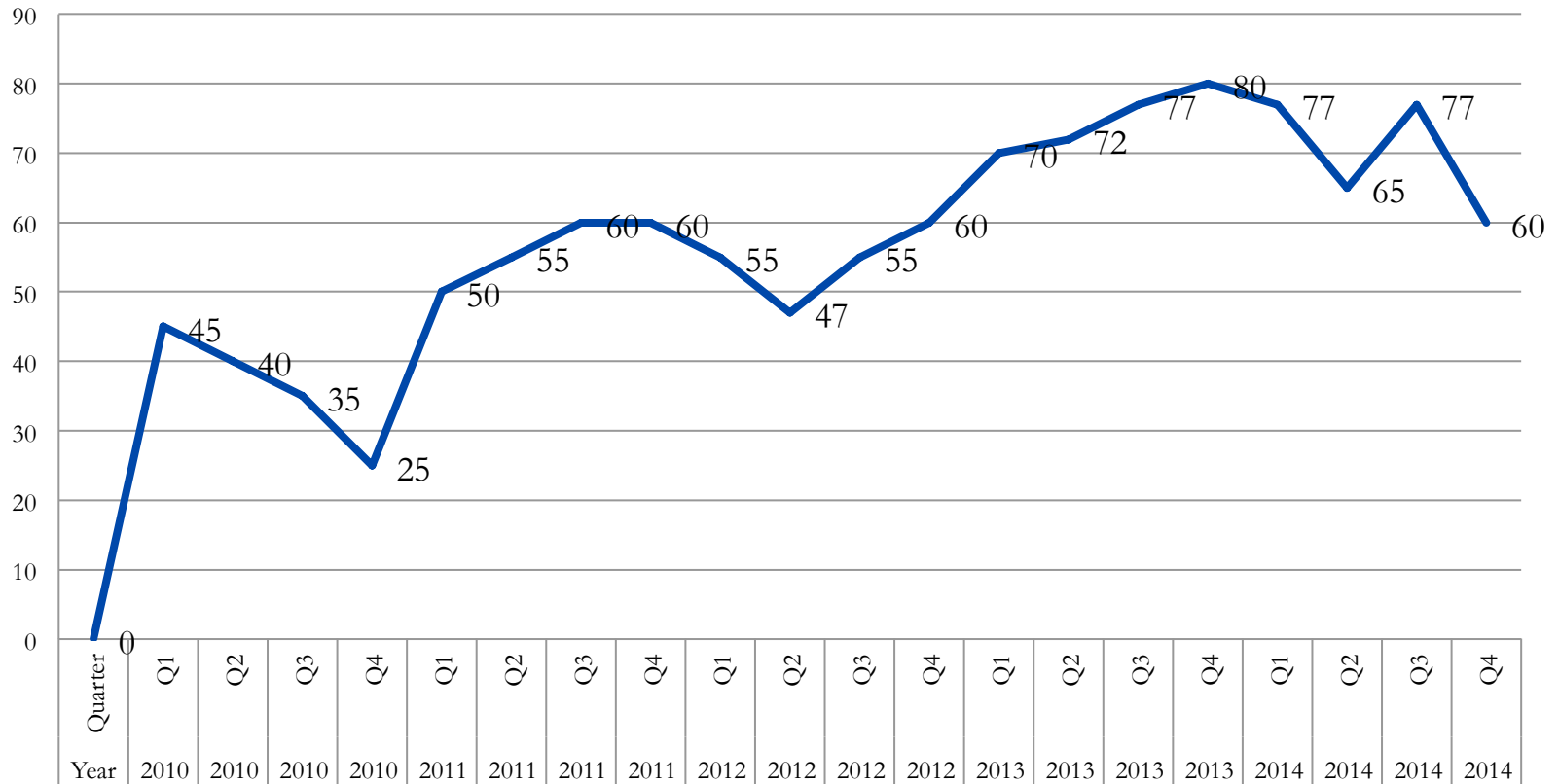
# Sunshine at a Glance

---

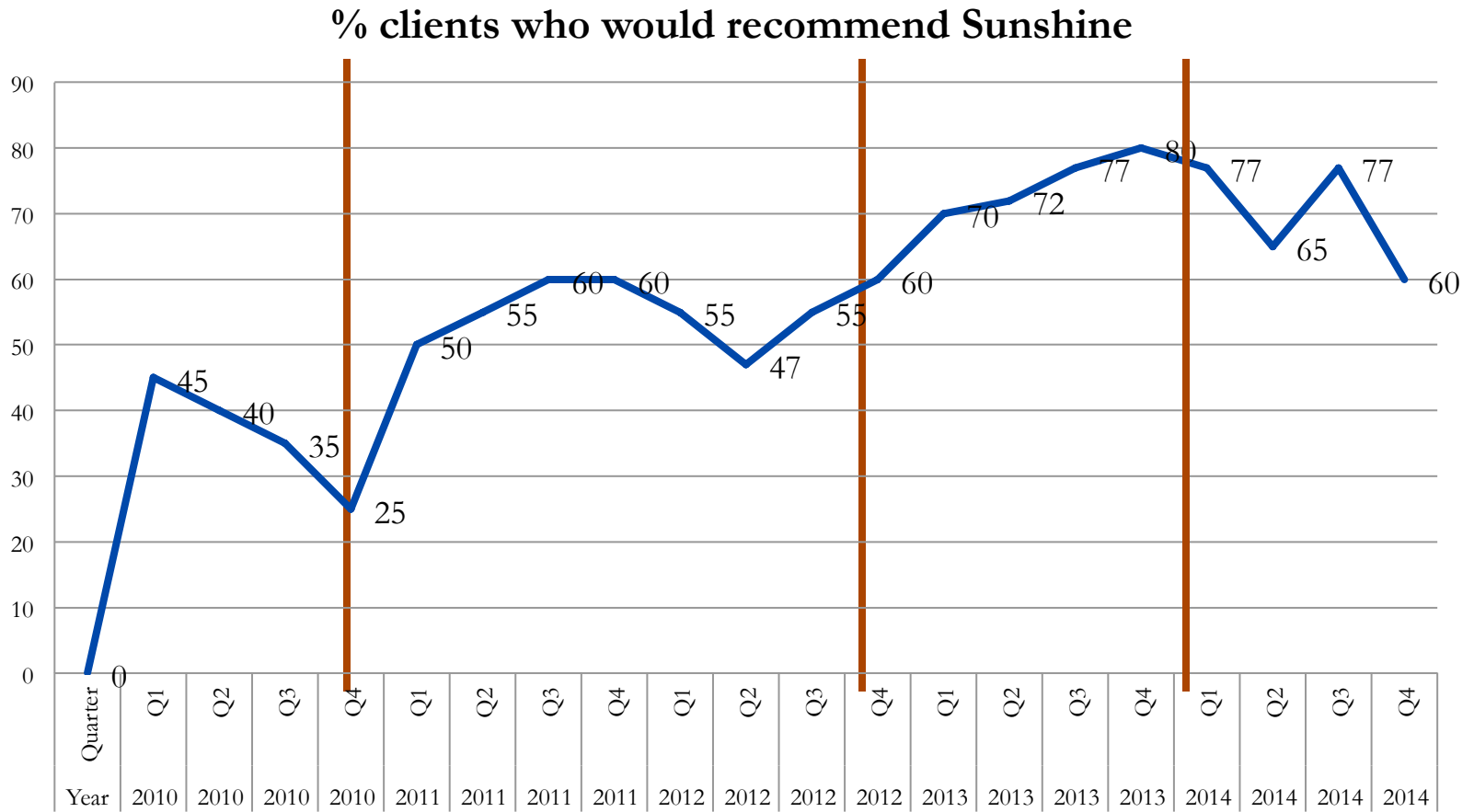
- *37 year old private non-profit agency*
- *Serves about 400 clients per year*
- *1 Agency Director*
- *1 CFO*
- *1 Clinical Director*
- *16 masters level clinicians*
- *20 direct care staff in residential*

