Problem Statement
Lean thinking is becoming the mainstay in healthcare management because of rapidly changing policies and the vagaries of the economy.

Understanding the Problem
• “Do more with less,” is becoming the daily mantra for healthcare leaders.
• To do more with less, leaders are turning to the time-proven Lean manufacturing strategies of the Toyota Production System.
• Using the Lean system involves creating improvement through a series of simple changes to alter process flow, leading to better outcomes.

Action Plan
• To address clinical research workflow problems, a work group consisting of HRPP staff, research coordinators, and others from the system was formed to identify opportunities for improvement (OFI).
• We are using Lean strategies and a huddle board.
• The visualization of the projects and the prioritizing implementation helps us to remain focused on completing the tasks.

Huddle Boards
• Standardized visual boards are used to display OFIs within the area.
• Everyone on the team participates in regularly scheduled, short meetings.
• OFIs are described on forms which are placed on the Huddle board.
• All OFIs are categorized by “do-ability” and moved around the board as milestones are achieved.
• Up-dates are provided each time the team meets.
• Success is celebrated.

Action Plan (continued)
• To date, our work group has identified 13 OFIs and has accomplished 3 of them.
• Five OFIs are in progress and 5 OFIs are on hold to keep the workload manageable.
• Overall, the work group is pleased with the progress of the projects and welcomes the opportunity to be part of the solution.

Lessons Learned
• Lean thinking and the use of huddle boards is becoming the gold standard in daily health-care management.
• There are many ways to modify and incorporate these strategies into our daily practice.
• Staff members embrace this new way of thinking because they are involved in the process from start to finish. The best part is celebrating the successes!