

Healthcare Associates Contact Center Redesign: Centralized Clinical Call Management

Authors: Candace Reynolds, Jeff Vale, Katherine Chiulli, Melissa Cote, Catherine J. Ivkovic, and Chris Rodrigues

BIDMC Healthcare Associates Contact Center, HCA Triage Nurses, and Office of Improvement and Innovation – i²

Introduction/Problem

Healthcare Associate's contact center was in need of a redesign to optimize the calls that flow from the call center to the practice. After the completion of a task analysis with the contact center's patient service representative, it became apparent that patient service representatives were spending a significant amount of time triaging clinical calls with nurses and providers. Given the clinical nurses' responsibilities to manage their suites and triage, it was challenging to balance the suites' and call center's demands

After considerable analysis and input from all constituencies, Healthcare Associates decided to develop a centralized clinical triage nursing team with a co-located patient service representative to ensure urgent calls are answered in a timely manner. We recognized clinical triage as a specialty to ensure clinical calls are answered by clinical staff in real time directly with the patient.

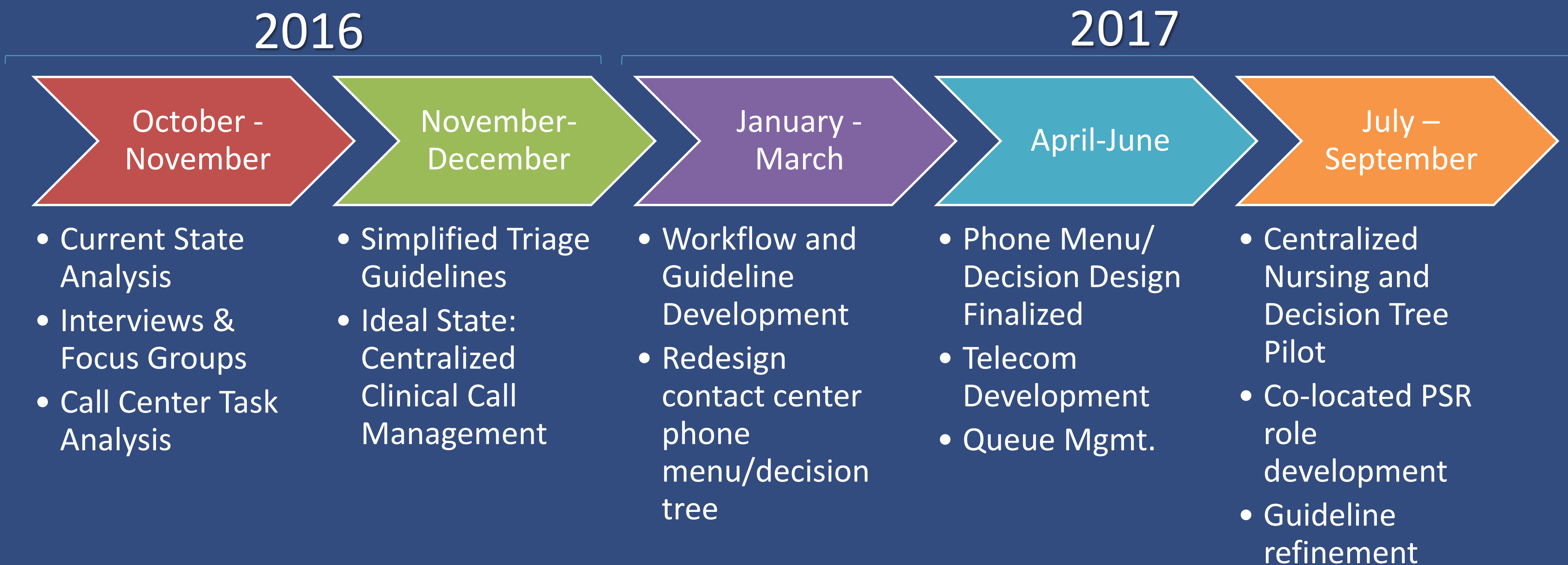
Aim/Goal

- Streamline and restructure the management of clinical calls that originate from the patient service representatives and transferred to triage nurses to provide patients direct access to clinical nurses
- Ensure patient calls are answered in a timely manner (improve calls answered < 20 second & calls abandoned > 20 seconds)
- Develop a new phone menu / decision tree to ensure callers are directed in a timely manner

