Project Title

Patient Care Officer (PCO) Project

Project Lead and Members

Project Lead(s): Yen Tan
Project Members: Shirley Heng, Cynthia Lee, Fatimah Moideen Kutty, Charmaine Sim, Loo Gaik Lee, Teo Cheng Wee, Catherine Hu You Qin, Cherie Koh Teng Sin, Ng Siok Qi, Yvonne Yap Hui Xin, Kendrick Tan, Lim Yan Ling, Goh Shu-Ann Sandra, Yeoh Pei Ting Regina, Ronley Ng Wai Loon, Zechariah Sean Lau

Organisation(s) Involved

Khoo Teck Puat Hospital

Healthcare Family Group(s) Involved in this Project

Healthcare Administration, Nursing

Applicable Specialty or Discipline

Geriatric Medicine

Project Period

Start date: Aug 2020

Completed date: Jun 2022

Aim(s)

This project aimed to introduce Patient Care Officers (PCOs), a new service professional, to support the ward in providing caregiving and non-clinical tasks to patients.

It improved nurses' productivity by increasing their time spent for clinical work by 30%; allowing 23% less nurses in PCO wards; and projecting manpower cost-savings of $1.6m annually.

Background

See poster appended/ below

Methods

See poster appended/ below

Results

See poster appended/ below

Lessons Learnt

The leadership of the team was rotated amongst the three main stakeholders. This enables a shared responsibility and accountability by the entire team.

Key learnings include:

- Leadership: Dual Reporting Officer for PCOs

-Pivoting to Adapt: Ward deployment based on skillset and strengths of PCOs

Conclusion

See poster appended/ below

Additional Information

See poster appended/ below

Project Category

Care & Process Redesign, Value Based Care, Productivity, Cost Saving, Job Effectiveness, Lean Methodology, Patient Satisfaction, Safe Care, Adherence Rate

Training & Education, Learning Approach, Team based Learning

Workforce Transformation, Job Redesign, Workforce Performance, Workforce Productivity, Workforce Sustainability

Keywords

Manpower Shortage, Public Health Institutions (PHIs), Service Professional, Lean Methodology, DMAIC

Name and Email of Project Contact Person(s)

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Patient Care Officer (PCO) Project

A New Healthcare Professional Born in a Time of Opportunities

Yen Tan, Chief Operating Officer; Shirley Heng, Chief Nurse; Cynthia Lee, Chief Human Resource Officer; Fatimah Moideen Kutty, Asst. Chief Operating Officer; Charmaine Sim, Director, HR; Loo Gaik Lee, Asst. Director of Nursing; Teo Cheng Wee, Asst. Director, Corporate Communications; Yvonne Yap, Senior Nurse Manager; Cherie Koh, Senior Nurse Manager; Ng Siok Qi, Senior Nurse Manager; Catherine Hu, Nurse Educator; Kendrick Tan, Senior Manager, Operations; Sandra Goh, Manager, Operations; Regina Yeoh, Senior Executive, Operations; Lim Yan Ling, Manager, HR; Ronley Ng, Senior Executive, HR; Zechariah Lau, Management Associate, HR

Background

PCO Project comprise of a trans-disciplinary team by Yishun Health (YH) in collaboration with Public Services Division (PSD), Ministry of Health (MOH), National Healthcare Group (NHG) and Healthcare Services Employees' Union (HSEU) that was formed within 4 months from ideation to implementation, to support nurses and Singapore's job market amidst COVID-19 pandemic in May'20.
The YH core team comprise members from Nursing, Operations and Human Resources.

