



**Hand-Off Communications  
Targeted Solutions Tool<sup>®</sup> (TST<sup>®</sup>)**

**Implementation Guide  
for  
Health Care Organizations**



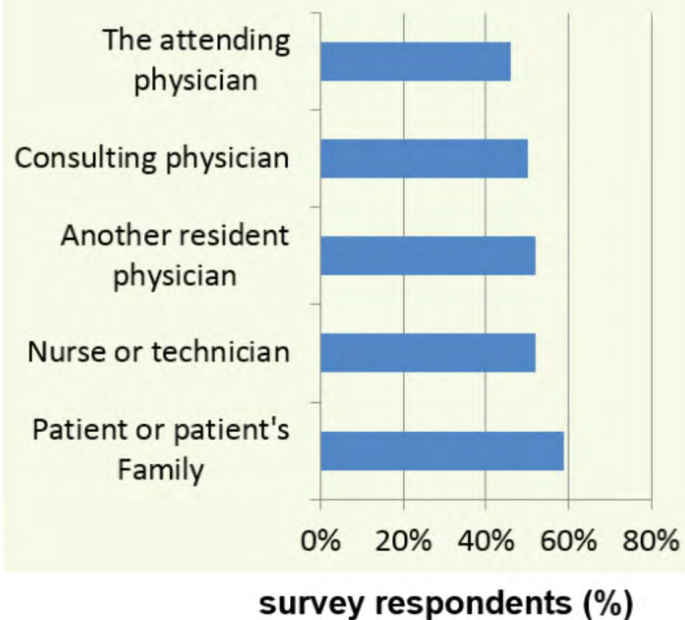
## Key Features of TST<sup>®</sup> Hand-Off Communications Module

- Facilitates the examination of the current hand-off communication process
- Provides a measurement system that produces data that support the need for improving the current hand-off communication processes.
- Identifies areas of focus, such as the specific information needed for the transition that is being measured.
- Provides customizable forms for data collection
- Provides guidelines for most appropriate hand-off communication process
- Can be completed in 16-21 weeks
- Control plan included to maintain success

### Substandard Hand-offs May Result in:

- Delay in treatment
- Inappropriate treatment
- Adverse events
- Omission of care
- Increased costs
- Inefficiency from rework

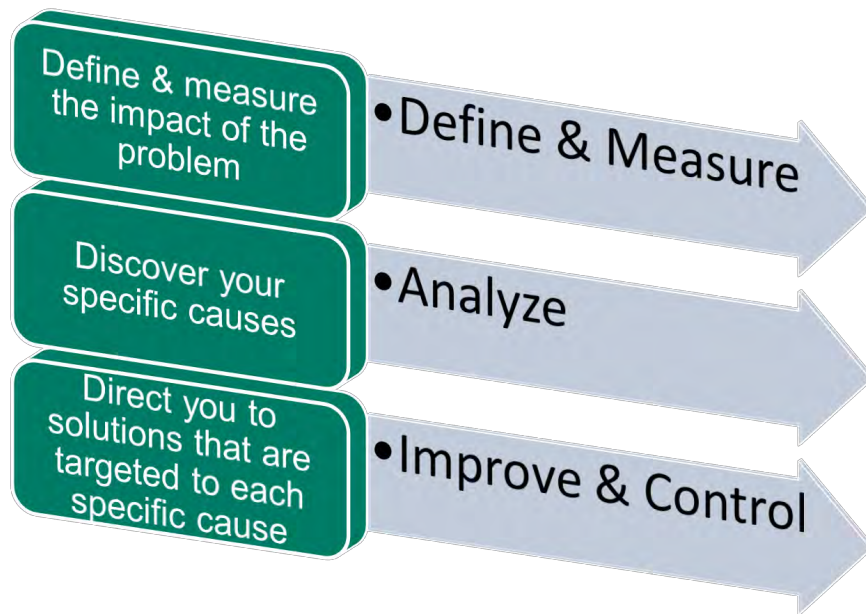
#### Problematic hand-off resulted in misinformation to:



## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this TST<sup>®</sup> Hand-off Communications Implementation Guide is to provide a model for launching a hand-off communications performance improvement project within a health care organization.

