



Rochester Section

Excellence Through Quality®

ROC Excellence 2026 Conference November 5, 2026

INCLUDES:

- Breakfast, Lunch & Free Parking
- Registration & Check begins at 7:00 am
- Conference Ends at 4:00 pm

RIT CONVENTION CENTER

5257 W Henrietta Rd
Henrietta NY 14467

THEME: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

KEYNOTE: Beyond the Prescription: Quality Improvement Strategies for Sustainable Opioid Stewardship.

Dr. Jacob Moalem MD, FACS

Is a Professor of Surgery (Endocrine Surgical Oncology) and Professor of Medicine (Endocrinology/Metabolism) at the [University of Rochester Medical Center \(URMC\)](#). A highly regarded endocrine surgeon and surgical oncologist.

TRACKS INCLUDE:

- **Fundamentals of Quality Tools**

Principals of Quality Costs, Fundamental Statistics, Avoiding Project Pitfalls, Gurus, Excel Pivot Tables, Minitab and Minitab Alternatives!

- **Quality in Healthcare and Leadership**

Learn what distinguishes leaders from managers. Experience real examples of how good leadership and the application of quality tools impacted both the bottom line and patient satisfaction!

- **Empowering the Workforce & Process Improvement**

AI Integration into Lean Six Sigma projects. Workforce empowerment strategies.

ASQ Member Ticket

\$55 (Early Bird \$40)

Non Member Ticket

\$169 (Early Bird \$149)

GRQC Member Ticket

\$75 (Early Bird \$55)

ASQ Student Member

Ticket \$20

Vendor Ticket (1 Person) \$300

Vendor Ticket (Extra Persons) \$45



Register at: ASQRochester.org
(Early Bird Ends October 15th)

ROC Excellence 2026

Seneca Room

Oneida Room

7:00 – 7:45		Registration / Breakfast	
7:45 – 8:00		Welcome: Onondaga Room	
8:00 – 8:40	Session 1	Foundation Quality: Gurus & Mathless Statistics - E. Alden	Empowering the Workforce - What comes first? T. Callanan
8:45 – 9:30	Session 2	Excel & Minitab for Analytics E. Alden	AI in the Driver's Seat – LSS to Lead AI-Enabled Evolution E. Verma
9:35 – 10:15	Session 3	Lean Six Sigma Project Pitfalls – E. Askey, P. Campbell	Using Cost of Quality to Align, Control, and Improve W. F. Pruitt
10:15 – 10:30		Break	
10:30 – 11:10	Session 4	Aspects of Quality Control B. Lerner	Reimagining the Hospital Discharge Program A.Tatro, D.Organ, N. Cox
11:15 – 12:00	Session 5	Quality at the Speed of People: Workforce Development into QMS F. Allen	RGH -5 Day Problem Solving A Guide to facilitating a Sprint D. Davison
12:00 – 1:00		Lunch: Onondaga Room Keynote Address –Dr. Jacob Moalem MD, FACS Beyond the Prescription: Low-Cost Quality Improvement Strategies for Sustainable Opioid Stewardship	
1:00 - 1:30		Announcing ASQ Rochester’s 2026 STEM Grant Recipients	
1:30 - 2:15	Session 6	Watch the Cup: A Foundational Process Improvement Experience 90-Minute Workshop S. Topham	Empowering the Workforce Through Apprenticeship Pathways B. Rottenburg, R. Thompson
2:15 – 3:00	Session 7		RIT Student Project Presentations
3:00 – 3:20		Conference Raffle and Closing	
3:30 – 4:30		Networking / Happy Hour	

Keynote Address –Dr. Jacob Moalem MD, FACS

Beyond the Prescription: Low-Cost Quality Improvement Strategies for Sustainable Opioid Stewardship

Title: Beyond the Prescription: Scalable, Low-Cost Quality Improvement Strategies for Sustainable Opioid Stewardship

Abstract:

Overprescribing postoperative opioids remains a pervasive challenge in surgical care, frequently leaving large quantities of unused controlled substances vulnerable to misuse within communities. This keynote address explores how the [University of Rochester Medical Center \(URMC\) Department of Surgery](#) tripled its initial quality improvement goals, achieving an extraordinary 67% reduction in discharge opioid prescriptions across 6,619 patients and 15 distinct surgical procedures.