# Example: one metric over time

% clients who would recommend Sunshine



# Adding timeline information



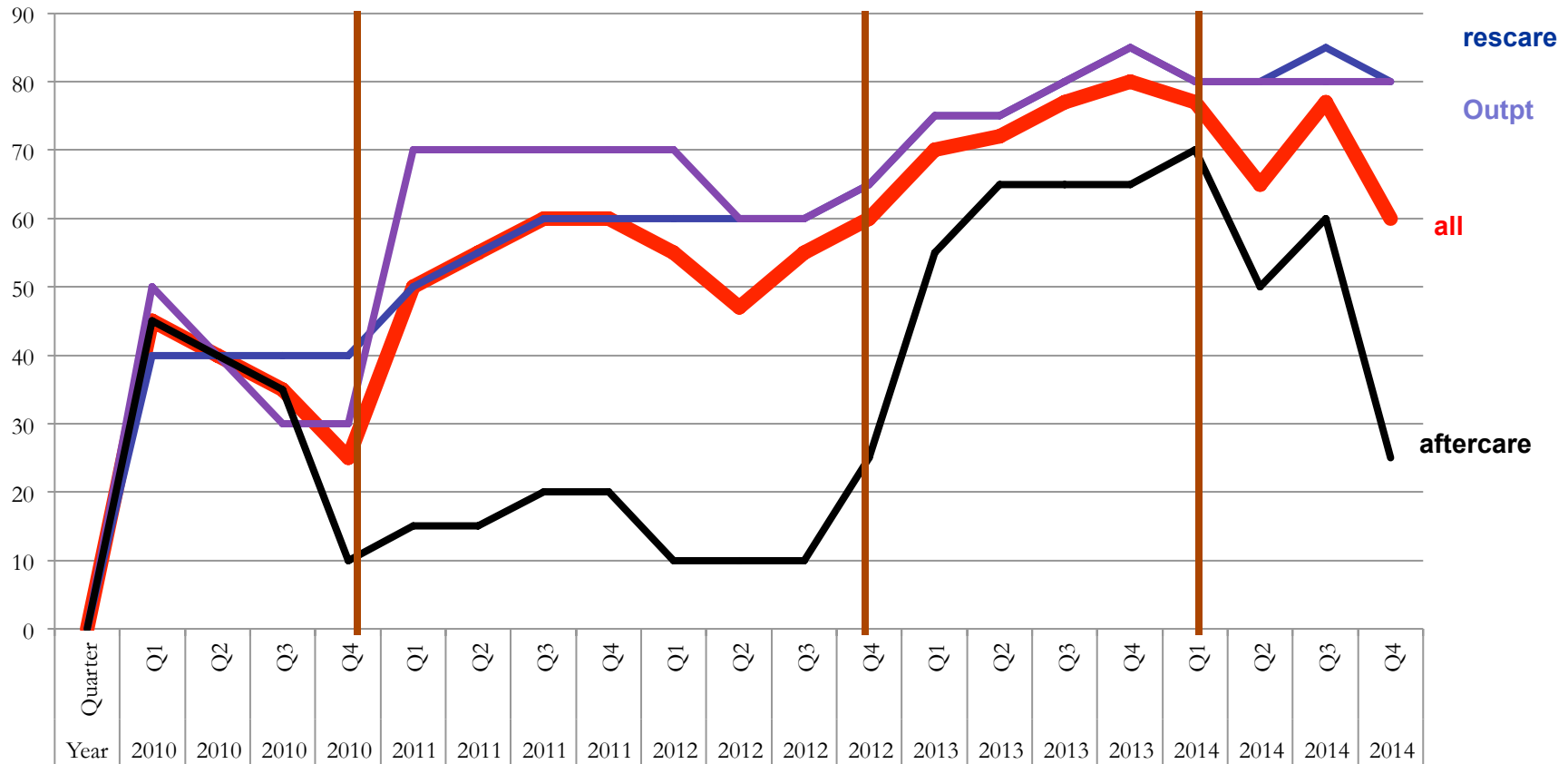
Agency-wide  
metric

caseworker  
metric

New clinical  
director

# Drilling down to program

% of clients who recommend



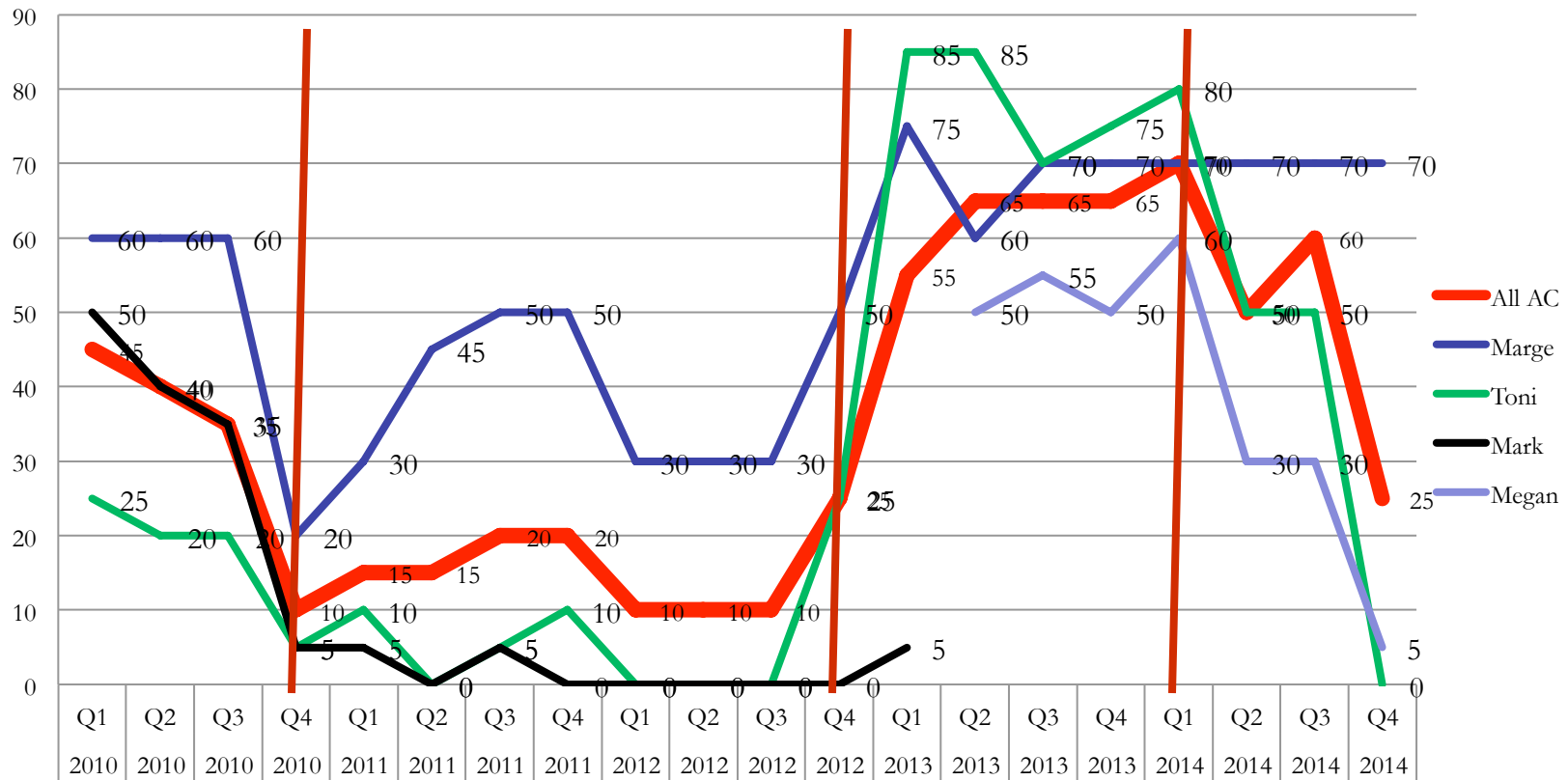
Agency-wide  
metric

caseworker  
metric

New clinical  
director

# Drilling down to caseworker

## Recommend to friend: Aftercare Program



Agency-wide  
metric

caseworker  
metric

New clinical  
director



# A How question: Where does the data come from in a performance management system?

*chart reviews*

*electronic client record reports*

*adverse event reports*

*self-report surveys*

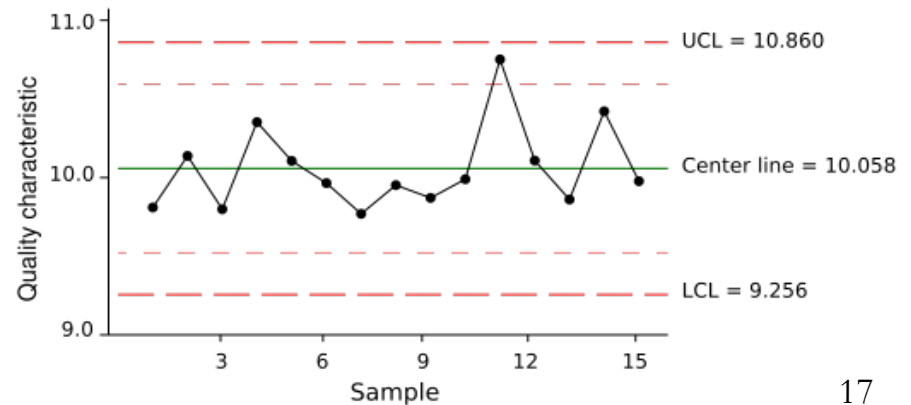
*observations*



