Project Title

Informing Patients of Their Follow-Up Appointments in a Timely Manner

Project Lead and Members

Project lead: Liyana Binte Mohamed Nasir

Project members: Sonia Linda D/O Lyndon Johnson, Ken Kan

Organisation(s) Involved

Ng Teng Fong General Hospital

Healthcare Family Group Involved in this Project

Operations

Applicable Specialty or Discipline

Operations

Aims

Reduce 50% patient queries relating to their follow up appointments.

Increase 20% of patients receiving their appointment information before discharge.

Background

See poster appended/ below

Methods

See poster appended/ below

Results

See poster appended/ below

Lessons Learnt

- Review existing process holistically to identify service gaps to improve service delivery.
- Gathering of patient feedback routinely allows us to gain insights of patient experience.

Conclusion

See poster appended/ below

Project Category

Care & Process Redesign

Job Effectiveness

Keywords

Follow-up appointments, post discharge, timely information

Name and Email of Project Contact Person(s)

Name: Ken Kan

Email: ken_kok_hon_kan@nuhs.edu.sg

INFORMING PATIENTS OF THEIR FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS IN A TIMELY MANNER

❑ SAFETY
❑ QUALITY
✓ PATIENT EXPERIENCE
❑ PRODUCTIVITY
✓ COST

MEMBERS: LIYANA BINTE MOHAMED NASIR, SONIA LINDA D/O LYNDON JOHNSON
FACILITATOR: KEN KAN

Define Problem, Set Aim

Problem/Opportunity for Improvement

Between Feb to May 2022, there was an upward trend in the number of force-book required for post discharge appointments, resulting in more follow-up appointments being obtained post discharge. Concurrently, our inpatient appointment team received over 50% increase in post discharge appointment enquires. Some patients feedback that they are unaware of their appointment information despite their appointment letters being already mailed to them.

Aim

Reduce 50% patient queries relating to their follow up appointments.
Increase 20% of patients receiving their appointment information before discharge.