**The TST<sup>®</sup> is an innovative online application** that guides health care organizations through a step-by-step process to:



### **This guide recommends that you:**

- Build your complete team by identifying your project leader(s), core and site team members.
- Understand and clarify the roles and responsibilities of each member.
- Set a goal and start date to launch the initiative with your core team.
- Follow all of the steps in TST<sup>®</sup> Hand-Off Communications module.
- Complete all of items listed in the Action Items section at the end of each phase.
- Launch the initiative in a few pilot areas first then add other areas/units over time that are in alignment with your goals.
- Use the change management tools and resources available in the TST<sup>®</sup> to:
  - Plan the Project
  - Inspire Your Staff
  - Launch the Initiative
  - Support the Change
- Share project and outcome results, demonstrate leadership support and increase awareness of the hand-off communication project.

## **Build the TST® Project Teams**

To ensure your project's success, a team of individuals will work together to achieve the goals of your project and commit to achieve the project deliverables. The following information provides guidance on building a successful Hand-off Communications (HOC) team – whether you already have a team established or you need to create one. The following are two organizational models for launching this project using the TST®:

- The Health Care Organization-Wide Team model for systems with multiple care settings and;
- Single Site Health Care Organization model for a hospital or ambulatory care setting.

The core project teams for either setting should include:

Executive Sponsor

Healthcare Setting Project Leader

Process Owner

Organization Project Leader

Clinical Champion

Subject Matter

**The Health Care Organization—Wide Team** is led by the Organization Project Leader and the core team consists of three to seven individuals who are also key stakeholders of your organization that meet regularly.

**The Health Care Setting Site Team** is led by the designated Hospital Project Leader and inspires others to support the project. This team consist of a group of three to seven individuals who are key stakeholders that meet regularly.



**Single Site Health Care Organization Team** is led by the Hospital Project Leader and inspires others to support the project. This team consist of a group of three to seven individuals who are key stakeholders at the site and meets regularly with unit Process Owners. The unit is the area where the project is being launched.

**The Unit Team** is led by the Process Owner and should include their unit key stakeholders and ancillary staff involved in the project and meet regularly.



## Key Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
<b>Executive Sponsor Core Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representative from the C-suite executive level</li> <li>• Supports and inspires others to support the project</li> <li>• Provide high-level oversight for the project and become more heavily involved should any issue resolution be necessary</li> <li>• Approves needed resources for implementation of solutions</li> </ul>
<b>Organization Project Leader</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key individual who manages the day-to-day project activities across all settings, helps gain support from stakeholders and leads others in the use of the TST<sup>®</sup> until the project is completed</li> <li>• Primary point of contact for the organization -wide hospital teams</li> <li>• Supports the hospital project leader by providing expertise in care delivery, implementation of clinical protocols, physician engagement, and cultivating organizational teamwork</li> <li>• Ensure deliverables are on time and meet expectations</li> <li>• Participate in creation, review, and presentations of deliverables as needed</li> <li>• Key individual responsible for continued success that includes the organization's ongoing data collection plan, aimed at showing whether the improvements made during the project have been sustained</li> </ul>
<b>Hospital Project Leader</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This role is similar to the Health Care Organization project leader but has oversight of the project at their hospital or care setting</li> <li>• Primary point of contact for the Organization-Wide project team model</li> <li>• Key individual who manages the day-to-day project activities, helps gain support from stakeholders and leads others in the use of the TST<sup>®</sup> until the project is completed</li> <li>• Participate in implementation of recommended solutions</li> <li>• Ensure deliverables are on time and meet expectations</li> </ul>
<b>Clinical Champion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinical leader who has the influence to lead the improvement initiative and spread the success of the project to other patient care units/areas in your organization.</li> </ul>
<b>Process Owner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leader of the project in the patient care area, for example the inpatient unit's director, manager, supervisor or local clinical director</li> <li>• Responsible for day-to-day management of the initiative in their area</li> <li>• Responsible for on-going data collection to maintain the gains</li> <li>• Ensure deliverables are on time and meet expectations</li> </ul>
<b>Subject Matter Experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals who are knowledgeable about specific areas or topics (such as infection control) and can provide guidance to the Core Team, as needed.</li> </ul>

### Core Team Notes:

- The core team members will meet regularly and will be closest to the process. At the initial phase, there should be no representatives from the sender group on the core team.
- Representatives from the sender group will be added to the team in the later in Determining Factors section.

