

# Assessing Quality in a State Health Department: Opportunities & Challenges

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# Presenter Disclosure

The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose



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# Background & Need

- Top officials from MN local public health departments have participated in three years of the Multi-State Learning Collaborative (MLC).
- Identified a need to examine quality improvement (QI) maturity from all staff levels within an organization.
- Wanted to establish baseline level of QI maturity at a state health department.



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# Objectives

- Broaden administration of the *QI Maturity Tool* beyond the top executive
- Explore novel approaches to maximize response rate
- Test the feasibility and value of expanded administration to all health department employees

Survey developed as part of the Multi-State Learning Collaborative,  
University of Southern Maine (USM)



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# Expected Outcomes

- Increased awareness of the role of the respondent and how a broader administration may affect QI maturity results for an organization.
- Strategies for promoting on-line surveys and increasing response rates.
- Concept of QI maturity score for public health and potential next steps for its use.

# Study Population & Methods to Increase Response Rate

- All 1,537 employees of the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) were surveyed in June 2011.
- Staff in the MDH Office of Performance Improvement (OPI) identified over 500 personal contacts for targeted solicitations.
- A series of multiple, targeted electronic reminders, as well as a personal email from the Deputy Commissioner of Health.



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# Survey Instrument

- Modified version of the *QI Maturity Tool*, distributed via Vovici survey software
- Two questions on accreditation
- All questions related to QI were retained
- MDH Executive Office included five additional questions related to employee empowerment and cultural competency
- Changed point of reference to “division” in some instances.



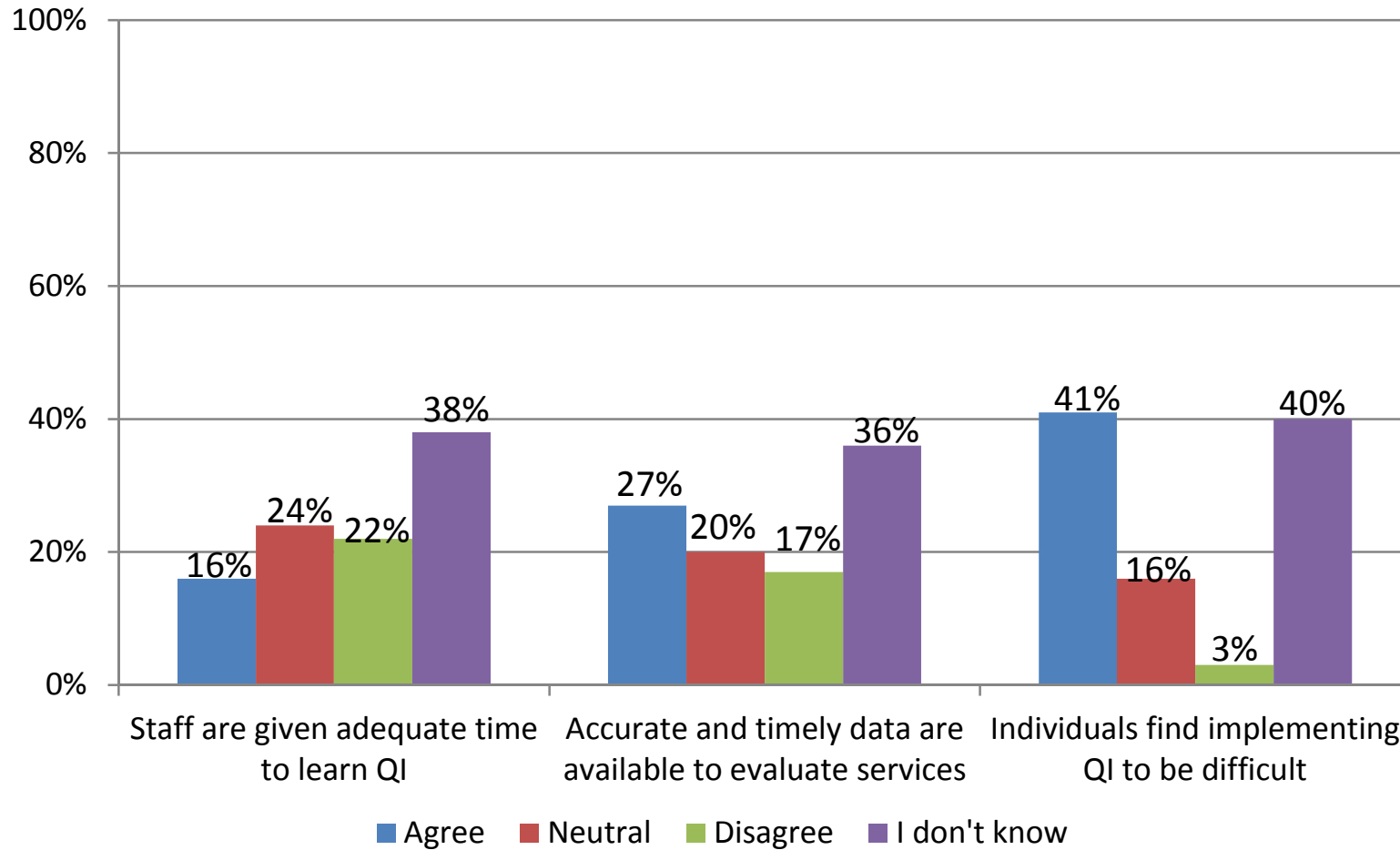
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# Response Profile