Led by Dr. Jacob Moalem, this multi-phase project pivoted away from traditional, rigid prescription defaults toward a low-cost, self-sustaining opioid stewardship paradigm. By integrating evidence-based multimedia patient education, clinical prescribing guides, customized electronic medical record (EMR) pathways, and real-time dashboard data tracking, the initiative successfully aligned provider habits with actual patient needs. Crucially, 70% of surgical patients were safely discharged with no opioid medications whatsoever, maintaining high satisfaction without any increase in patient-reported pain concerns. Attendees will gain actionable insights into designing scalable, multidisciplinary quality improvement interventions that challenge historical clinical assumptions, empower patient decision-making, and deliver lasting community-wide impact.

Fundamentals of Quality Tools Track

Foundation Quality: Gurus and “Mathless” Statistics Eric Alden LSS Master Blackbelt, CRE, CQE, ASQ Fellow

Part 1 acknowledges the quality gurus who created the foundation of the current quality body of knowledge and then delves into “Mathless Statistics”! One does not need complex mathematics to utilize the power of statistics. Random occurrences tend to distribute into bell shaped normal distributions. Properties of the normal distribution can be estimated visually! While the normal distribution is the basis for many decision-making tools, not all distributions are bell shaped. Luckily, the Central Limit Theorem can transform any shape distribution into a normally approximated distribution. This property enables decision making tools such as Hypothesis Testing, Statistical Process Control, Process Capability and Gage R&R. Visualizing distributions enable comprehension without complex math!!!

Excel & Minitab for Analytics Eric Alden

Part two of the workshop will introduce the Excel spreadsheet structure required for analytics. Once correctly structured, many analytic tools and Pivot Tables are enabled! Demonstrations will be presented of frequently used functions, tips to clean data, pareto charts, pivot tables, and importing data into Minitab for deeper transcendental experiences of becoming “One with Data, It’s a beautiful thing!!!”

Eric Alden has been practicing quality and reliability engineering in the Rochester Area for over 25 years. Eric is a Xerox Certified Lean Six Sigma Master Blackbelt and has recently retired from Xerox as a reliability manager and is developing his consulting practice, All Done Analytics LLC. He holds a Masters degree from RIT in Quality and Applied Statistics, and an undergraduate degree from RIT in Mechanical Engineering. Eric is active board member of both Rochester ASQ and the Greater Rochester Quality Council. He is an ASQ Fellow and holds CRE, CQE, CQM and CSSBB certifications. Eric has presented at numerous dinner meetings, conferences and seminars, and tackles this subject matter with passion and exuberance in an entertaining style.

Lean Six Sigma Project Pitfalls

Eileen Askey LSS MBB, PMP, CISM; Pat Campbell, LSS MBB, PMP, CISM

This session will walk through pitfalls of lean six sigma projects and leave you with ideas and ways your next project will be successful! So, you are a greenbelt and are excited to be starting a new project! Your manager wants to sponsor you on a project to solve a problem in operations that is affecting Sales and Customer Satisfaction. You ask to see the charter and your sponsor tells you to write it. Ok, you are a good green belt, so you get to work. You request your perfect team and find out that most of them are unavailable. Your sponsor gives you a team to work with. You don't know any of them very well. You haven't even started and there are already challenges. How do you proceed? You start into the Define Phase and after getting agreement from the team on the work needed arrive at the Define tollgate. What can you expect here? What other challenges can you expect during the remainder of the phases? What if you learn something in Measure/Analyze that completely changes the direction of the project. What if your sponsor leaves the company? What if the best solution takes too long or is too expensive? You are finally ready to implement a solution and all of sudden someone doesn't agree. What happens next?

Eileen Askey, LSS Master Blackbelt, PMP, CISM

Eileen Askey has a Master's Degree in Organizational Management from Roberts Wesleyan, and over 35 years of experience in Process Improvement, Physical, and Information Security. She has led multiple cross functional projects resulting in cost and time savings and has taught and coached numerous Lean Six Sigma candidates; Additionally, she is a certified Project Manager, Certified Information Security Manager, and former board member of GRQC. She is currently an Adjunct Instructor at RIT Certified teaching LSS Courses.

Pat Campbell, LSS Master Blackbelt, PMP

Pat Campbell has a Master's Degree in Applied Statistics from RIT and over 45 years of experience in Engineering Management and Quality Management. She is a Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belt. She has led multiple cross functional projects resulting in cost and time savings. Her experience includes teaching and coaching numerous Lean Six Sigma Black and Green Belt candidates. Additionally, she is a certified Project Manager, Certified Information Security Manager, and former board member of GRQC. She is currently an Adjunct Instructor at RIT Certified teaching LSS Courses.