## Getting Started

**Projects**   **Start**   **Baseline**   **Improve**   **Sustain**

Overview   Project Scope   Project Access   Data Collectors   Training

Adult ICU ICU West to Adult Med/Surg Med Surg East

The Hand-Off Communications Targeted Solutions Tool<sup>®</sup> outlines the specific steps you can take to improve hand-off communications. Hand-offs involve the transfer of clinical information, responsibilities and duties concerning a patient from one health care provider or team (the senders) to another (the receivers). This site includes:

- Forms, tools and tips for recording and interpreting defects in the hand-off communications process
- Instructions for pinpointing the solutions that will work best at your organization
- Guidelines for maintaining success

**Getting Started**

The **Start** section focuses on laying the groundwork for a successful project. Here is a brief explanation of the sub-sections under **Start**:

**Project Scope:** At a high level, this is what is included in your project. Select an area of your organization to focus your hand-off communications improvement effort and give your project a name. Decide if you will be following our recommended project parameters. Select the roles of your senders and receivers. Identify the information critical to a successful hand-off. Select outcomes of your efforts for which you would like to track improvement. Familiarize yourself with some of the basic project tools such as the project charter and stakeholder analysis form.

**Project Access:** Add and administer members of your project team that will be accessing the TST.

**Data Collectors:** Optional page where you can add data collectors and track their training.

**Training Materials:** Access the online and downloadable training tools to assist your data collectors in accurately collecting your hand-off communications data.

**Required Reading**

- [Background of the hand-off communications project](#)
- [Defining hand-off communications](#)
- [How long will it take](#)
- [Expectations for data collectors](#)

- This section gives the background for hand-off communications, project parameters (including operational definitions), its scope and building your team.
- There are videos displayed throughout the tool with tips from the original participating organizations that worked with the Center to develop the Hand-Off Communications tool.
- It is estimated that within 16 to 21 weeks, you will start to see the improvements from this project.

## Tailoring the Project

**Projects**   **Start**   **Baseline**   **Improve**   **Sustain**

Overview   Project Scope   Project Access   Data Collectors   Training

Adult ICU ICU West to Adult Med/Surg Med Surg East

Name Your Project   Scope Agreement   Identify Roles   Critical Elements   Outcome Metrics   Project Tools

**Name your project**

The name of your project will be the combination of your Sender and Receiver areas. You may customize the name further by selecting "Other" and typing in a specific name. For example: Hospital - Emergency Department to Hospital - Medical Surgical Unit - 7 South or Ambulatory Care Facility - Pre-op to Ambulatory Care Facility - Holding Area.

In selecting your project area, consider where the greatest need is in your organization. The greater the need, the higher the chances for project success and staff buy-in.

**Sender:**

Select your sender's setting:

- Hospital
- Ambulatory Care
- Behavioral Health Care
- Long Term Care
- Home Care
- Other

Select your sender's area:

- Adult Med/Surg
- Pediatric Med/Surg
- ED
- Adult ICU
- Pediatric ICU
- Neonatal ICU
- Other

Name your sender's unit:

**Receiver:**

Select your receiver's setting:

Select your receiver's area:

Name your receiver's unit:

- The TST<sup>®</sup> allows you to customize and tailor the project to your organization's transition of care area to be addressed. Here is where you will identify the sender and receiver areas for this project.
- If internal - Identify the sender area and setting that you want to look at (i.e. ED to Med Surg.).
- If external - Identify the sender location and setting that you want to look at (i.e. hospital to SNF).
- Save your selections, and this will name the project for you.

## Identifying Your Critical Information

**Identify your critical information**

Please select the items below that make up the information needed by the receiver at the time of the hand-off, and is critical to continued care for the patient. If you have other critical elements that are not listed below, you can use the Other field and type in the critical information that is needed at the time of the hand-off to continue care for the patient. You may select up to 40 critical elements. These selections will be used for creating your customized receiver data collection form in Baseline > Data Collection.

**Critical elements selected (40 max): 15**

**Patient's identity information:**

Name  DOB  H&P  Completed charting (paper)

Age  Gender  MR#  Admitting physician and consults requested

**Diagnosis:**

Not applicable  Reason for admission  Interpreted EKG rhythm  Past medical history

Chief complaint  Review of systems

**Limitations on life-sustaining treatment:**

Not applicable  Code status  Advance directives

Current status:

- Ask the receivers to brainstorm on the critical pieces of information that they need to safely continue care for the patient and then select all of the required elements.
- These selections feed into your customized data collection form.

