

# STANDARD WORKFLOWS & PROTOCOLS

## STANDARDIZATION AT A GLANCE

### THE CORE RATIONALE: WHY STANDARDIZE?

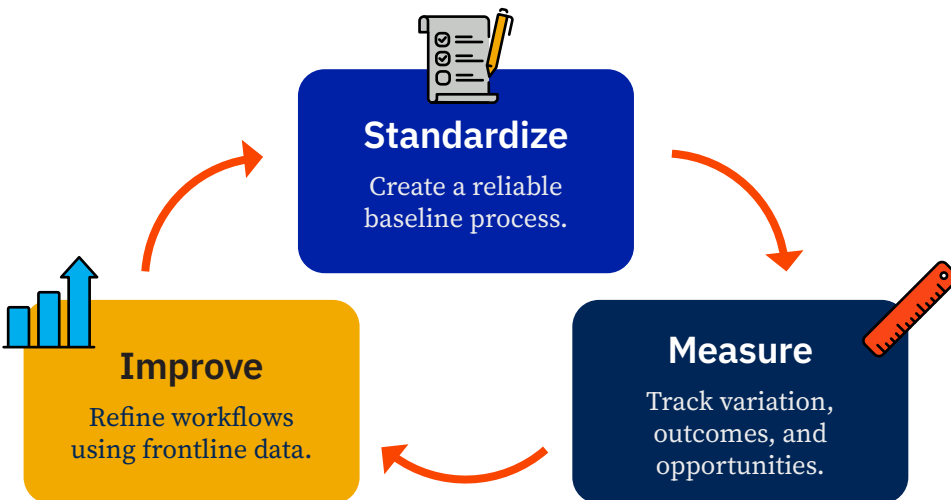
Healthcare is complex, and humans are not perfect at repetitive tasks. Standard workflows act as guardrails to reduce harmful variation.

#### Standardization...

- **Creates a Reliable Baseline:** You cannot measure improvement if everyone performs the task differently.
- **Offloads Cognitive Burden:** Preserves mental energy for complex cases.
- **Prevents Missed Steps:** Keeps care consistent during high-volume or high-stress shifts.

### QI SUSTAINABILITY

QI projects fade when they rely on human memory instead of system design. To sustain improvements, embed the new process directly into everyday workflows.



#### The Air Traffic Control Metaphor



Just as standard flight paths and radio protocols free pilots to handle the unexpected...

Standard clinical workflows handle the **routine** — preserving clinical team members' critical thinking for **complex, individualized care**.

#### The MYTH of Rigidity

##### Myth

Standardization eliminates clinical judgment.

##### Reality

Standardization **supports** clinical judgment.

The goal is not rigid medicine.

**The goal is reliable medicine with thoughtful flexibility.**

### REDUCING HARM: PROVEN EXAMPLES

Standardization consistently reduces preventable harm by helping teams perform reliably.

#### Surgical Safety Checklists

Standardized pre-incision verification reduces wrong-site surgeries, missed allergies, and operative complications.

#### Medication Reconciliation Protocols

Systematically verifying home medications against new hospital orders safeguards against adverse drug events.

#### Chest Pain Pathway

Ensures prompt, evidence-based evaluation and reduces delays while preserving clinical judgment for atypical presentations.