Beyond the Big Number: Using Cost of Quality to Align, Control, and Improve

W. Frazier Pruitt, CQC, CSSBB,

Cost of Quality (COQ) -. This advanced session uses the Juran Trilogy as an organizing logic for strategic COQ. Participants start with customers and stakeholders and map their needs to strategic objectives, KPIs, COQ measures. In control, a COQ Control Checklist and a control chart are used to distinguish actual performance change from changes. **In improvement**, a disciplined PDCA approach as described in the Principles of Quality Costs, fifth edition, uses dollar Pareto analysis to select an opportunity and execute methods such as CAPA, 8D, or DMAIC. Financial and accounting concepts are introduced only where they improve the decision. Uncertainty can be evaluated without turning the session into a finance class. Participants leave with a practical structure for aligning COQ, interpreting it responsibly, and converting it into sustained action.

W. Frazier Pruitt was named the 2024 Young Engineer of the Year by the Rochester Engineering Society. He is a 2021 ASQ 40 Under 40 award winner and currently serves as Quality Supervisor at Corning Inc., while remaining active in both the Finance Officers of the Geographic Communities Council (GCC) and Rochester ASQ. Pruitt has BS degree in electrical-mechanical engineering from the RIT, dual MBA degrees from Indiana University and the Alliance Manchester Business School in the United Kingdom. He is a member of the U.S. TAG to ISO/TC 176, contributing to the development of ISO 9001. He serves on the ASQ NextGen Advocacy Committee. Pruitt is co-author of the Principles of Quality Costs, Fifth Edition, and has published in Quality Progress. He has also spoken at the ASQ World Conference on Quality and Improvement.

AI in the Driver's Seat - Positioning Lean Six Sigma to Lead the Enterprise's AI-Enabled Evolution

Ela Verma

"AI in the Driver's Seat," introduces a strategic framework demonstrating how LSS's DMAIC can convert fragmented AI pilots into a financially defensible enterprise capability. Artificial intelligence is fundamentally repositioning Lean Six Sigma (LSS). - Not as a downstream process-improvement function, but as the discipline best equipped to govern, scale, and validate AI-driven transformation. Central to this framework is workforce empowerment. Technology alone does not generate value; sustained value emerges only when roles, workflows, and behaviors change. The session presents change-management practices that equip employees to redesign their work around AI rather than absorb it as an unassimilated add-on.

Attendees will leave with a replicable roadmap connecting workforce readiness, quality discipline, and governance to profitable growth—positioning Lean Six Sigma as the catalyst that transforms AI investment from experimental technology spend into durable, enterprise-wide competitive advantage. This session offers actionable insights for quality leaders navigating AI at global scale.

Ela Verma is the Global Director, Lean Six Sigma CoE at Verisk. She is a Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belt, enterprise transformation executive, with more than 18 years of experience leading large-scale process excellence programs. Her work at Verisk has contributed to approximately \$100 million in cumulative financial impact. Throughout her career, Ela has applied Lean Six Sigma, DMAIC, DFSS/DMADV, Agile, systems thinking, and change management to solve complex business problems and strengthen quality, productivity, and financial performance. Ela holds a MBA in finance and is a certified Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belt and Black Belt trainer. She is actively affiliated with ASQ.

Aspects of Quality Control

B. Lerner

This presentation examines Supplier Quality Control through the Cost of Quality model and emphasizing the benefits of “shifting left”—moving quality activities toward prevention and early detection rather than relying on costly corrective action. Effective Supplier Quality Control requires a structured approach to ensuring that suppliers consistently meet both product quality and on-time delivery. The presentation examines the significant internal and external failure costs that can result from inadequate supplier controls, including scrap, rework, schedule disruption, warranty costs, corrective action, customer dissatisfaction, and lost business. A proactive supplier quality strategy helps organizations identify risks earlier, reduce total quality costs, and build stronger, more reliable supplier relationships.

Bob Lerner is the founder of RL-QMS LLC, a consulting firm providing supplier quality, manufacturing quality, quality management system, auditing, training, in area such as of ISO 9001, AS9100, APQP, PPAP, First Article Inspection. Bob brings more than 40 years of engineering, manufacturing, and quality management experience in his career has included roles in manufacturing engineering, quality engineering, supplier quality, quality management systems, and independent consulting across aerospace, electronics, medical device, and industrial manufacturing environments.