## Training Data Collectors

**Training Modules for Data Collectors**

At this step of the project, some receivers will also be core team members. However, senders should not yet be members of the core team. It is important that sender and receiver data collectors are trained separately to avoid confusion between the groups and to maintain anonymity of the senders and receivers while collecting data.

There are two main components to training both sender and receiver data collectors:

- Scenario review and practice with the hand-off communications collection tool
- Written scenario-based testing

**Ensuring that hand-off communications data collectors are ready**

The following training tools are provided to ensure reliable data collection.

It is important to ensure that hand-off communications data collectors understand the material and will be able to measure the data consistently. This is done by completing the training modules, which include a test.

The links for the downloadable training modules are located at the bottom of this screen. The expectation is that hand-off communications data collectors will pass the written exam with a score of 90 percent or higher. In the event that a hand-off communications data collector does not pass the exam, reinforce education and provide additional time for data collection, and re-test at a later date.

Training Modules	Web-based	Downloadable	#OfA test test
Hospital	Sender / Receiver	Sender / Receiver	Sender / Receiver
Ambulatory	Sender / Receiver	Sender / Receiver	Sender / Receiver
Home Care	Sender / Receiver	Sender / Receiver	Sender / Receiver
Long Term Care	Sender / Receiver	Sender / Receiver	Sender / Receiver

**Additional Links**

- [Download all audit tools \(.zip\)](#)
- [Operational Definitions](#)
- [Written test for senders](#)
- [Written test for receivers](#)
- [Test answers for senders](#)
- [Test answers for receivers](#)

- The TST<sup>®</sup> provides detailed information on how to train the receiver and sender data collectors. It includes: scenario review and practice with the collection tool and written scenario-based testing.
- The tool outlines the distinctive roles each data collector has, as well as, the data collection methodology in order to obtain a representative sample and non bias data.
- It is important that sender and receiver data collectors are trained separately to avoid confusion between the groups and to maintain anonymity of the senders and receivers while collecting data.

## Measuring Defects and Contributing Factors

**Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare** **Hand-off Communication Tool-RECEIVER**

Date of hand-off (month/day/year): \_\_\_\_\_ Time of hand-off (hh:mm): \_\_\_\_\_

Your role:  Primary physician  Physician designee

Your unit: Adult ICU East Wing 4

Did the hand-off meet your needs to continue caring for the patient?  Yes  No

\*If "No," please check all that apply:

A. The method of communication was ineffective

Check the method(s) that were ineffective for this hand-off.

Chart  Electronic record

Face to face  Fax

Handwritten  Telephone

Text message  Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

B. The timing of the hand-off communication and physical arrival of the patient were not in sync

C. The amount of time provided was inadequate

D. Interruption(s) occurred

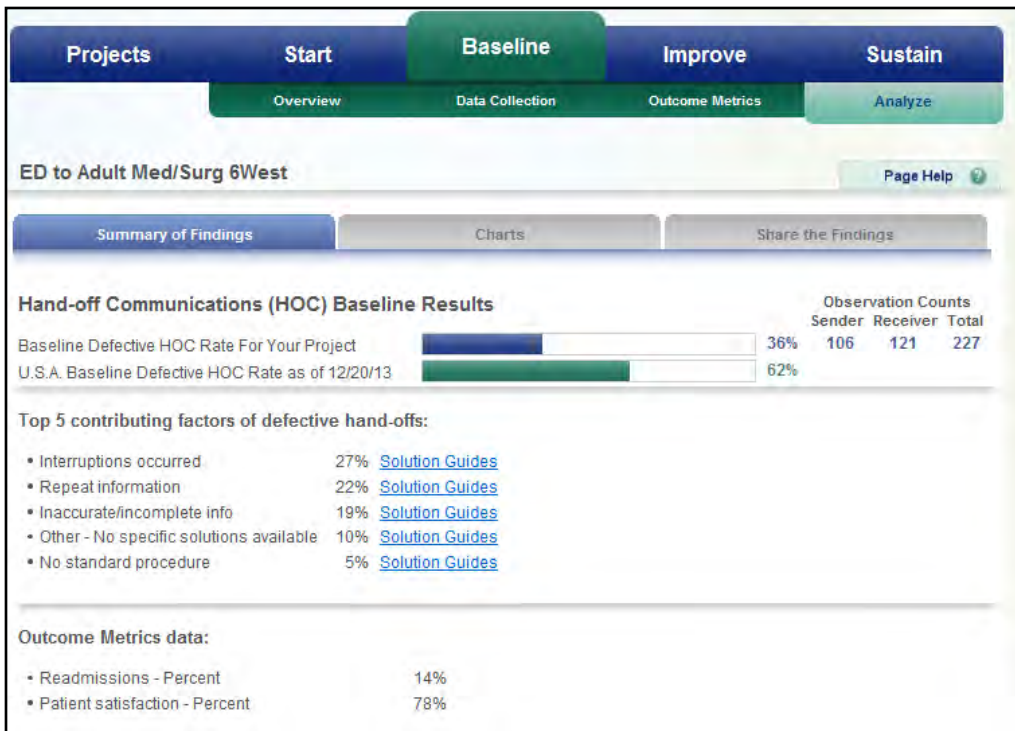
E. Standardized procedures were not followed