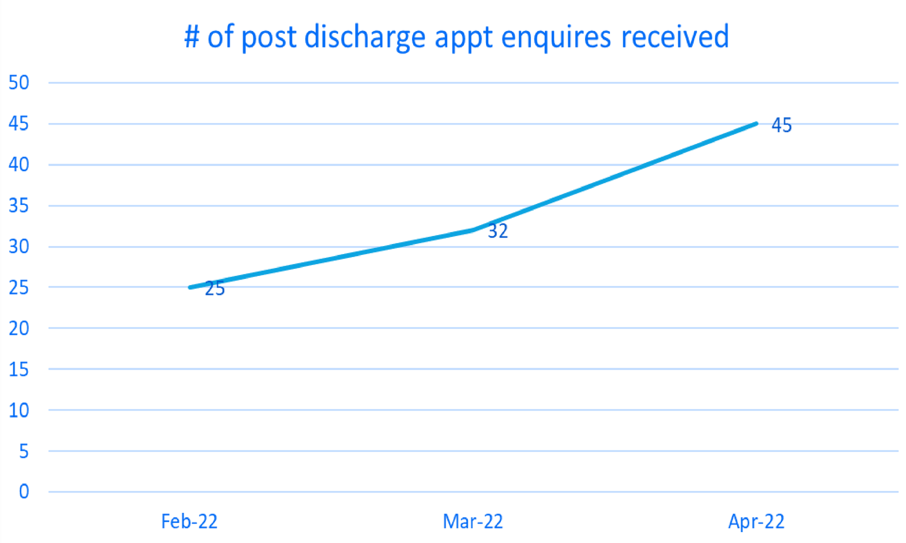
Establish Measures

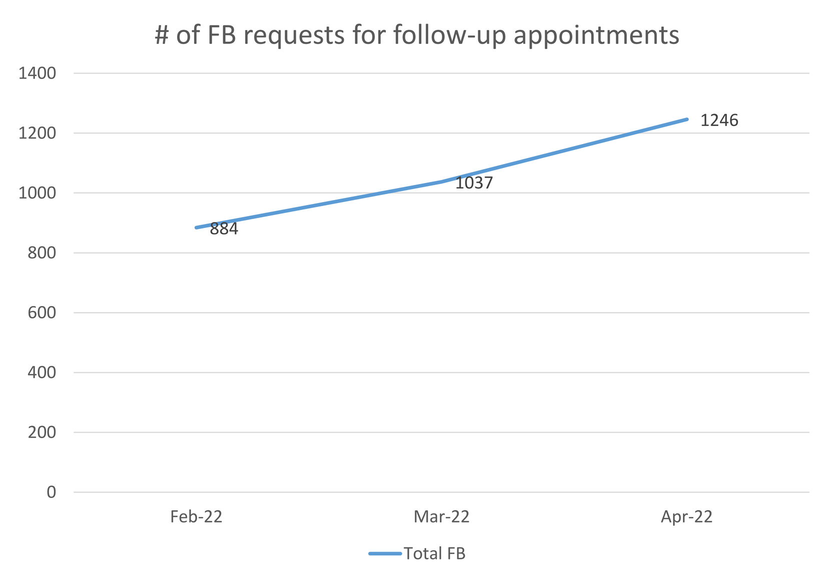
Measures

To measure the number of post discharge appointment enquires received and the number of force-booked appointments required.

Current performance

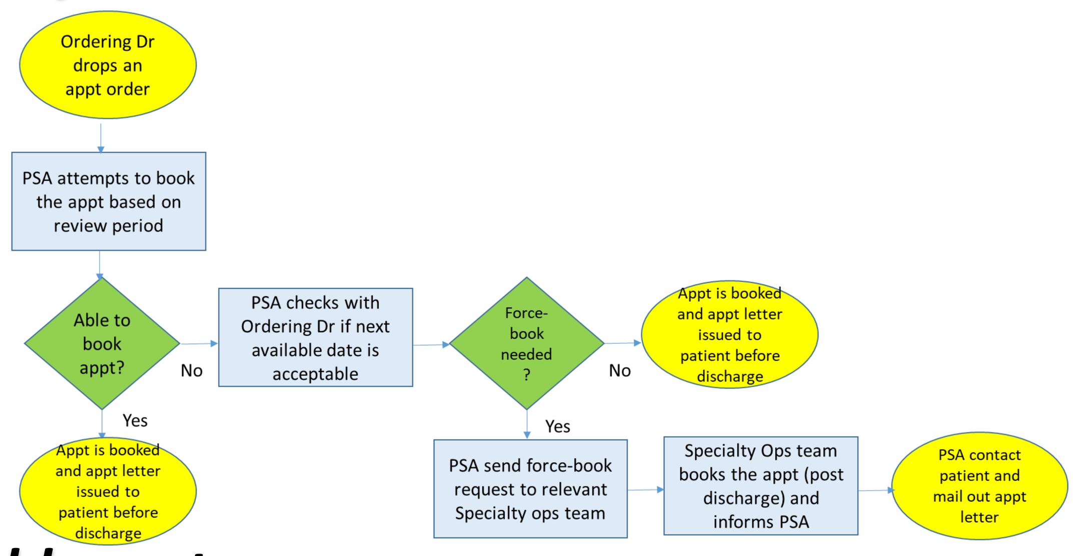
Between Feb 2022 to Apr 2022, there is an gradual increase (an average 54%) in post discharge queries received via our feedback channels. An average of 29% increase in force-book requests is also observed during the same period.



