



Ensure Safer Systems: Singapore's Public Healthcare Institutions' Zero Harm Journey Beyond Accreditation

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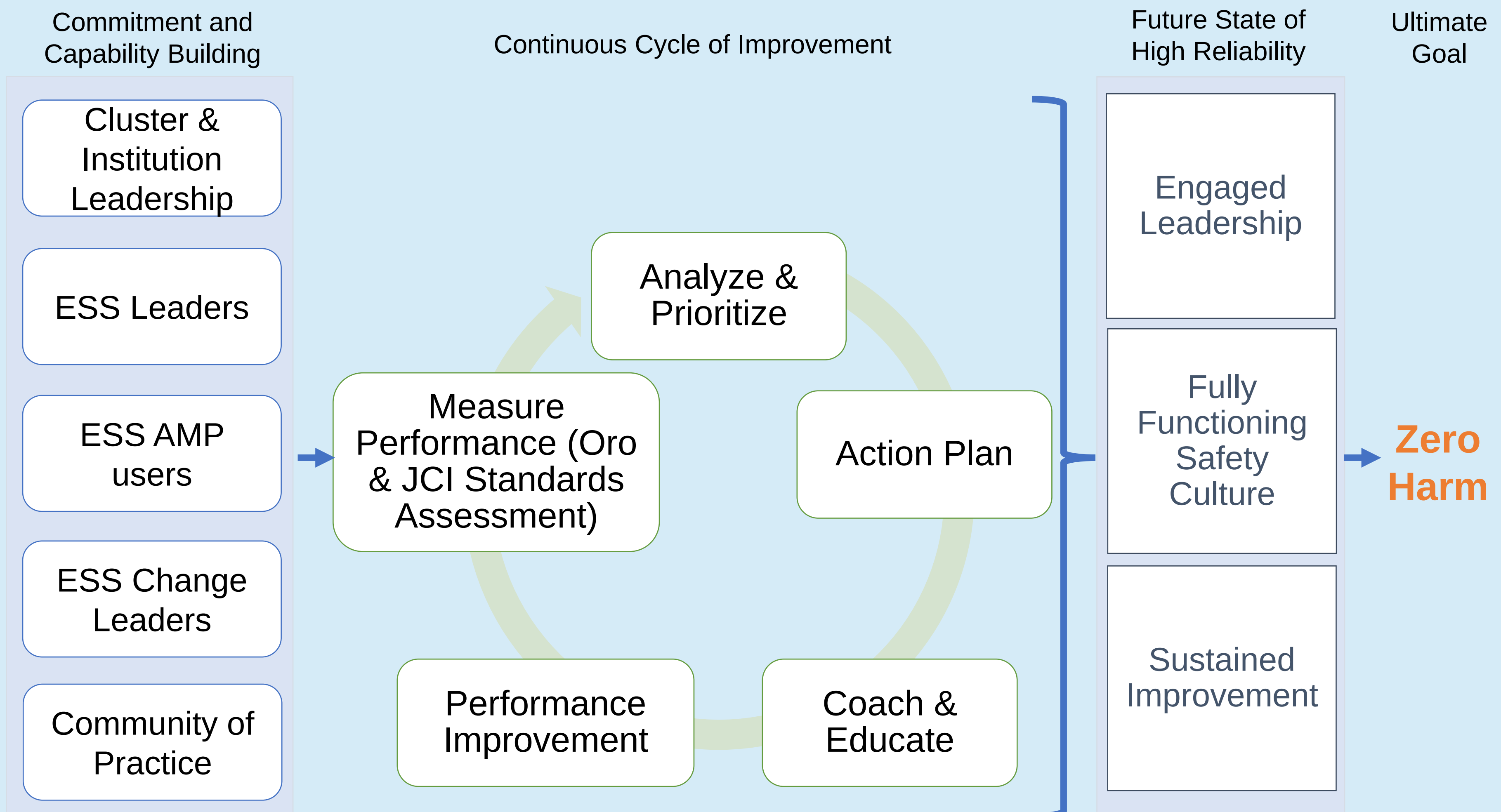
²Joint Commission International

INTRODUCTION & OBJECTIVES

Singapore's healthcare system prides itself with delivering world-class services resulting in health outcomes that are comparable to OECD countries. Extensive accreditation experience under the Joint Commission International (JCI) and greater local expertise and capabilities served as an impetus to develop a Singapore-specific national high reliability strategy leveraging on the expertise of the JCI.

In 2021, MOH embarked on a five-year collaboration with the JCI to develop a systematic approach to raise capabilities to allow for sustainable and credible self-assessment anchored on the principles of high reliability and quality improvement.

Referred to as the **Ensure Safer Systems (ESS)** programme, the collaboration aimed at (a) institutionalising core principles of leadership and safety culture across the system, (b) developing and implementing a Singapore contextualised performance standard manual and evaluation system, (c) training a cadre of quality leaders, (d) providing ongoing support from JCI experts to support organisations in evaluating gaps, prioritising most critical issues, and continually improving quality care and patient safety.