F. Staffing was inadequate

G. The sender provided inaccurate or incomplete information Check all that apply.

- This is an example of the data collection form.
- Receiver data collectors will use this form that contains the critical information your team identified for an effective hand-off.
- Sender data collectors will use a different customized data collection form.
- Determine who will enter this data and add them as a team member to the project.

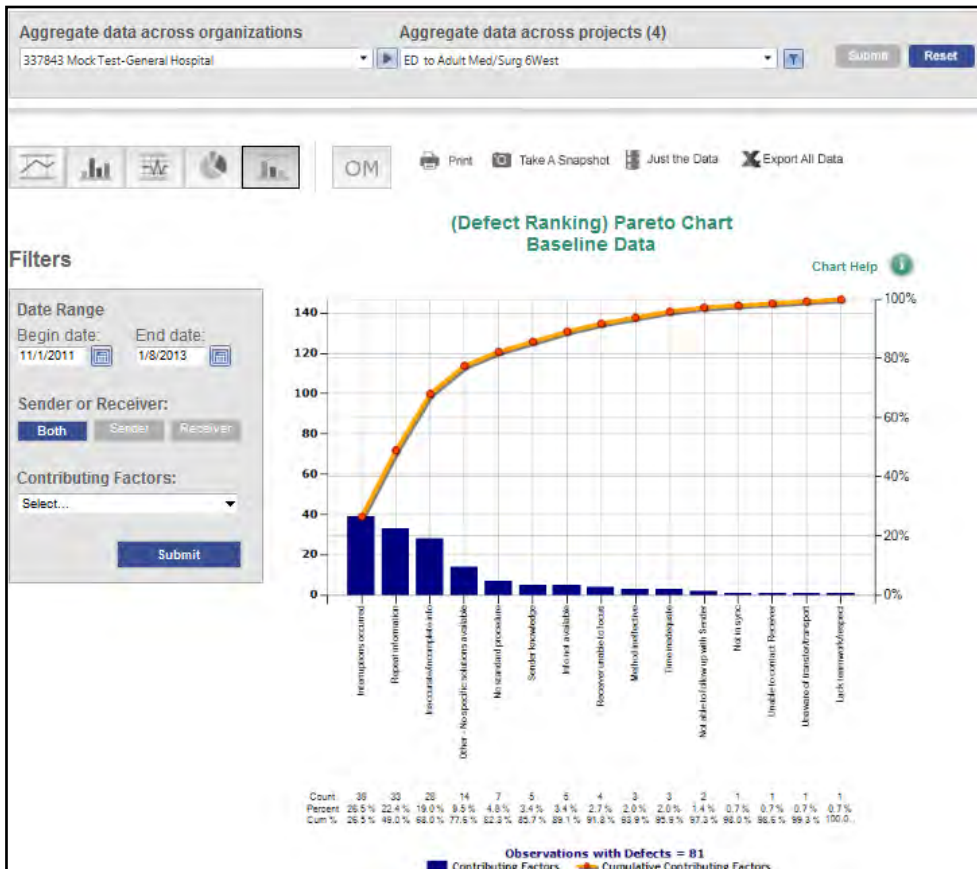
## Baseline Results



- The TST<sup>®</sup> will give real time feed back in terms of number of observations entered by the data collectors and the compliance rate.
- After entering baseline data, the TST<sup>®</sup> will analyze your data and show your baseline hand-off defect rate by receiver, sender and total and contributing factors based on your data collected.
- There are 6 chart options chart options to display results, located on the Charts tab.