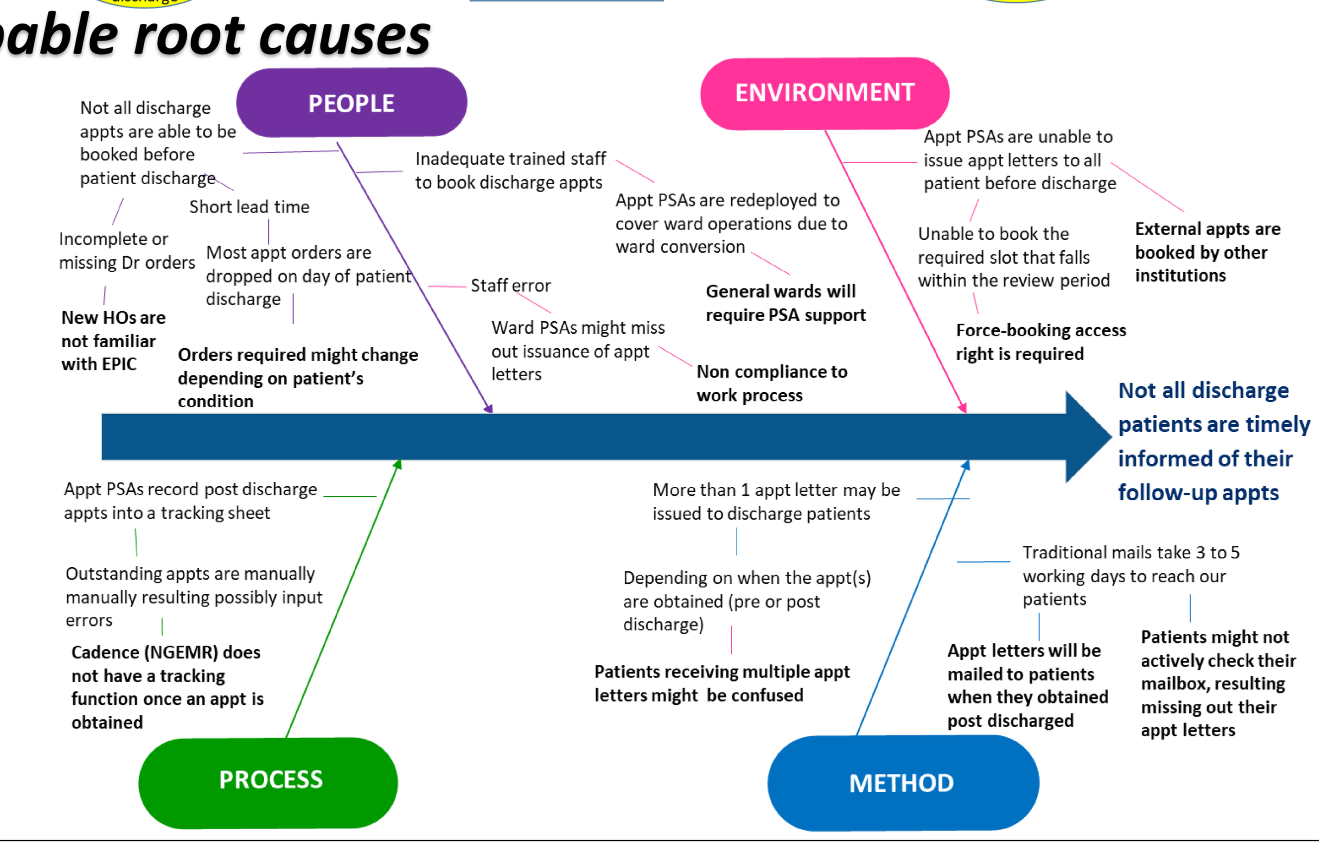


Analyse Problem

Current process



Probable root causes

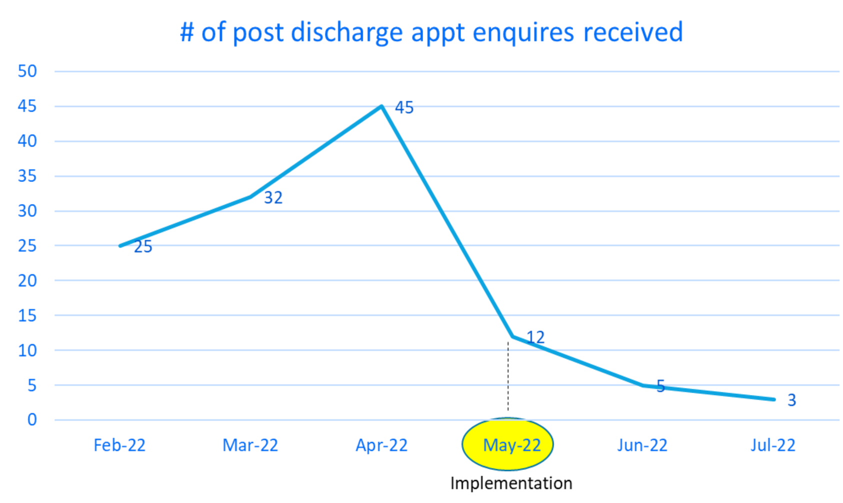


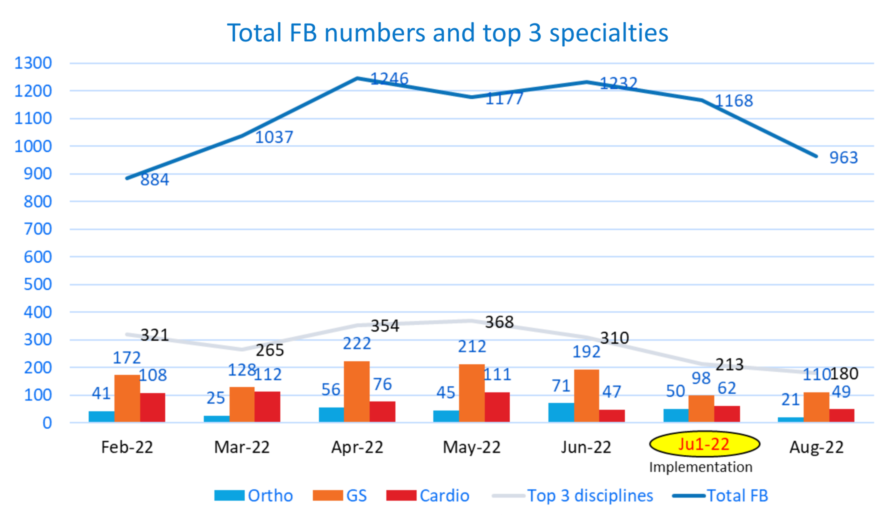
Select Changes

Root causes		Possible Solutions
#1 Patients might not actively check their mailbox, resulting missing out their appointment letters	1	Review alternative options to inform patients on their discharge appts. E.g. OneNUHS, 1-way SMS, etc
	2	PSAs to call discharge patients to remind them on their appt information
	3	PSAs to remind spokesperson to check patent's letterbox for follow-up appt details
#2 Force-booking access rights is required	1	Ask Specialty Ops to open more clinic slots to minimise the need to force-book
	2	Engage Specialty Ops to assign force-book rights to selected Inpatient Ops staff
	3	Convince Ordering Dr to accept the next available date to optimise clinic resources

Test & Implement Changes

CYCLE	PLAN	DO	STUDY	ACT
1	Develop survey questionnaire to capture patient preference - 1-way SMS, OneNUHS app, appt letter, email	Prepare and send 1-way SMS to post discharge patients on their appt details as most patients selected this option	Review the number of queries received after implementation of 1-way SMS.	Explore having Ward PSAs to educate patients/NOKs to use OneNUHS app to retrieve and manage their follow-up appts.
2	Consolidate force-book data to understand which are the specialties contributing to high force-book numbers.	Engage Specialty Ops Team to assign force-book rights to select Inpatient Ops staff to force-book Gen Surgery, Ortho and Cardio appts. Guidelines are also provided by Specialty Ops to faciliate force-booking by Inpatient team.	Review the number of patients receiving their appt details before discharge by reducing force-book performed by Specialty Ops team.	Explore the possibility of having Inpatient Ops team to acquire the knowledge to force-book other specialties appts to further increase the number of patients receiving their appts information before discharge.





