Gathering Metrics & Leveraging Data

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Metrics in the IRB Office

• Metrics matter
  – They tell your story
    (Yes, that includes the good, the bad, the ugly)
  – Metrics are powerful – make them work for you

• Metrics are a yardstick
  – They let you look backwards and set a marker for the future
  – They dispel myths and validate facts
Tell Your Story – Trend Spotting

• What does the workload really look like?
  – Do February and October always just ‘feel’ like you’re really busy or are you?
  – Is there really a ‘summer season’ to catch up on old work? (I bet not – so prove it!)

• Look for trends
  – Share trends institutionally and with PIs for awareness
  – Be transparent

Tell Your Story – The Office and its Boards

• How is your work divided among the office staff?
  – Is it uneven
  – Is there a mismatch with the work(load) and the employee

• Is one Board more efficient
  – Or, is it just fewer studies compared to other Boards
Tell Your Story – Turn Around Times

• What is the life-cycle of an application submitted to your office?
  – Be honest
• Think about each step and each person who handles the application
• What can the metrics tell you about your IRBs

Create Your Yardstick

• Each institution and IRB is different
• Inform your own decision-making
  – Look inward
  – Then look at others and benchmark
• Set your goals
  – What’s realistic in the short-term
  – What could the future state look like
Implementing Changes: Using Metrics

• Shake-it-up (you’ve got the data, after all!)
  – Workflows within the office
  – Balancing work between Boards
  – Reviewer assignments
    • Volume
    • Turn around time
• Implement pilot projects
  – Inform the participants
  – Start small

Implementing Change: Follow-thru

• Rerun the metrics to evaluate the data
• Talk to staff and the Boards
  – Some may have seen workloads increase
  – Some may feel scrutiny
  – Be transparent with the data, the goals, and the outcomes
• You will have the data to address system or personnel problems more directly
A Few of Our Efforts

• Balancing
  – Regulatory staff workloads
  – Board workloads

• In-office workflows
  – Administrative reviews
  – Continuing reviews
  – Daily inbox volumes
    • Permits assistance due to illness or vacation

• Even so, there are many variables to conquer and we have a ways to go

Examples of Metrics

• This system is commercially available
• Set up by IT
• Utilization of a data warehouse as the data source
• Reports can be managed by somewhat savvy non-IT types
Final transition from Legacy system to fully electronic system

IRB Office Metrics: By Year

IRB Office Metrics: By Team
IRB Office Metrics: By Individuals within a Team

Direct link to IRB Application: Ability to Ascertain Circumstances