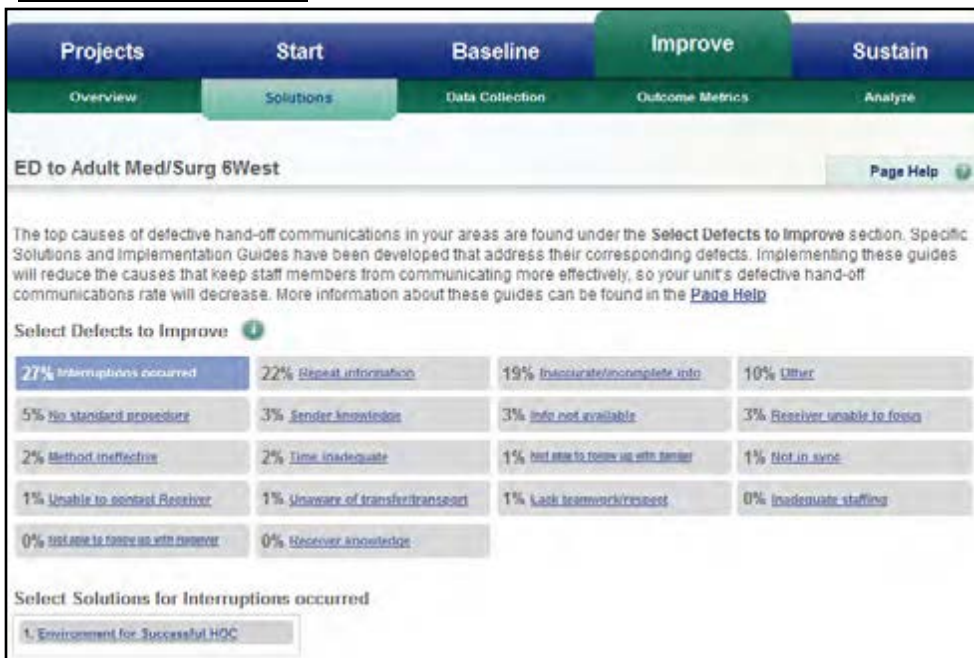


## Determining Factors—Analysis



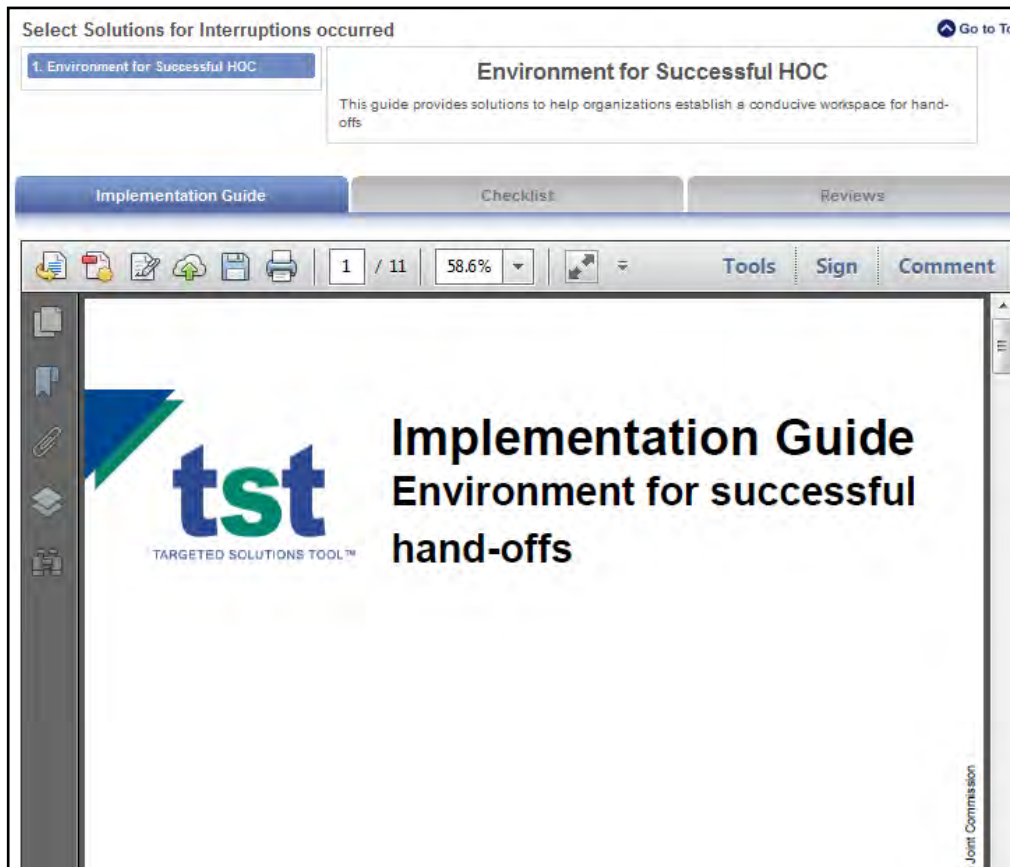
- The Pareto Chart will show why the hand-off did not meet your needs, and rank your contributing factors from highest to lowest frequency based on your data collected.
- The bars of the graph represent the different contributing factors that were identified for why the hand-off did not meet your need.

## Targeted Solutions



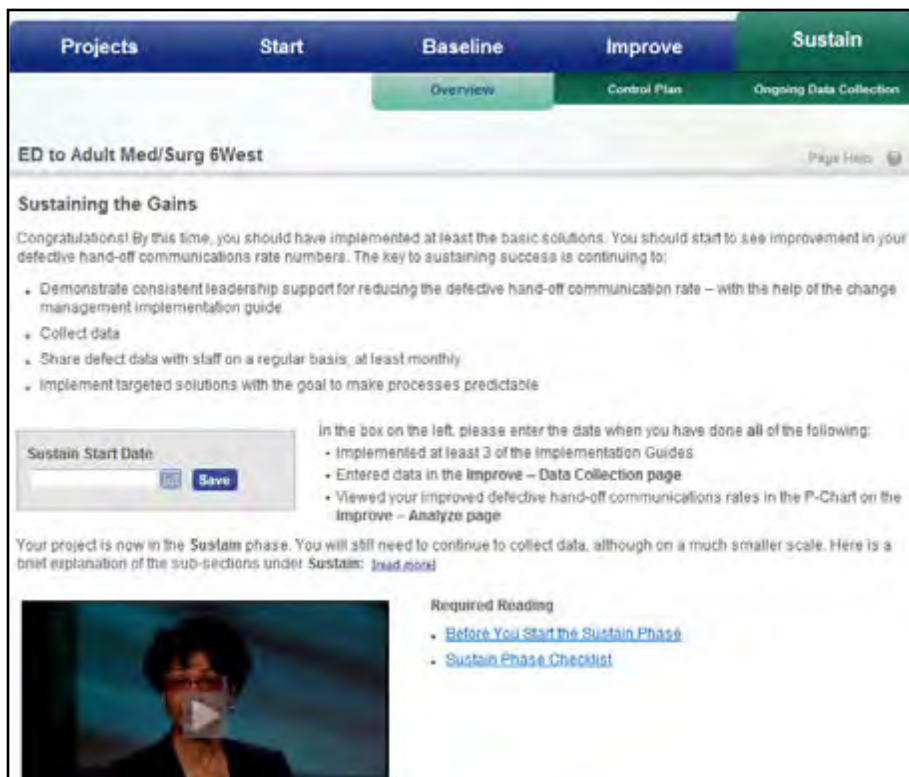
- In the TST<sup>®</sup>, you will find specific Solutions and Implementation Guides for why the hand-off did not meet the sender's and receiver's needs.
- Follow the step-by-step process in the guides to address your contributing factor and use the document to track action items and next steps to plan out your improvement.

## Implementing Solutions



- Bring the senders and receivers together at a team meeting.
- Identify the top contributing factors for your pilot area.
- Select your targeted solutions based on your data and the analysis of your contributing factors.
- Decide who will lead the implementation of the targeted solutions and complete the implementation checklist provided with each solution .
- Enter the date that you implemented solutions for each area.
- Share improvement data with staff.

## Sustaining the Gains



- This section focuses on sustaining the improvements made in your project, replicating results in other areas of your organization, and other considerations to take your project to a higher level.
- Designate someone in each area to “own” the process (for example, the dedicated leader or a setting/area manager).

## Set-up Outcomes Data

**Adult Med/Surg Senders Unit to Ambulatory Care Receivers Area**

**Outcome Metrics (OM)**

Now that you have started on your hand-off communications project, your organization's leaders and staff may want to know if improvements in your hand-off communications project will lead to an improvement in the outcomes you've selected to measure. The following tool can help you track the performance of these outcomes on a monthly basis. It is recommended that you also enter outcome data for the six month period prior to the date you started your project. Then, you can compare the monthly data to see the impact your project is having and if outcomes are improving as a result of your work.

Note: The grid will contain both baseline and improve OM Data  
 Your Baseline Date start date: -  
 Your Improve Date start date: -

Enter your OM Information into the following table:

Outcome Metric	Format	Month	Year	Performance	
Readmissions	Percent	January	2013	30	
Bounce backs	Percent	January			

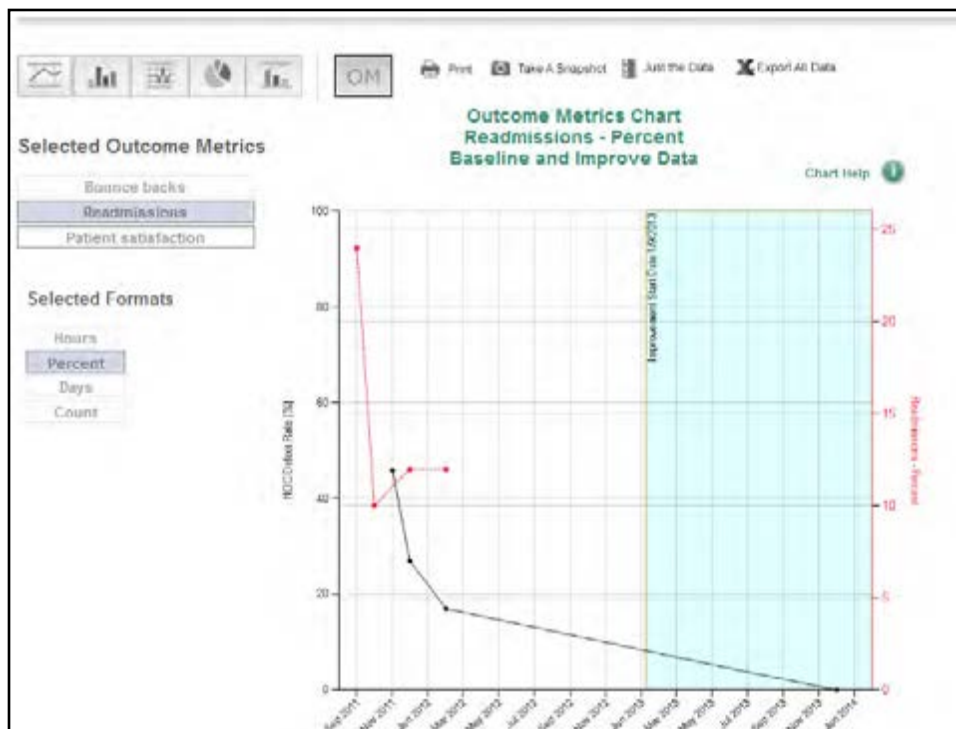
- Beyond defective hand-off, what else would you like to measure? Patient satisfaction, and readmissions?

- In Step 3c, based on the setting for your pilot project, you were given the option to select a measurable outcome to track for improvement, such as readmissions, bounce-backs or medication errors.

- As a result of entering the metric data for the six

month period just prior to implementing solutions for your designated outcome, you can now compare pre- and post implementation outcome metric data. This will allow you to see the impact the hand-off communications project is having on the outcome metrics.

## Updating Outcomes Data



- As part of sustaining the gains you can continue to update outcome data.



## **We Invite You to Join the Growing Number of TST<sup>®</sup> Users**

**For more information about the TST<sup>®</sup>:**

- **Visit the Center website at [www.centerfortransforminghealthcare.org](http://www.centerfortransforminghealthcare.org) or;**
- **Call Customer Service at (630-792-5800) or;**
- **Send an email to [tst\\_support@cth.org](mailto:tst_support@cth.org).**