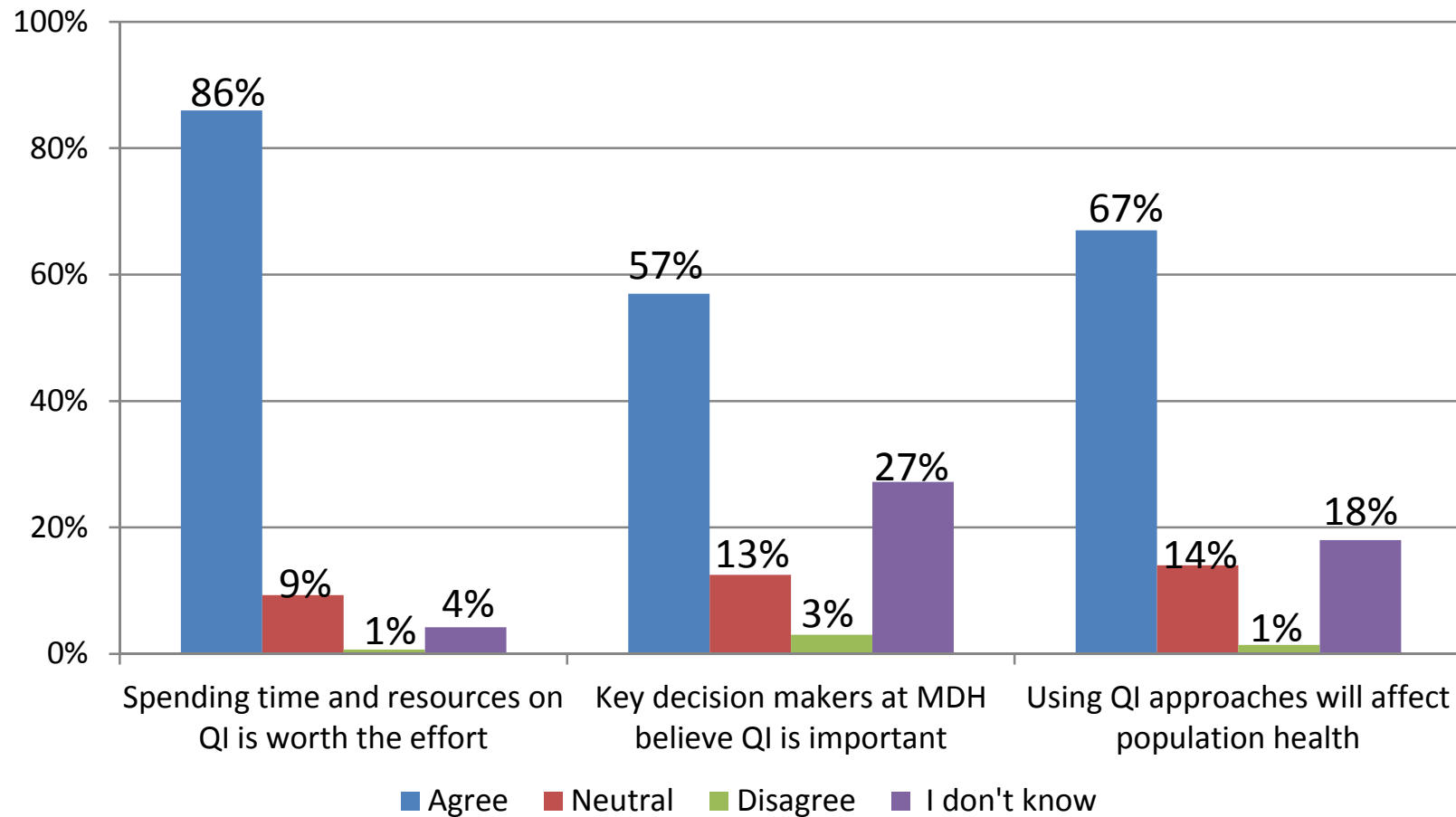
- Of the 1,537 employees surveyed, 1,111 responded (73%). Of those, 92% had complete data for analysis
- Response rates differed by job classification, ranging from 56-75%
- Division-specific response rates also varied, ranging from 65-92%



