

### **Project Title**

To Reduce the Time and Cost of Dietetics Services to Nursing Homes

### **Project Lead and Members**

Project lead: Melody Foo

Project members: Hoong Jian Ming, Victoria Chong, Gabriel Wong, Filzah Abdul  
Rahim, Lim Ruey Jiun

### **Organisation(s) Involved**

Ng Teng Fong General Hospital

### **Healthcare Family Group Involved in this Project**

Allied Health

### **Applicable Specialty or Discipline**

Dietetic and Nutrition

### **Aims**

To reduce the time spent travelling to NHs (16 hours per month equivalent to 2 working days) and reducing costs (\$160 per month) by at least 50% by June 2020.

### **Background**

See poster appended/ below

### **Methods**

See poster appended/ below

### **Results**

See poster appended/ below

## **Lessons Learnt**

It is important to explore new models of care to enhance the accessibility to DT services. The provision of telehealth services will be beneficial during times when physical visits are not possible (i.e. during a pandemic), to ensure that continuity of care and residents' nutritional requirements are met.

## **Conclusion**

See poster appended/ below

## **Project Category**

Technology, Digital Health, Telehealth

Care & Process Redesign, Value Based Care, Productivity

Care Continuum, Intermediate and Long Term Care & Community Care, Nursing Home

## **Keywords**

Travelling Costs, Dietetics Services, Dietary and Nutritional Requirements

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# TO REDUCE THE TIME AND COST OF DIETETICS SERVICES TO NURSING HOMES

MEMBERS: Melody Foo<sup>1</sup>, Hoong Jian Ming<sup>1</sup>, Victoria Chong<sup>1</sup>, Gabriel Wong<sup>1</sup>, Filzah Abdul Rahim<sup>1</sup>, Lim Ruey Jiun<sup>1</sup>

1. Dietetics and Nutrition

- SAFETY
- QUALITY
- PATIENT EXPERIENCE
- PRODUCTIVITY
- COST

## Define Problem, Set Aim

### Opportunity for Improvement

Based on the Enhanced Nursing Home Standards developed by the Ministry of Health, every nursing home (NH) will require dietetics services in order to comply with their Licensing Terms and Conditions.<sup>1</sup> The role of a dietitian (DT) in a NH is to supervise the dietary aspects of residents' care and to ensure that proper dietary requirements are complied with. NTFGH Dietetics provides clinical services to a total of five NHs. DTs are required to travel to these NHs at least once a month, incurring time and costs.

### Aim

To reduce the time spent travelling to NHs (16 hours per month equivalent to 2 working days) and reducing costs (\$160 per month) by at least 50% by June 2020.