METHOD & RESULTS

ESS was conceptualised and implemented as a multi-phased effort with the participation of public healthcare institutions covering the following six workstreams:

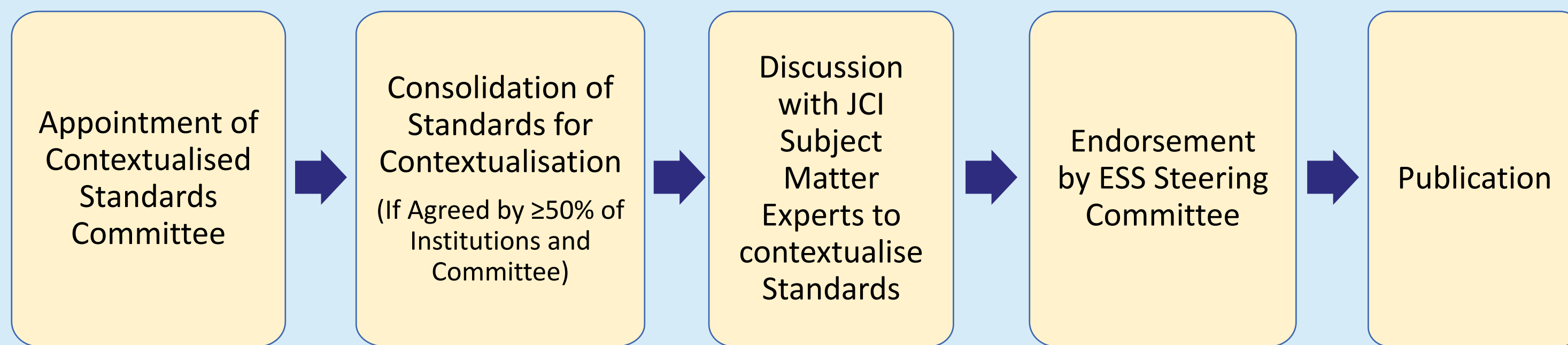
1 Developing a core infrastructure for oversight and governance

- Formation of a Steering Committee, comprising key representatives from the institutions, to serve as a guiding body for the overall project.
- Appointment of at least 1 ESS Leader from each institutions to be in-house champions, and mentors and facilitators for the rest of the staff in their institution.
- Appointment of Cluster Deployment Leaders to co-develop and be accountable for the success of the change management programme.

Results:

- A total of 42 ESS Leaders were appointed.
- 1,586 leaders engaged through 17 introductory webinars/ roadshows.

2 Developing Singapore-contextualised standards for hospitals, ambulatory care centres, and primary care centres



Results:

- Published contextualised 7th ed. Hospital and 4th ed. Ambulatory Care Standards.
- Primary Care Standards will be contextualised by 2024.

3 Developing a customised performance evaluation system including baseline assessments, ongoing coaching for self-assessments, and prioritised action planning for each institution to focus continuous improvement efforts

- Using contextualised standards as the foundation for assessments.
- JCI's software as an enabler.

Results:

- Completed 10 hospital baseline assessments in participating institutions.
- 80 ESS Leaders and core team member trained for self-assessment.

Preliminary feedback from 5 hospitals on their baseline assessment experience:**
Leadership and staff perception have been positive. ESS was viewed as a less stressful and more effective approach to building trust, open communications and teamwork to create an engaging learning experience to improve quality of care and patient safety.

4 Capability building, including change management, through training, coaching, and provision of ongoing improvement expertise

Results:

- Common change management language taught to 250 senior leaders through introductory webinars, 102 senior leaders and 111 leaders engaged and trained through workshops.
- 40 Change Leaders and 8 Master Change Leaders trained.
- 8 Oro® 2.0 facilitators trained.



5 Developing measures for success

- Appointed a workgroup with Subject Matter Experts to deliberate and set the targets for the indicators.

Results:

- Outcome and process measures of success identified.

Outcome Indicators

Primary Indicator

- Reduction in rate of hospital acquired complications (7 domains*)

Secondary Indicators

- Improved Patient Safety Index
- Improved Care Delivery Index
- Improved scores on Staff Engagement Surveys

*pressure ulcers, falls, hospital acquired infections, medication complications, surgical complications, respiratory complications, venous thromboembolism

Process Indicators

Training-related indicator:

- Completion of ESS training for identified staff

Assessment-related indicators:

- Completion of assessments
- Priority areas (high and moderate risk findings) addressed using ESS framework

6 Creating Whole-of-System Enablers for participating institutions

Results:

- Formation of Communities of Best Practices across institutions.
- Development of a ESS users Handbook.
- Formation of Standardised Tracers Development Workgroup.
- Development of digital repository of ESS resource materials.

Insights obtained from the first 2 years:

- Co-development with partners allowed for shared ownership and improved buy-in.
- Hospital leadership commitment to high quality self-assessments and meaningful change via continuous education, training and collaborations is essential.

CONCLUSIONS

Ensure Safer Systems is the Singapore Ministry of Health's developmental journey with public healthcare institutions towards empowering and advocating for patients and staff in a culturally safe environment (non-punitive) to improve quality of care provided by public healthcare institutions.

The adoption of internationally recognised standards that is contextualised to the local setting and greater involvement of stakeholders in its development has the potential to foster greater ownership and sustained active participation by Singapore healthcare institutions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**ESS CDL Prof KH Tan et al. SingHealth Duke-NUS Institute for Patient Safety and Quality. June 2023.

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