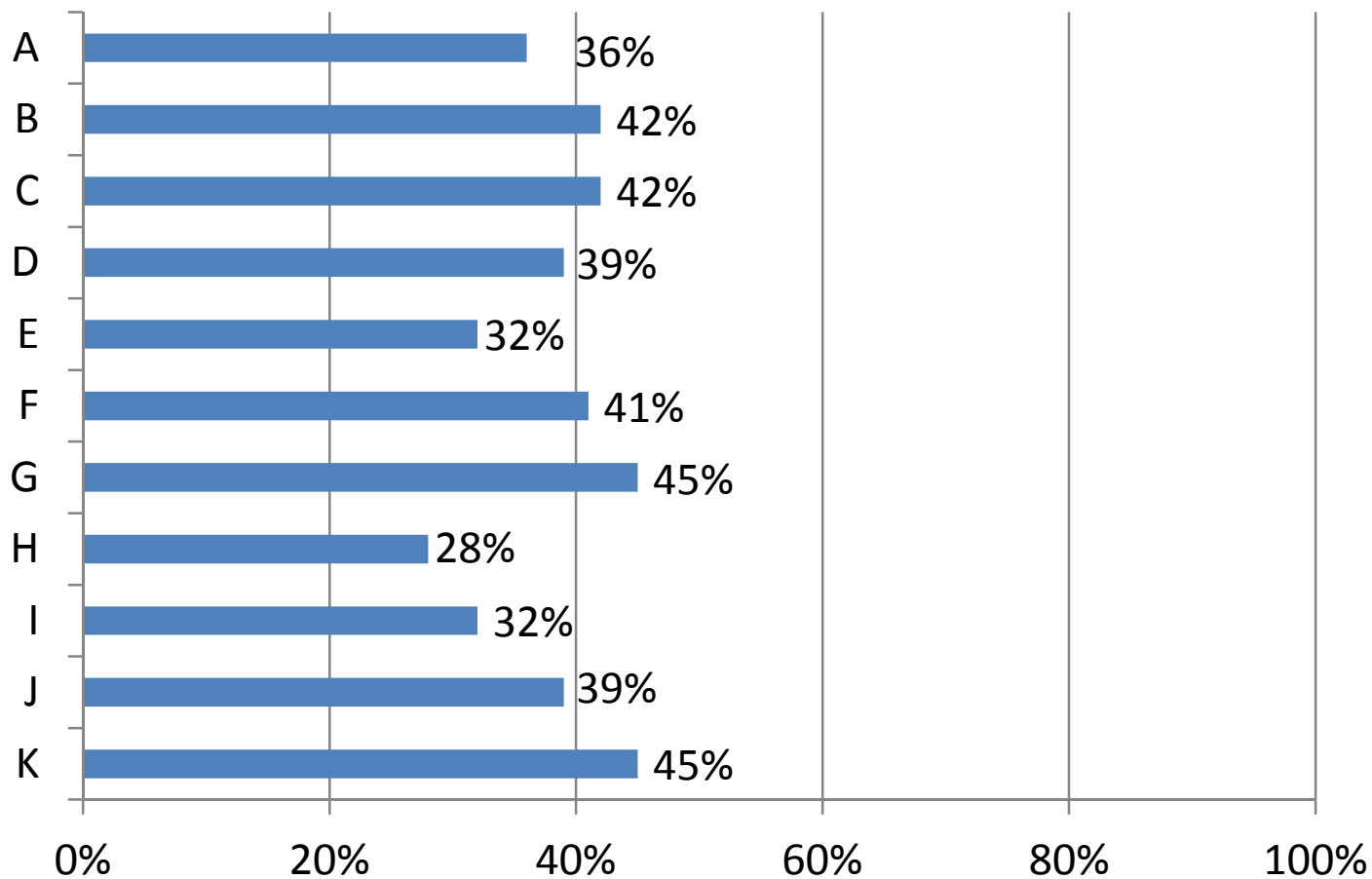
# Results



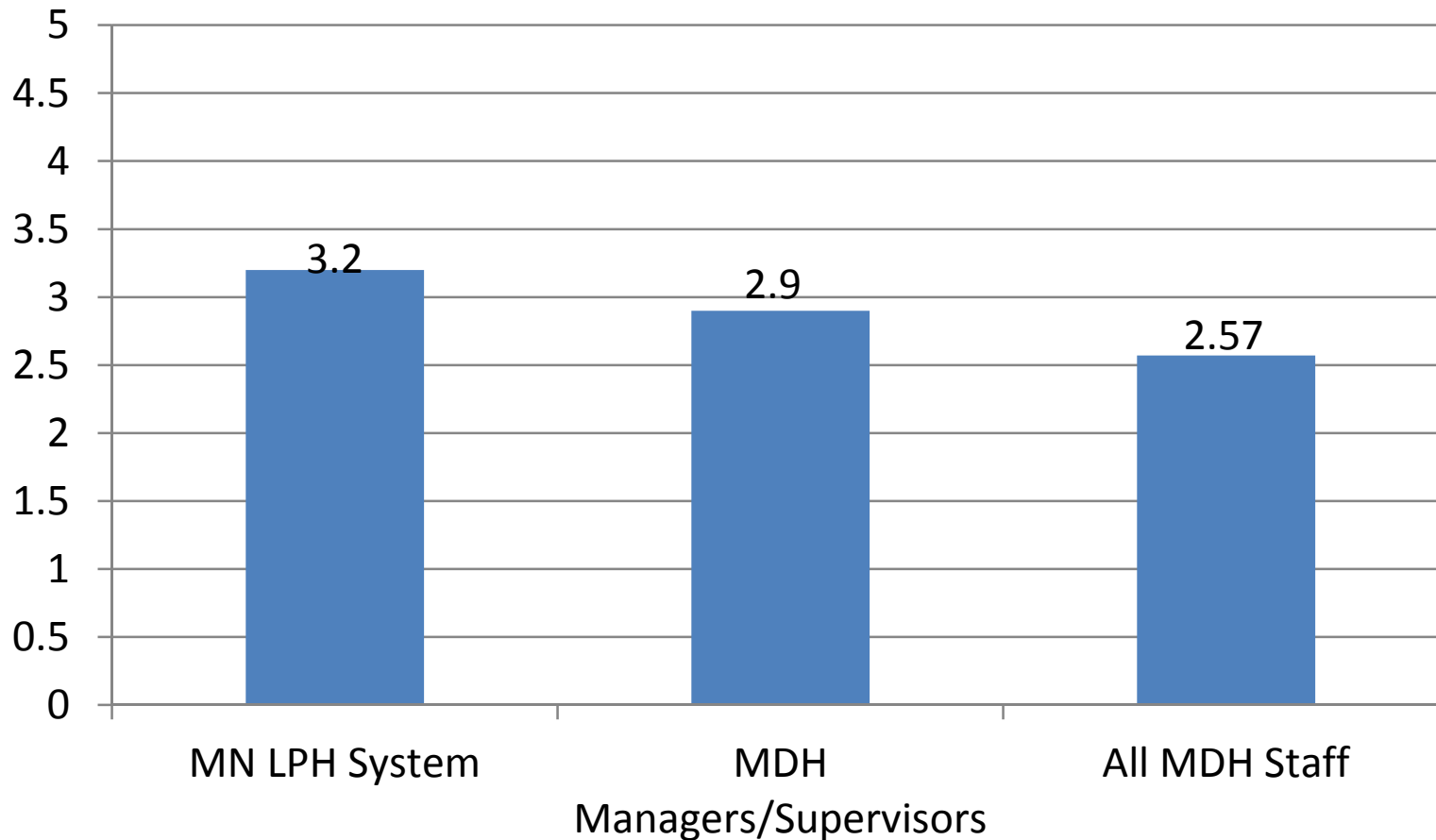
# Results



# Division-Specific Results: Staff have the authority to change programs or influence policies (agree/strongly agree)



# Preliminary QI Maturity Score



\*Score developed in consultation with USM, University of MN and MN PBRN.  
Scores range from 1.0 (no QI) to 5.0 (strong QI culture)



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# Overall Results

- Most seem to experience a spirit of collegiality within MDH and many agree that MDH is a learning organization. Yet this experience is not universal.
- Employees widely view QI as challenging. Specific challenges include: having authority to work within and across program boundaries, integrating QI into daily work, and using/sharing data for improvement.
- MDH employees express near universal agreement that they do not have adequate time or support to learn QI.
- Yet even with difficulties in executing QI, there was high employee buy-in to the importance of it.



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# Conclusions

- Results suggest variation in QI maturity across MDH by division and by job class.
- Supervisors/managers tended to have higher rates of agreement than professional, technical and administrative staff.
- “I don’t know” a meaningful response in this organizational-wide administration.
- Our strategy (personal contacts) contributed to the high response rate, particularly for an online survey.



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# Discussion/Next Steps

- This project surfaced potential tensions between research and practice (e.g., acting on findings while protecting confidentiality and resisting the urge to publicly compare divisions)
- Results have been useful within MDH to inform QI technical assistance and training, and as baseline data for the newly established QI Council.
- More focus on the use of a QI maturity score for tracking trends and research opportunities.

# Acknowledgements

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# For More Information

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