The PCOs are new service professionals introduced in KTPH during the pandemic to provide caregiving and end-to-end care coordination. This new job role was designed to focus on basic patient care and non-clinical roles, so that nurses could focus on clinical roles.
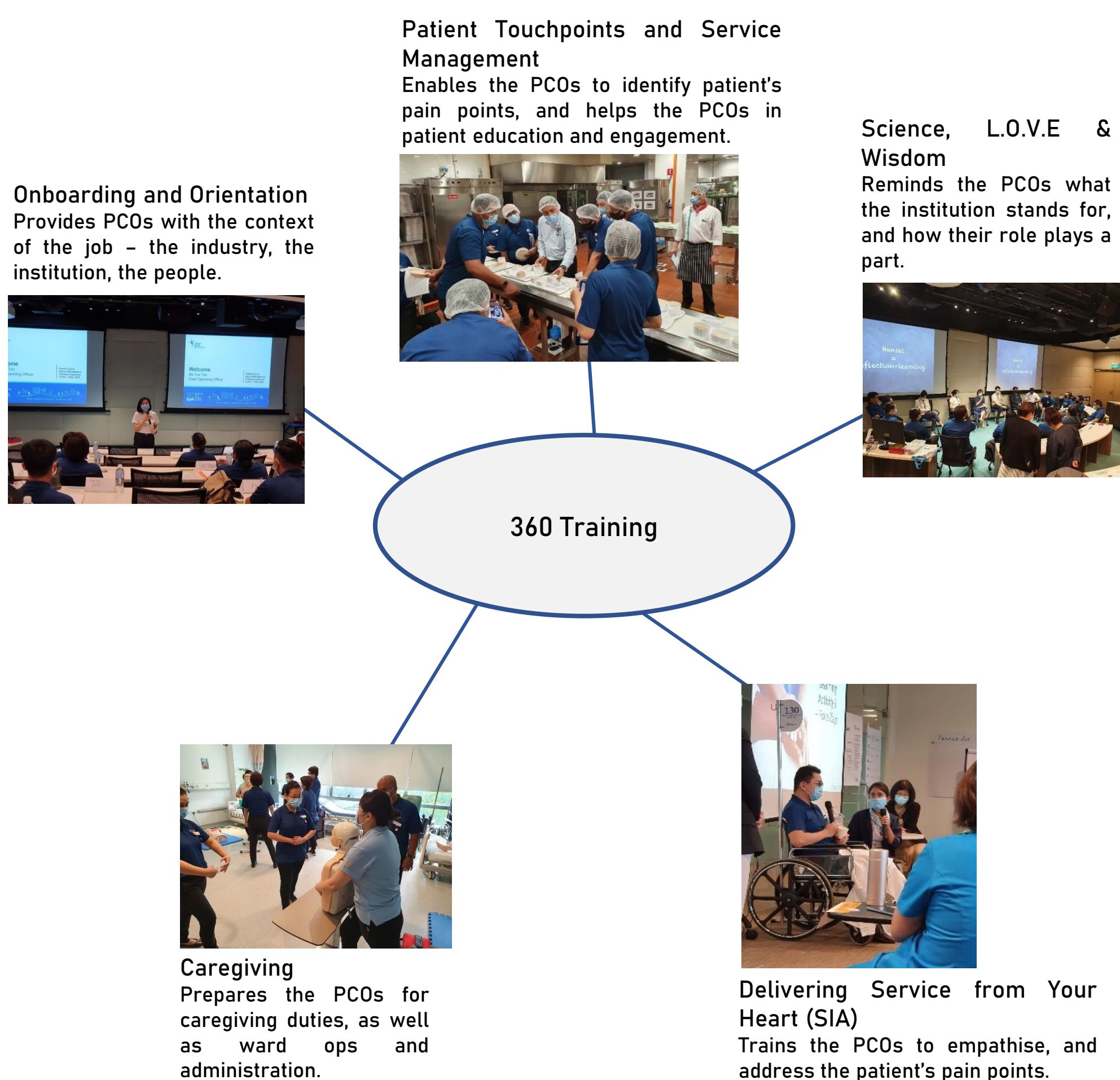
Objectives

1. Remove non-direct patient care from nurses
2. Augment nursing manpower focusing on caregiving and non-clinical tasks
3. Maintain patient safety standards and satisfaction
4. Achieve system cost-savings
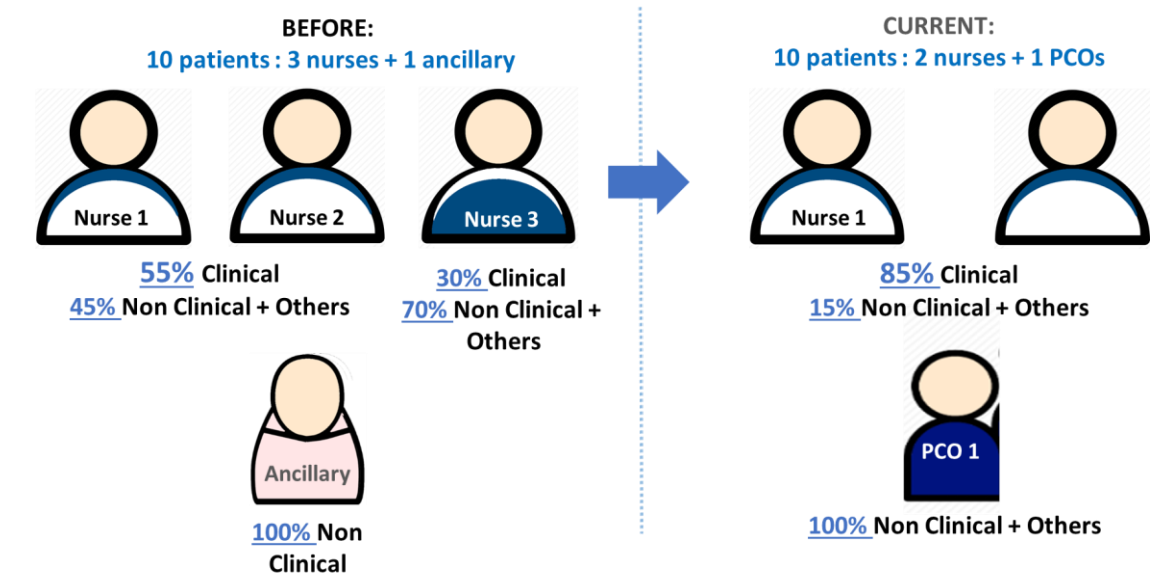5. Attract more people to join healthcare

Methodology

1. Systems thinking was shown through the team's total organisational approach using lean principles and the DMAIC approach (Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve, Control), with the aim of a sustainable, value-add & cost-effective PCO Project.
2. This include having to pivot from Care Ambassadors Prorgramme to design the PCO role to develop into a new service professional.
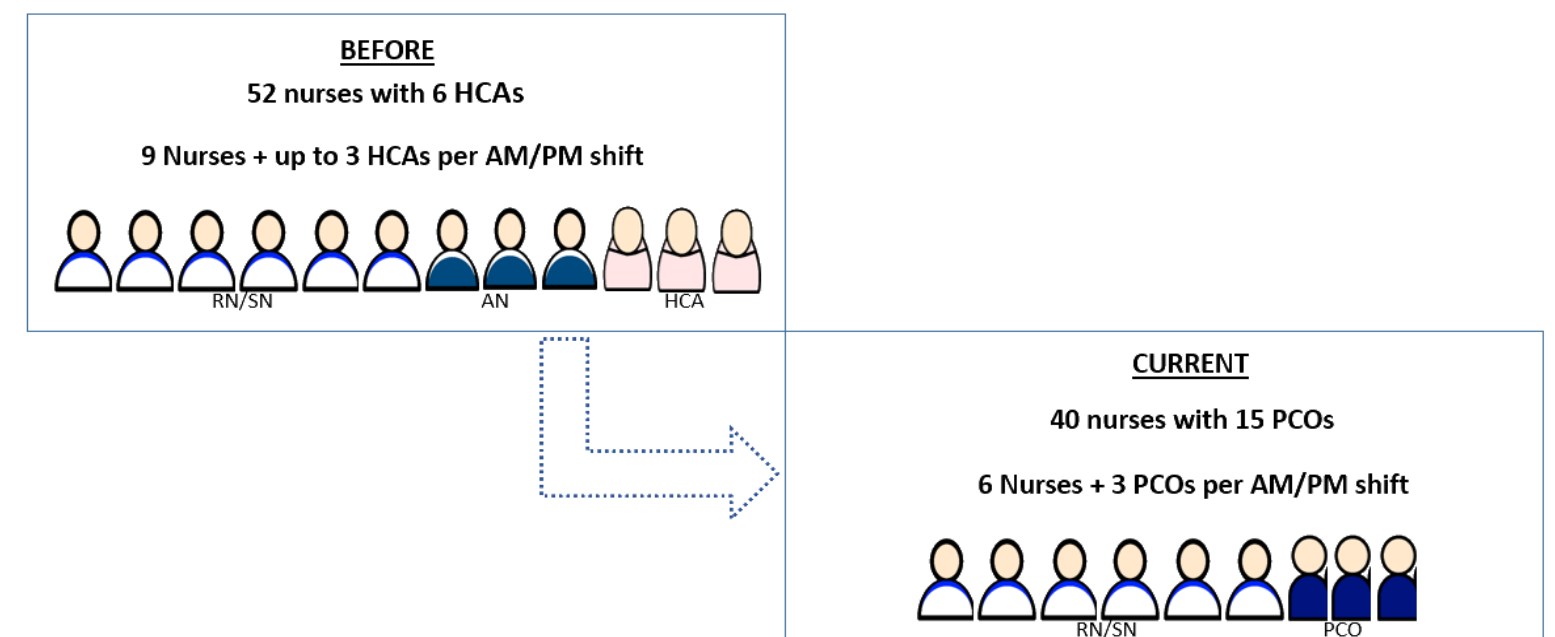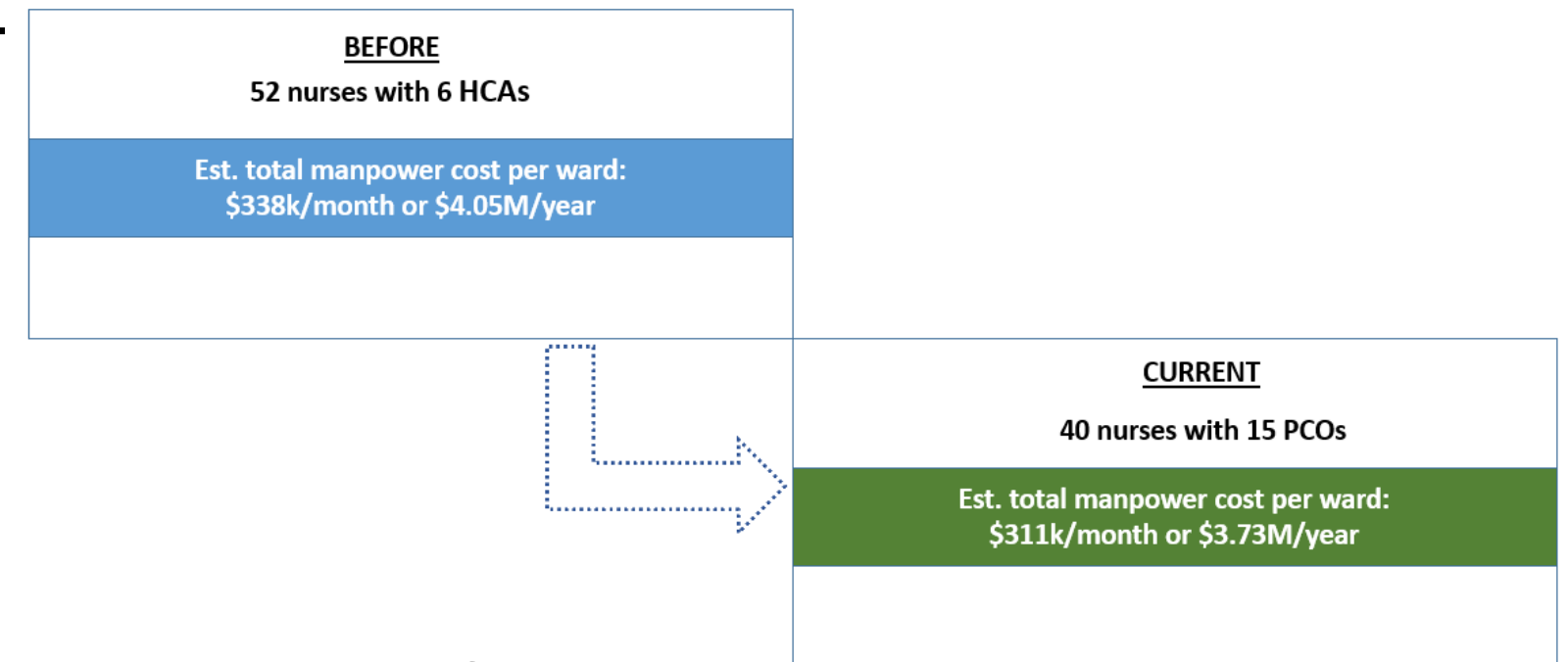3. Proper Training (20-days) was designed to on-board new staff.

Patient Touchpoints and Service Management
Enables the PCOs to identify patient's pain points, and helps the PCOs in patient education and engagement.

Science, L.O.V.E & Wisdom
Reminds the PCOs what the institution stands for, and how their role plays a part.

Onboarding and Orientation
Provides PCOs with the context of the job – the industry, the institution, the people.

360 Training

Caregiving
Prepares the PCOs for caregiving duties, as well as ward ops and administration.

Delivering Service from Your Heart (SIA)
Trains the PCOs to empathise, and address the patient's pain points.

Results & Project Impact

1. Increase nurses' clinical work from 55% to 85% in PCO wards

BEFORE: 10 patients : 3 nurses + 1 ancillary
Nurse 1 — 55% Clinical, 45% Non Clinical + Others
Nurse 2
Nurse 3 — 30% Clinical, 70% Non Clinical + Others
Ancillary — 100% Non Clinical

CURRENT: 10 patients : 2 nurses + 1 PCOs
Nurse 1 — 85% Clinical, 15% Non Clinical + Others
PCO 1 — 100% Non Clinical + Others

2. 104 PCOs hired with 75% clearing probation, thus augmenting manpower in the 5 PCO wards allowing nurses to be deployed elsewhere. Generally, there is 23% reduction of trained nurses (from 52 to 40 nurses per ward) needed in PCO wards.

BEFORE
52 nurses with 6 HCAs
9 Nurses + up to 3 HCAs per AM/PM shift

CURRENT
40 nurses with 15 PCOs
6 Nurses + 3 PCOs per AM/PM shift

3. Patient safety standards maintained while average number of compliments is higher in PCO wards.

4. Projected manpower cost-savings of $1.6m per year for PCO wards.

BEFORE
52 nurses with 6 HCAs
Est. total manpower cost per ward: $338k/month or $4.05M/year

CURRENT
40 nurses with 15 PCOs
Est. total manpower cost per ward: $311k/month or $3.73M/year

5. Improved patients' satisfaction.

- PCO wards have higher average number of compliments compared to other wards.

Patients' Satisfaction: Compliments

Patient satisfaction higher in PCO wards (prior no visitation from Aug'21)
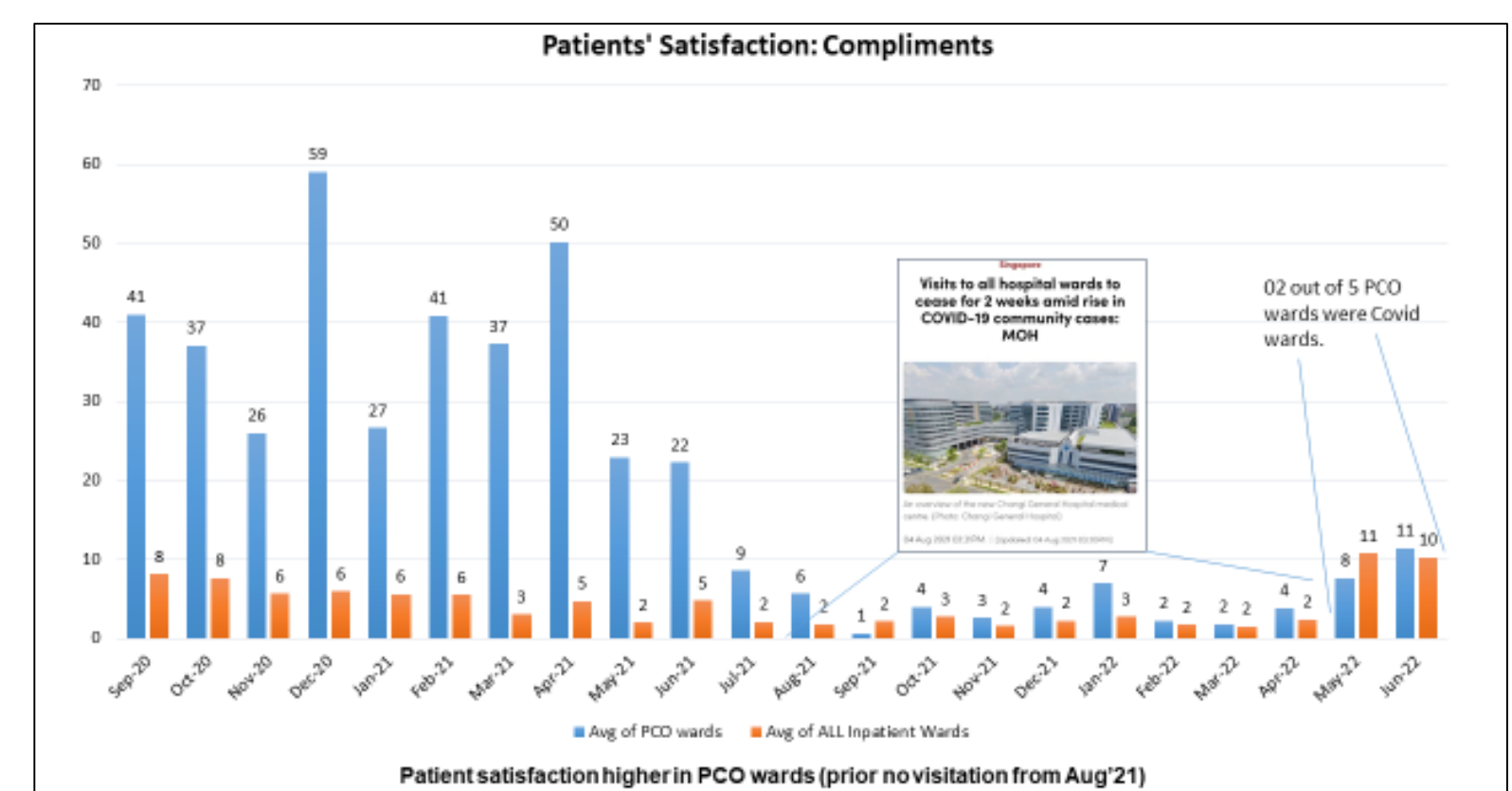
Sustainability & Follow-Up

1. Regular engagement with PCOs via townhalls, roll calls, group sessions, and 1-on-1 sessions with COO.
2. Regular engagement with other stakeholders (nursing and senior management) for a 360 feedback on the project.
3. Constant refining and scaling of the programme and roles of PCOs to improve efficiency
   - From deploying PCOs to surgical & medical wards, to deploying PCOs to medical & geriatric wards
   - Expanding from 2 to 5 wards & re-calibrating the numbers of PCOs per ward per shift
   - Improving the training needs and frequency of training for PCOs (from 20 days into 5 days of hybrid training – via Zoom and face-to-face)
4. Constant recruitment drives and interviews to keep the pipeline:
   - Job trials
   - Roadshows
   - Career talks

Conclusion

This is a cost-effective workforce transformation initiative. Encouraged by positive results and feedback from nurses, patients and PCOs, the plan is to expand this job role to more wards and into the community.