Empowering the Workforce & Process Improvement

Empowering the Workforce - What comes first?

Presenter: T. Callanan

“Empowering the Workforce” is the theme for this year’s RS-ASQ Conference. But, what do we mean by empowerment? And, what does it take to achieve it? This presentation is geared for leaders and staff alike who want to build – and be part of - empowered work environments free of fear. We’ll discuss two precursors that are required.

Terry Callanan has years of experience driving process improvements while at Eastman Kodak and Carestream Health. He served as Kodak’s Director of Quality for Global Equipment Manufacturing, and Carestream’s Chief Quality Officer and then its Chief Culture Officer.

Today, Terry is the founder and owner of WalkOn Consulting, a training and consulting firm partnering with organizations to build better ways of working, develop leaders, empower employees, and create cultures of continuous improvement.

Terry has a Ph.D. in Statistics from Iowa State University and a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt from Kodak. He has served as a reviewer for the New York State Baldrige program, and has presented and published numerous papers through the American Statistical Association, ASQ, and other quality organizations.

Quality at the Speed of People: Workforce Development into QMS Franklin Allen

Integrating Workforce Development into Quality Management Systems

This presentation explores the strategic intersection of workforce development and operational excellence. Moving beyond the "check-the-box" approach to compliance training, this session examines how organizations can leverage ISO 9001 competency frameworks, dynamic skill matrices, and standardized work instructions to build a resilient, high-performing workforce. Attendees will analyze how to shift organizational culture from passive training to verified frontline competency, treat frontline staff as co-creators of quality documentation, and establish structured knowledge-transfer mechanisms. This presentation equips quality managers and engineers with practical, data-driven strategies to treat human infrastructure with the same rigor and continuous improvement applied to technical processes.

Franklin Allen is a Program Manager at Avangrid known for combining process expertise and creative talent to lead organizations through complex continuous improvement journeys. Franklin is the current Chair of the Rochester ASQ Chapter and an active contributor to the local professional community and has presented at [ASQ](#), IIE, and the Greater Rochester Quality Council’s Performance Excellence Forum. He is the recipient of the 2010 Leader of Excellence Award from Highland Hospital, a leadership certificate from Cornell University’s S.C. Johnson Graduate School of Management and published co-authorship in the *American Journal of Infection Control*.

Empowering the Workforce Through Apprenticeship Pathways

RTMA Bill Rottenburg & Ruth Thompson

RTMA has proven workforce development models that strengthen the talent pipeline! The challenges facing manufacturers today require innovative, practical solutions that attract, develop, and retain skilled talent. Participants will explore how programs such as Real-Life Rosies, Advanced to Apprenticeship, and registered Apprenticeship Programs introduce underrepresented populations and emerging workers to long-term employment. Through real-world case studies, success stories, and lessons learned, attendees will gain actionable strategies for building workforce readiness programs that align with quality objectives and operational excellence.

This workshop is ideal for quality professionals, manufacturing leaders, human resource teams, workforce development practitioners, educators, and community partners seeking effective approaches to closing skills gaps while advancing excellence in manufacturing and quality performance.

Bill Rottenburg is currently the Director of Workforce Development for the Rochester Technology & Manufacturing Association (RTMA). He has 31 years in education with the last 13 focused on Workforce Development. Bill has worked in K-12 education as a teacher, coach, and principal in the Finger Lakes region. He later moved on to Monroe Community college where he focused on creating access to college level Career & Technical education for high school students.

Watch the Cup: A Foundational Process Improvement Experience

Format: 90-Minute Workshop

S. Topham

Watch the Cup is an engaging, hands-on workshop built around a familiar everyday analogy that makes process thinking click - fast. Participants discover and discuss real processes from their own organizations, building the confidence to keep going after they leave the room.

The foundational Lean Six Sigma concepts of value streams, process identification, and current-state analysis are introduced through doing!

Every process improvement journey begins in the same place: understanding the current state. But seeing the work, especially when systems, technology, and people are involved, is harder than it sounds. Whether frontline staff or executive, healthcare or nonprofit, Watch the Cup provides a new lens on the work in any organization. Takeaways include a completed Process Identification Worksheet, and a clear next step toward improvement.

Sarah Topham is the founder of Sarah Topham Consulting, an independent process improvement consultancy. A Lean Six Sigma Black Belt with more than 20 years of experience across the financial, higher education, and healthcare industries, she helps organizations increase productivity without adding staff or technology. While her primary focus is higher education, she brings the same rigor to nonprofits and small service providers navigating similar operational challenges.