# Why do we monitor?

## *Cynic's version*

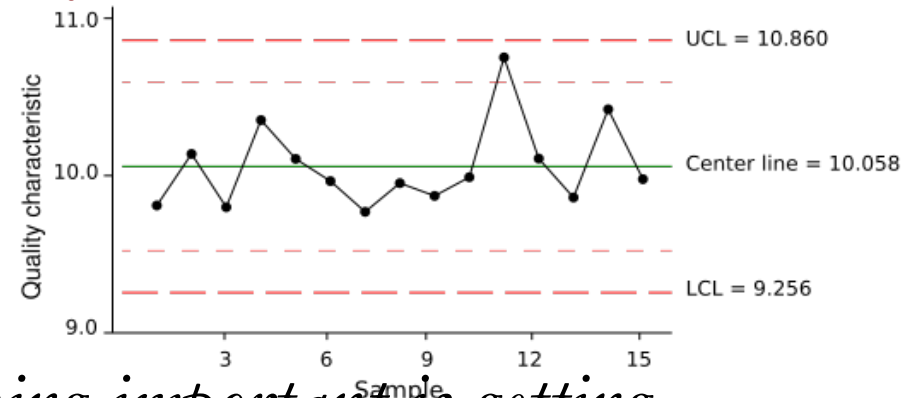
- *to get or remain accredited or licensed*
- *to satisfy a funder*
- *to satisfy the gods of bureaucracy*



# Why do we monitor?

## *Idealist's version*

- *we want to see whether something important is getting better or worse*
- *we want to see WHO is doing better or worse*
- *we want to see WHERE things are better or worse*



The



of Quality Monitoring



*We monitor to become a data driven agency.*

*We monitor to know what to emulate, what to fix, what needs our attention, where things are going off track.*

*We monitor for accountability*

# Keys to Success

---

- *Get proper sponsorship and resources for the monitoring effort.*
- *Create the right metrics*
- *Design a compelling interface*
- *Plan ahead to ensure end use adoption*

» Eckerson, 2011, Performance Dashboards, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

# Getting the metrics right: What to monitor



- *Stuff that is critical – if things go wrong here, important stuff is at risk.*
- *Stuff that happens frequently.*
- *Stuff that is “hands on” – where humans make decisions.*

# Getting the metrics right: What to monitor



*KEY QUESTIONS:*

*How much stuff do you monitor?*

*What do you put on your dashboard / scorecard?*



# Quality Tool: Balanced Scorecard

- The top top things the agency/ program wants to monitor.
- Often want from myriad perspectives: financial, consumer, internal process perspective, innovation, etc.
- Balanced because an improvement in one area can have negative consequences on another.
- Can be used for accountability at multiple levels.