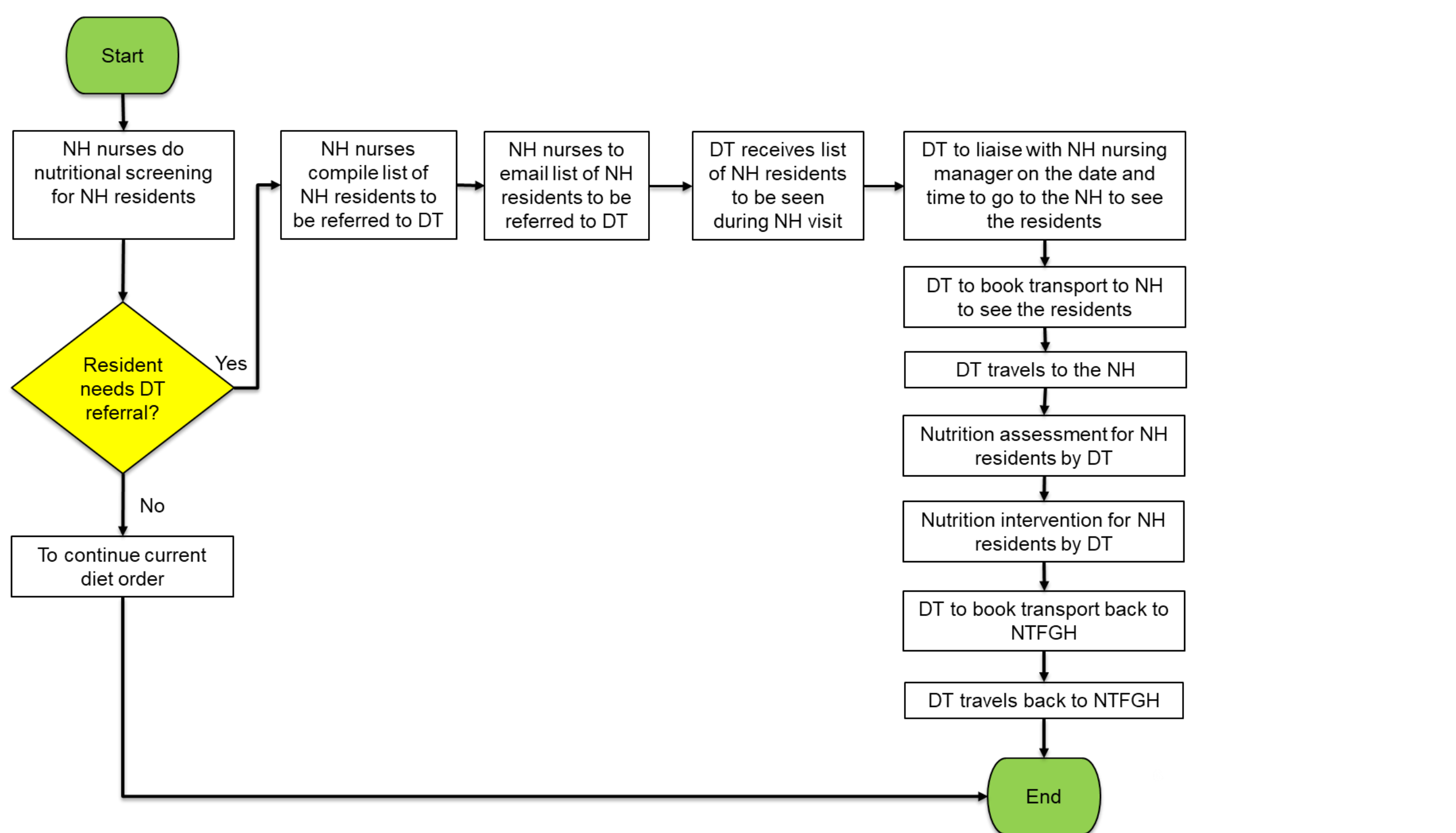
## Establish Measures

### Current Performance

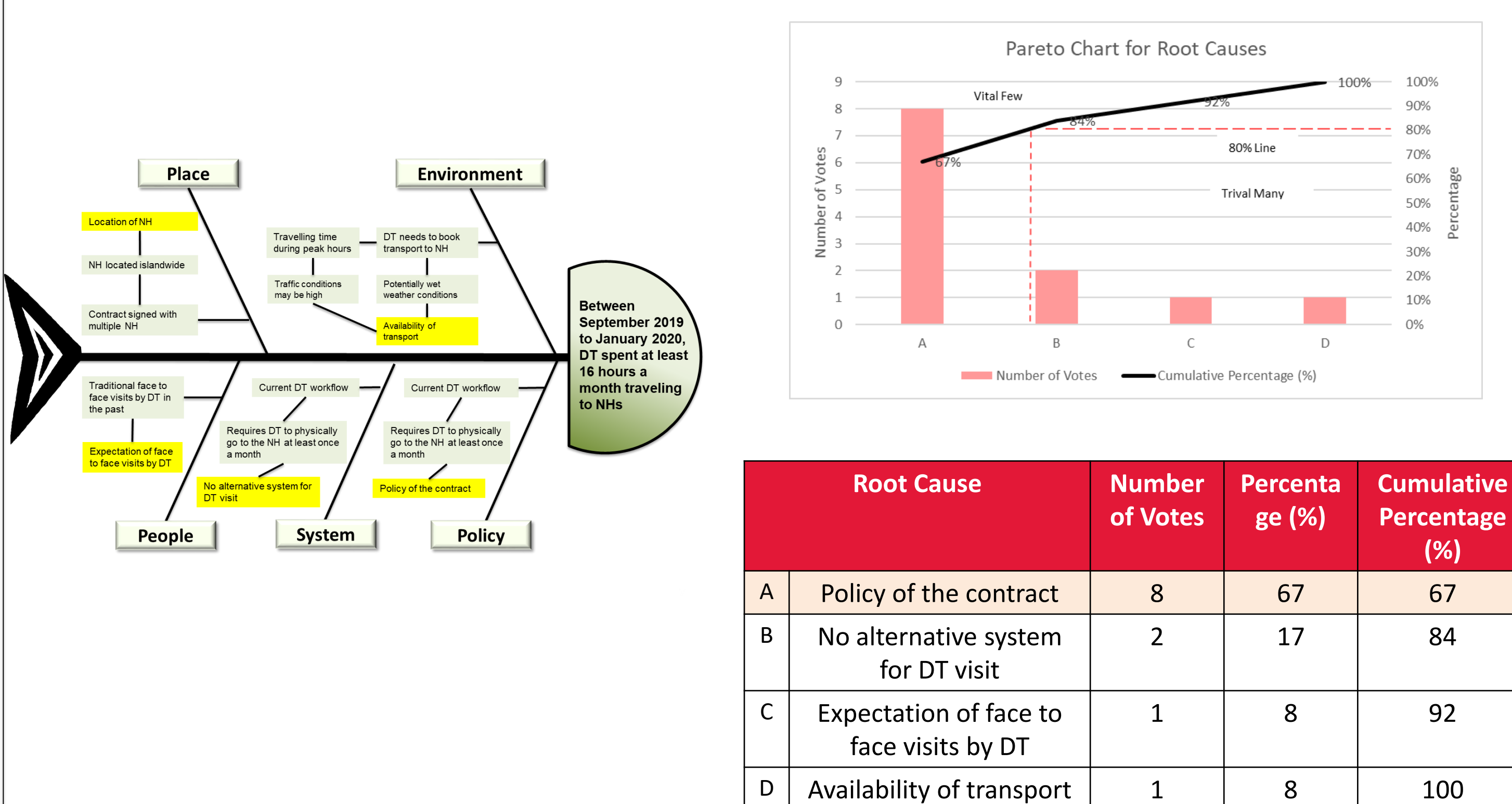
Between September 2019 to January 2020, 16 hours and \$160 in transport costs were spent per month travelling to NHs to provide clinical services.

## Analyse Problem

### Current Process Mapping



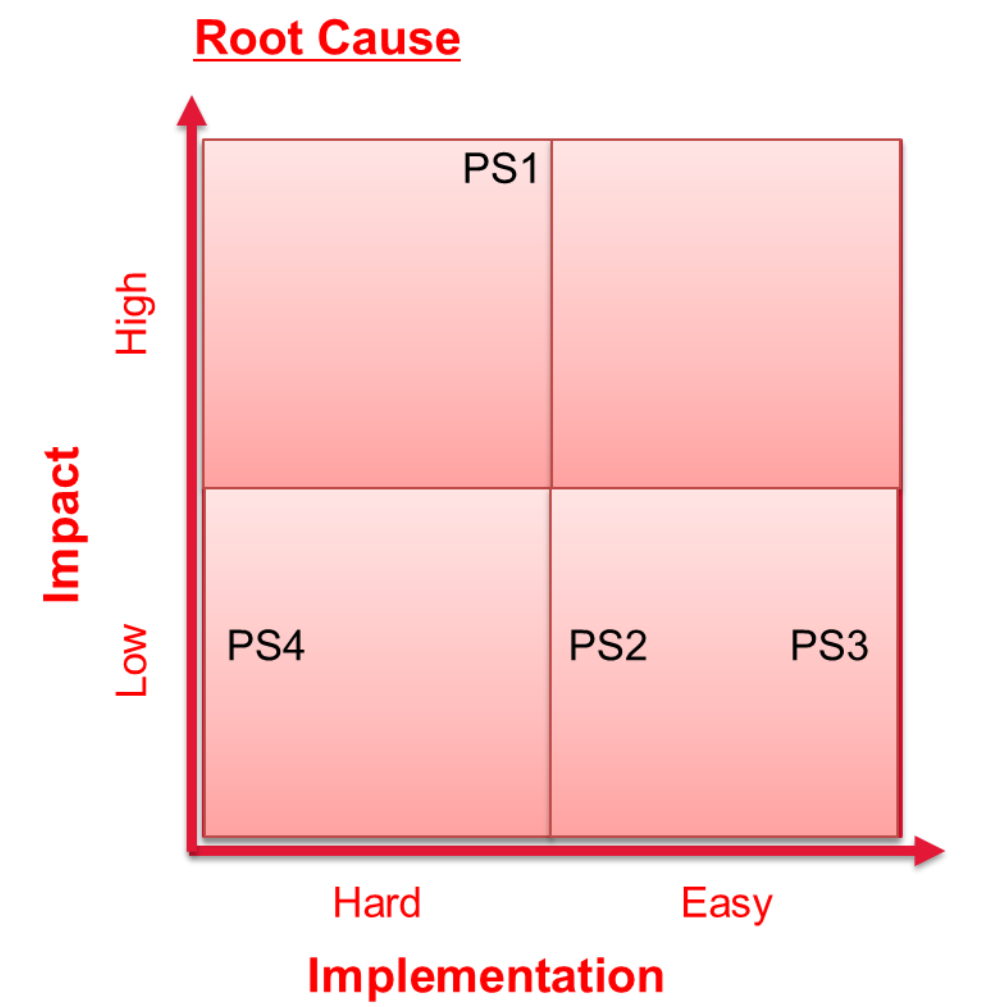
### Root Cause Analysis



## Select Changes

### Possible Solutions (PS)

Root Cause	Potential Solutions
Policy of the contract	PS1 To provide DT services via telehealth (video/phone consultation)
	PS2 To reduce the frequency of NH visits
	PS3 Sequential visit to NH (i.e. visit 2 NHs in one day)
	PS4 To only provide services to NH that falls within the regional health service area



## Test & Implement Changes

### Solution Implementation

CYCLE	PLAN	DO	STUDY	ACT
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To seek support from NTFGH and NHs higher management about the provision of telehealth services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To speak to NTFGH and NHs higher management about the provision of telehealth services and its benefits in March 2020.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received approval from NTFGH and NHs higher management to start telehealth services.</li> <li>Started providing telehealth services in June 2020. Successfully eliminated travelling time to NHs and subsequently costs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telehealth helps to eliminate travelling time and costs to NHs and will be continued.</li> <li>DTs covering NHs do not have access to NEHR and certain sections of NHelp. Therefore, DTs may not be able to gather all the necessary information required for DT assessment of NH residents.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To enhance the current DT referral template for NHs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To work with DTs covering NHs to enhance the current DT referral template for NHs by June 2020.</li> <li>To email NH nurses the new DT referral template for NHs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NH nurses were able to successfully use the new DT referral template for NHs by June 2020.</li> <li>As part of virtual consultation, DTs were able to contact NHs via the ward telephone number provided in the referral template.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is important to explore new models of care that will enhance DT services and to continue seeking improvement.</li> <li>Results will be shared with relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>To gather feedback from relevant stakeholders to evaluate the usefulness of the template for further enhancement.</li> </ul>

From June 2020, DTs were able to successfully provide clinical services to NHs via telehealth, thus eliminating travelling time and costs to NHs.

## Spread Changes, Learning Points

### Strategies to Spread Change After Implementation

Results will be shared with relevant stakeholders for continued engagement. From there on, the team aims to expand telehealth services beyond clinical visits, to provide clinical teachings to NH staff via videoconferencing. The team also intends to evaluate the quality of DT services (telehealth vs face to face visits) to ensure that the quality of residents' care is not compromised.

### Key Learnings

It is important to explore new models of care to enhance the accessibility to DT services. The provision of telehealth services will be beneficial during times when physical visits are not possible (i.e. during a pandemic), to ensure that continuity of care and residents' nutritional requirements are met.

### References

1. Ministry of Health. MOH | Regulations, Guidelines and Circulars. [https://www.moh.gov.sg/licensing-and-regulation/regulations-guidelines-and-circulars/details/licensing-terms-and-conditions-on-enhanced-nursing-homes-\(dated-1-apr-2015\)](https://www.moh.gov.sg/licensing-and-regulation/regulations-guidelines-and-circulars/details/licensing-terms-and-conditions-on-enhanced-nursing-homes-(dated-1-apr-2015)). Published April 1, 2015. Accessed August 1, 2020.