Quality in Healthcare and Leadership

Discharge to Recovery: Reimagining Transitions of Care Through the Hospitalist Discharge Program

Adam Tatro, Danielle Organ, Nicole Cox

Hospital readmissions often begin long before a patient returns to the emergency department. Missed appointments, unresolved test results, medication discrepancies, communication gaps, and limited post-discharge support can all contribute to preventable returns to care. The Hospitalist Discharge Program was designed to close these gaps through a proactive, system wide approach to transitional care. This presentation highlights Rochester Regional Health's innovative post-discharge model that follows high-risk patients during the critical first seven days after leaving the hospital.

Attendees will learn how the program was designed, implemented, and scaled across multiple hospitals while integrating with existing resources. This presentation offers practical strategies for creating a coordinated, patient-centered discharge process that improves continuity of care and delivers measurable results.

Adam Tatro is currently the Vice President of Quality for Rochester Regional Health. He received his BS, MS and Doctorate from the University of Rochester School of Nursing. He has worked with UPMC in areas including clinical research, population health, informatics, analytics and care management and has taught at the University of Rochester School of Nursing, and also as the Director of IT at the Villa of Hope. Through the use of Lean, and Change Management principles, Adam has transformed clinical care to a higher quality of care. Adam is passionate about the work that he does to improve the care and the lives of the patients that are served in the Rochester community.

Nicole Cox, PA-C, MS-HSM is the Manager of Advanced Practice Providers for Rochester General Hospital's Hospital Medicine Program. Nicole earned her PA degree from the RIT and later completed a MS in Health Systems Management. She has more than 15 years of clinical experience as a PA in Hospital Medicine, Nicole has developed expertise in care transitions, interdisciplinary team collaboration, and operational excellence within acute care settings. She is an APP leader and is passionate about quality improvement, performance excellence, and patient safety, with a particular interest in designing and implementing initiatives that improve patient outcomes, enhance care delivery, and support high-reliability healthcare practices.

Danielle J. Organ, IMSE, LSSBB is currently the Director of Performance Excellence at Rochester Regional Health where she leads enterprise-wide initiatives focused on innovative approaches to healthcare delivery. She has more than 20 years of experience improving healthcare operations, quality, patient experience, and financial performance across leading health systems nationwide. Prior to joining Rochester Regional Health, Danielle served as a healthcare consultant and executive leader for organizations including Tenet Health, Sutter Health, Emergent Medical Associates, Tampa General Hospital, HCA Healthcare, and Memorial Healthcare System. , Industrial and Management Systems Engineer, and Lean Six Sigma Black Belt. She is recognized for her ability to unite physicians, administrators, and frontline teams around a shared vision and deliver measurable, sustainable results.

**Solving Complex Problems in Five Days:
A Practical Guide to Planning and Facilitating a Sprint
Dawn Davison**

Organizations often face challenges that are too complex for a traditional meeting yet too urgent to spend months studying. A Sprint provides a structured, five-day approach for bringing together stakeholders, exploring a challenge, generating solutions, making decisions, and creating a prototype that can be tested quickly.

This session shares how Rochester Regional Health's Performance Excellence team uses the Sprint methodology popularized by Jake Knapp to accelerate problem solving and decision making. Attendees will learn how to determine when a Sprint is the right approach, identify and prepare participants, structure activities across the week, facilitate productive discussions, and guide teams from challenge identification to a testable prototype.

A real-world example involving an Information Technology Project Management Office engagement will be used throughout the session to illustrate key concepts and lessons learned. However, the primary focus will be on the Sprint process itself, including preparation, facilitation techniques, stakeholder engagement strategies, decision-making methods, and approaches for maintaining momentum after the Sprint concludes.

Whether participants are tackling operational, quality, project management, innovation, or customer experience challenges, they will leave with practical tools and frameworks for hosting highly effective Sprints that transform complex problems into actionable next steps within a single week.

Dawn Davison is the Senior Director of Performance Excellence & Innovation at Rochester Regional Health. Dawn Davison leads Rochester Regional Health's Performance Excellence team, supporting strategic initiatives, process improvement, project execution, and organizational innovation across the health system. With expertise in Lean, project management, facilitation, and change leadership, she partners with teams to solve complex operational challenges and build improvement capability at scale. Dawn also serves as the Chapter President of ACHE of Upstate New York, the regional chapter of American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE).