# THE PROVIDER 360 PROGRAM

## FISHBONE DIAGRAM TEMPLATE

A **Fishbone Diagram** is a visual tool that organizes possible causes of a problem into categories (such as People, Process, Technology, etc.) to help teams explore all contributing factors. Use a Fishbone Diagram when a problem may have multiple causes or when you need structured brainstorming to explore all possibilities before identifying root causes.

### Instructions

**Step 1: Write the Problem Statement in the "Head" of the Fish**

Clearly define the specific problem you want to analyze. Keep it factual. Avoid assumptions or causes at this stage. Place this description in the box at the far right (the "head" of the fish).

**Step 2: Confirm or Select the Fishbone Categories**

Identify the main cause categories shown on your template. Common categories include: Methods, Materials, Equipment, People, Measurement, Environment. These branches help organize your thinking and prevent missing potential causes.

**Methods**—Clinical processes, workflows, and standard procedures used during patient care or service delivery.

**Materials**—Clinical supplies, forms, documents, or informational resources needed to provide care.

**Equipment**—Medical devices, diagnostic tools, electronic health record (EHR) systems, and other technology used by the provider.

**People**—Providers, clinical staff, administrative staff, and anyone involved in the patient care process.

**Measurement**—Documentation practices, data collection, performance metrics, and how outcomes or processes are measured.

**Step 3: Environment**

The physical care setting, room setup, noise level, layout, and any external factors that affect the provider's ability to deliver care.

**Step 4: Ask "Why?" for Each Listed Cause**

Take each surface-level cause and ask, "Why is this happening?" Add sub-causes branching off the initial cause. Continue asking "why" until you uncover deeper contributing factors. This builds the layered structure of the fishbone diagram.

**Step 5: Continue Drilling Down Until You Reach Root-Level Causes**

Follow each branch until you reach the lowest-level cause that cannot be broken down further or that directly explains the problem. These become potential root causes.

**Step 6: Review the Diagram for Completeness**

Check all branches to verify: Nothing is duplicated. Causes are placed under the correct categories. All potential contributing factors have been captured. The chart tells a logical story of how the problem occurs.

**Step 7: Identify the Most Likely Root Causes**

From the full diagram, determine which causes have the strongest relationship to the problem. You may identify root causes by: Team consensus, Data or evidence, Frequency or impact. Highlight or mark these causes on the diagram.

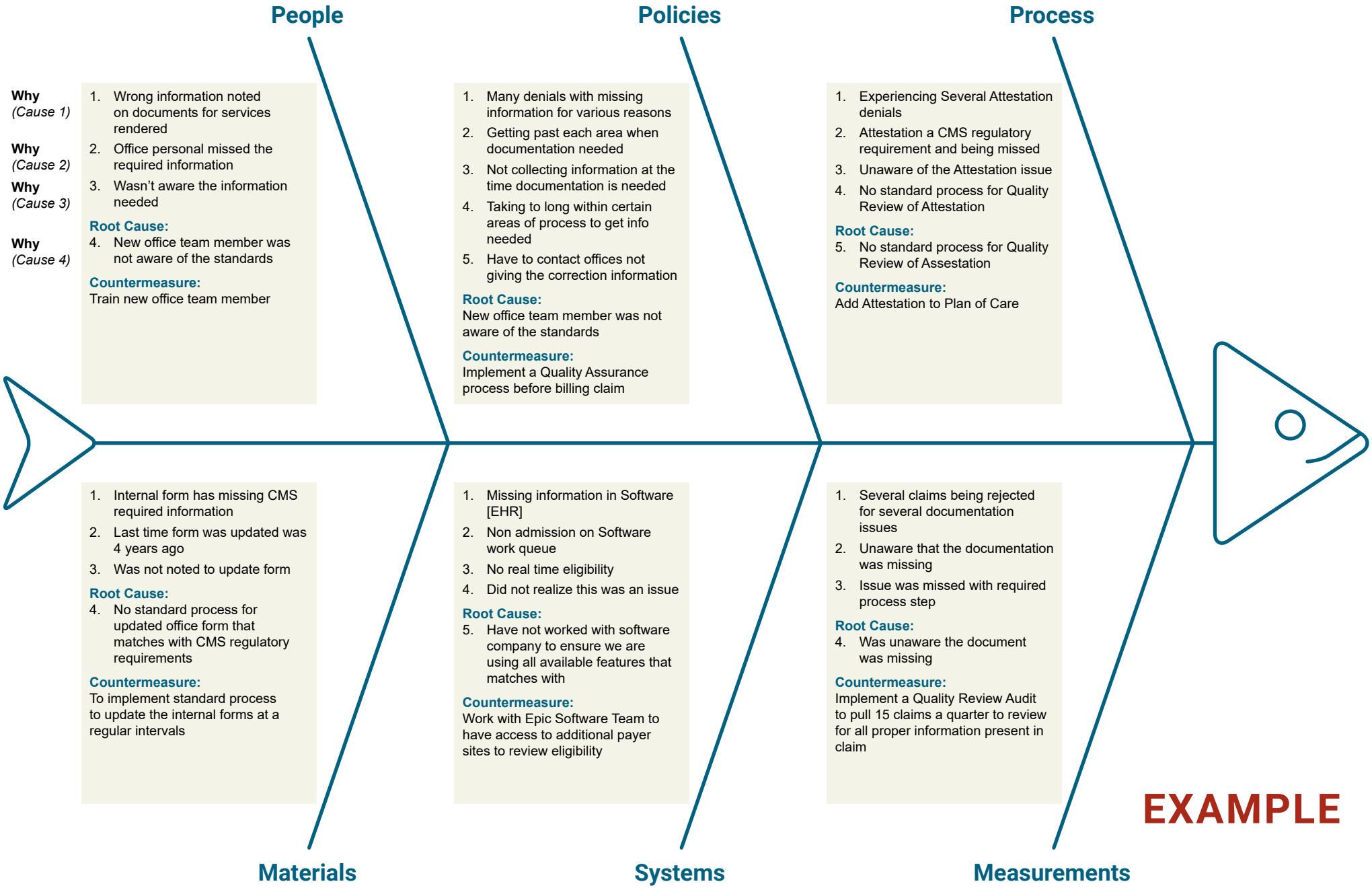
**Step 8: Prioritize and Move Root Causes to the Action Plan**

Once root causes are identified: Transfer them to your Lean Action Plan; Create targeted countermeasures for each; Assign owners and due dates to ensure follow-through.

# Problem Statement (Effect)

Start here, ask “Why?” (first “Why”) then work to the left!

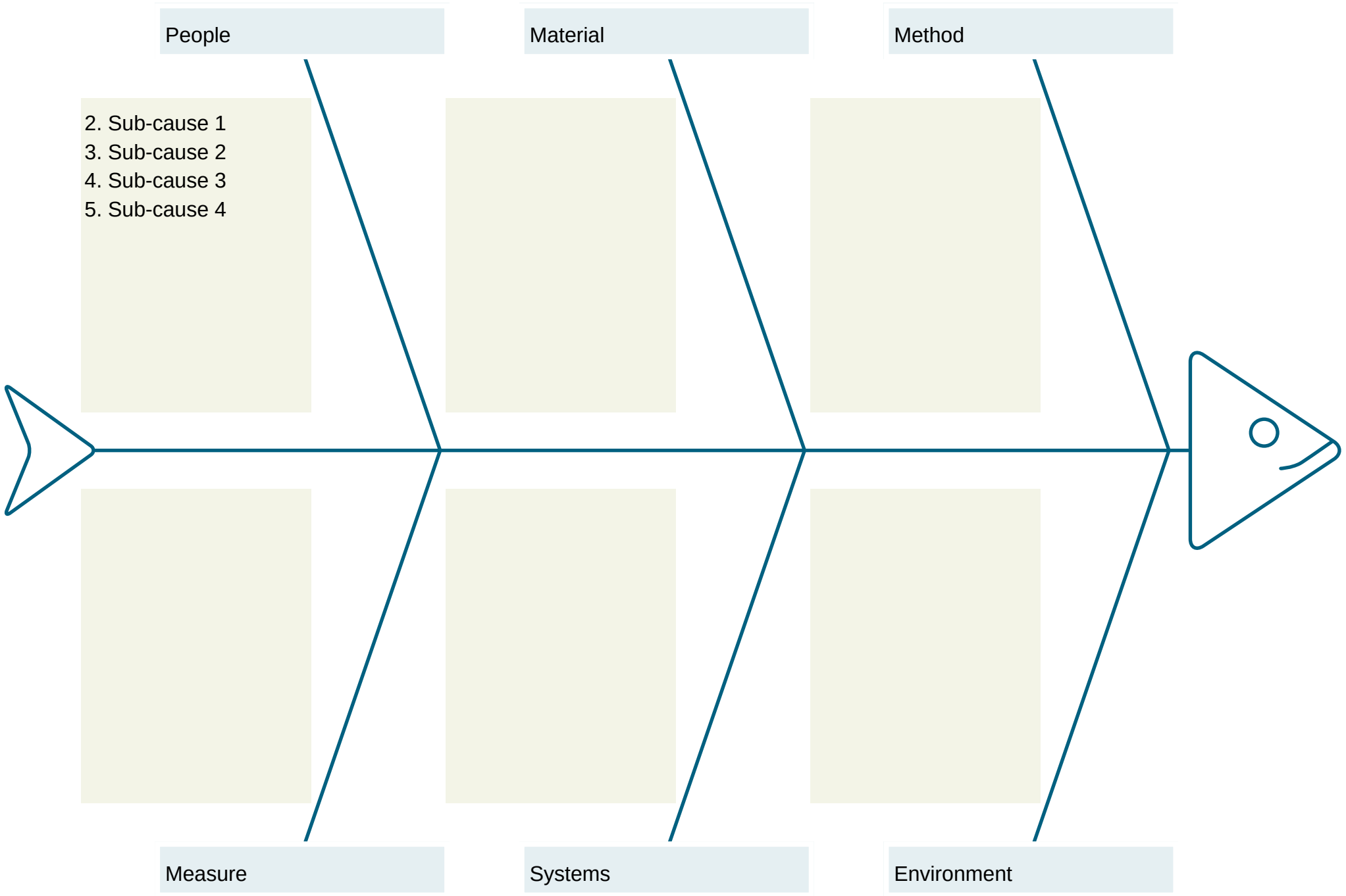
30% High Claim denials within the last month due to incorrect information for services rendered




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