# Let's Start with what we know

---

- *Pick key metrics for SSA*
- *Strive to capture multiple perspectives*
- *Strive for balance.*

*What are your top five?*

# Back to Sunshine



*What do you monitor at Sunshine Substance Abuse Services?*

*Outpatient substance abuse counseling*

*Residential Substance Abuse Counseling*

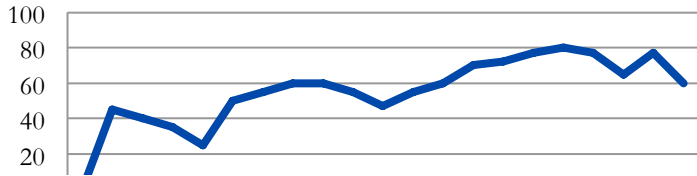
*After care Substance Abuse Counseling*

# There are lots of good choices

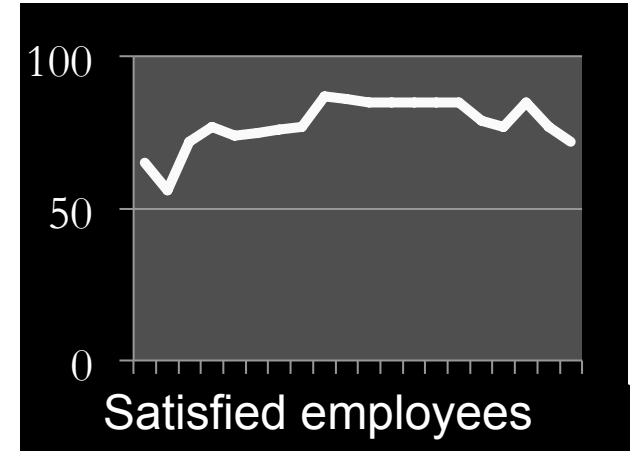
---

- *relationship/ sensitivity in delivering services*
- *getting it right, competence, knowledge about substance use,*
- *staying sober – amount of use.*
- *agency finances / payor mix*
- *employee satisfaction*
- *Audit perspective – medicaid compliance*

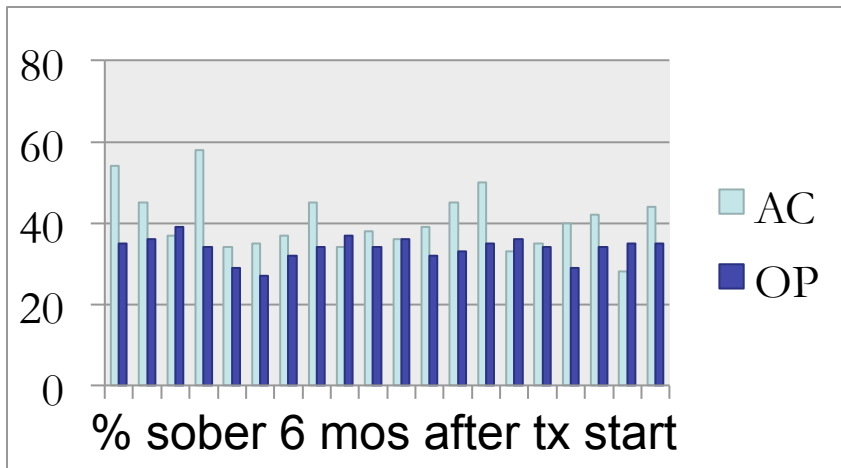
# 5-Year Performance Dashboard for Sunshine



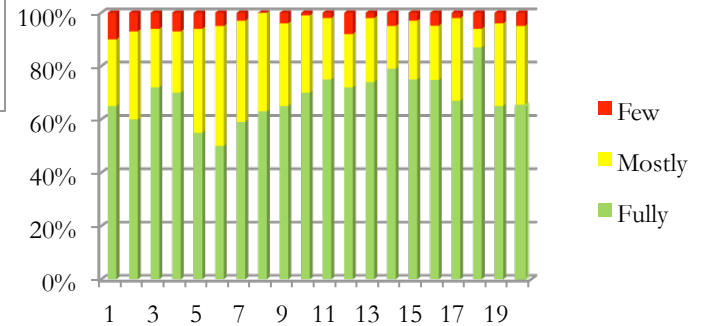
Would recommend Sunshine



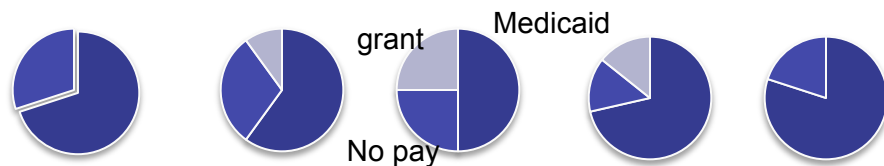
Satisfied employees



% sober 6 mos after tx start

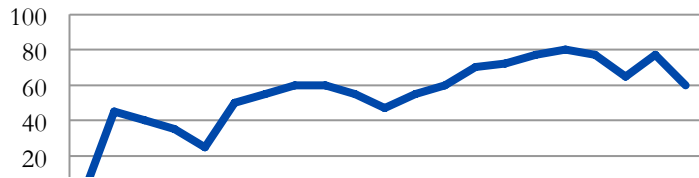


Medicaid Compliance

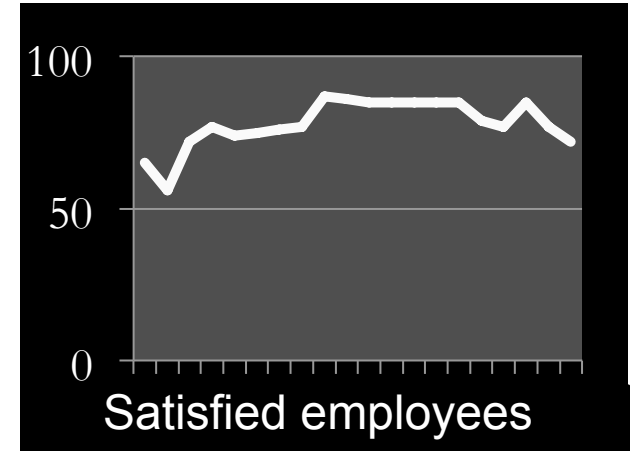


Payor Mix

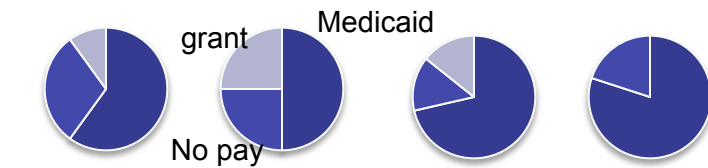
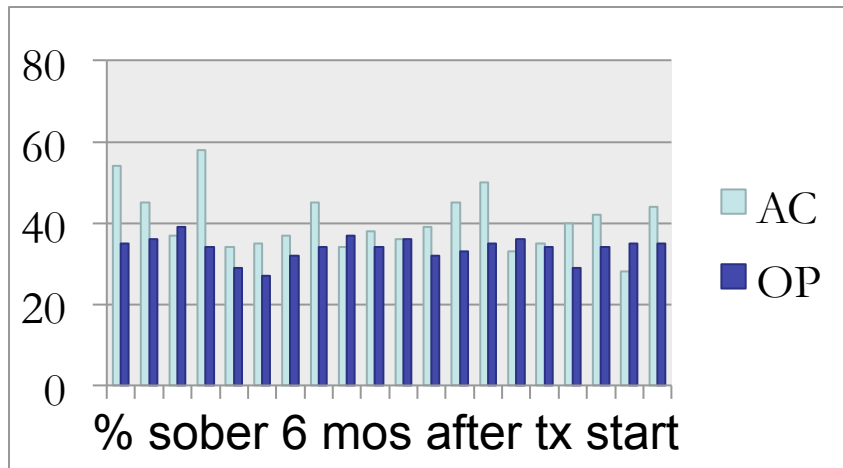
# Ramifications of Managing by these Foci



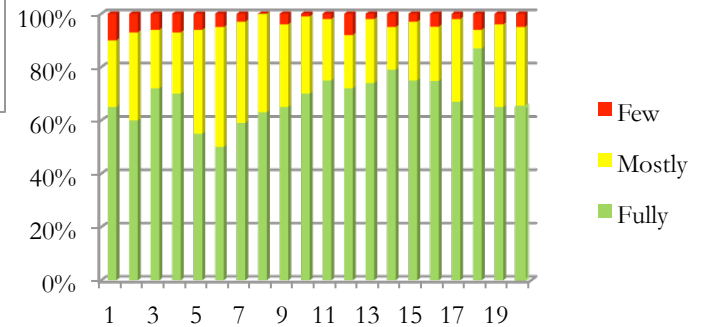
Would recommend Sunshine



Satisfied employees

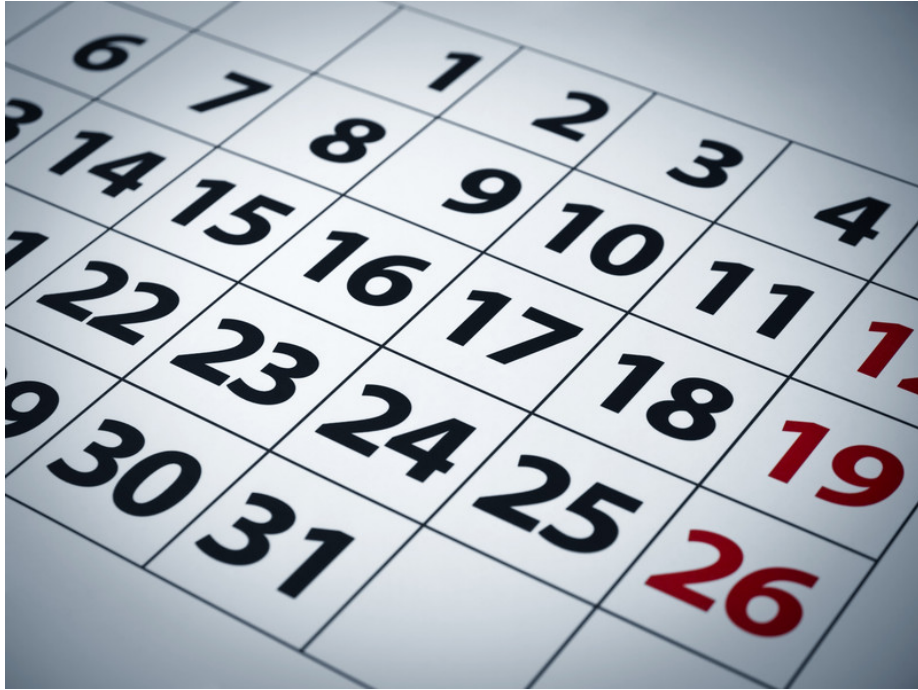


Payor Mix



Medicaid Compliance

# How often do you monitor?



## How often do you monitor:

- Outcomes?
- Consumer satisfaction?
- Employee satisfaction
- Compliance?
- Payor mix?
- Relationship/ Respect
- Promptness

## How often do you:

- Conduct chart reviews?
- Mount Surveys?
- Run record reports?

Each service encounter?

Monthly?

Quarterly?

Annually?



# My generic big three

---

- *Respect*
- *Competence*
- *Helped*

How often do you ask these questions?

At each service encounter?

Monthly?

Quarterly?

Annually?

# Ways to get to the right metrics

---

- *Know your agency/program's mission, vision and values*
- *Destination statements*
- *Strategy Maps*
- *Strategic Themes*
- *SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, Opportunities)*

*Unique to Social Services?*

- *Logic models*