- 80% reduction in post-discharge appt queries
- Patients are timely informed of their appt information once they are booked
- Post discharge appt letters are only mailed out based on patient requests
- Reduction in use of paper and postage cost
- Patients are also encourage to use HealthHub or OneNUHS app to keep themselves updated on their appts

- 39% increase in number of patients receiving their appts before discharge
- This initiative has helped to reduce the number of post discharge appt enquires received
- Allows patients/spokesperson(s) to clarify with the clinicians pertaining to the given appts before they leave the hospital
- Improves patient experience by reducing patients' anxiety

Spread Changes, Learning Points

Strategies to spread change

- Inpatient Ops team intends to collaborate with JCH Ops to share experiences relating to force-booking of specialties. This allows both departments to better identify gaps for improvement and quicken the learning process for both teams.
- Increase the number of specialties this initiative can be extended to.
- RO held bi-weekly team meetings to share results, gather feedback and address any concerns from his team members. This promotes effective communication, promotes buy-in and solidifies the changes that are implemented.
- Senior frontline staff are engaged weekly to aid in feedback gathering and lead in selected team discussions.

Key learnings

- Review existing process holistically to identify service gaps to improve service delivery.
- Gathering of patient feedback routinely allows us to gain insights of patient experience.

Ng Teng Fong General Hospital
Jurong Community Hospital