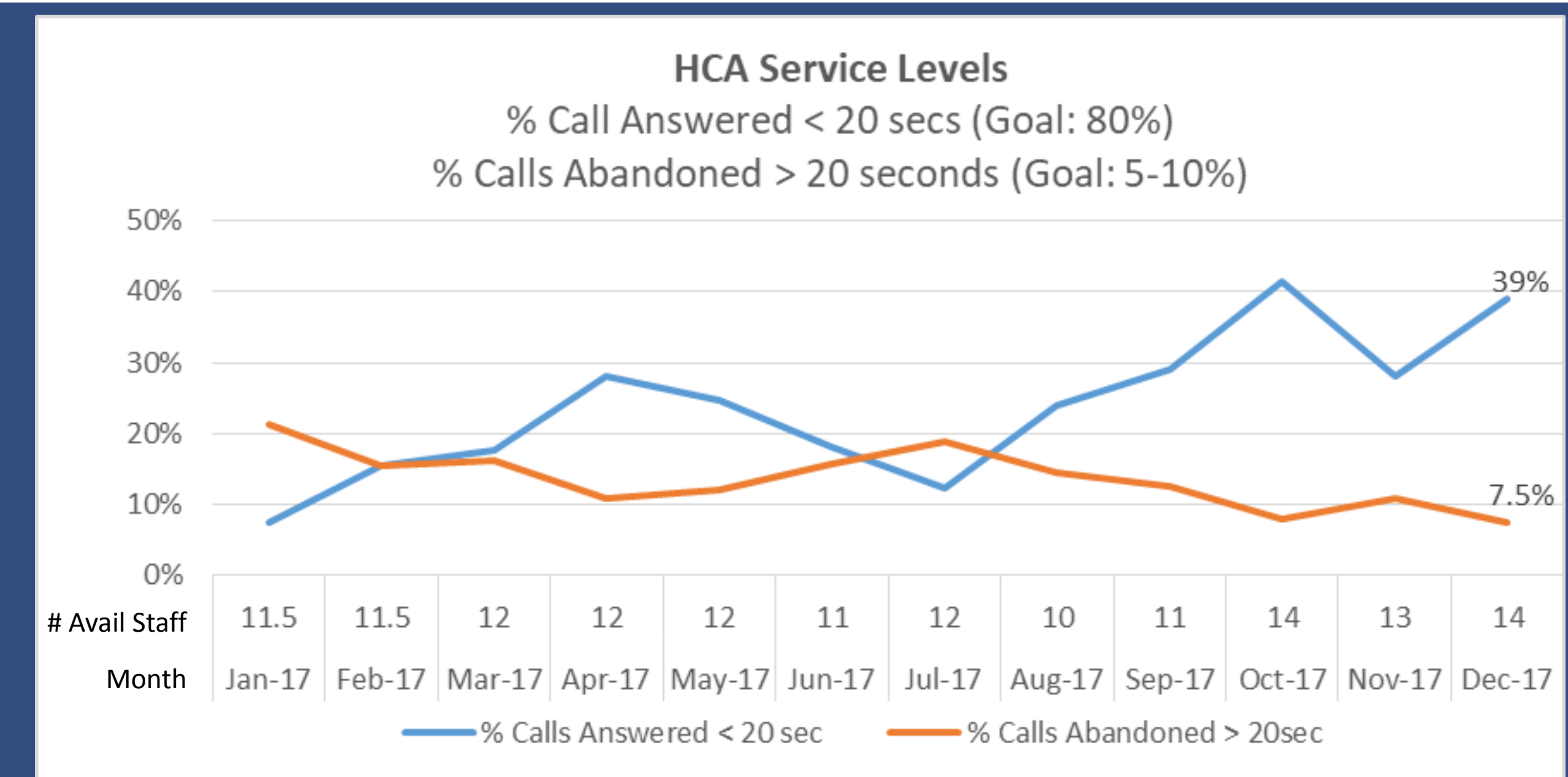
The Team

- Candace Reynolds, HCA Nursing Director
- Jeff Vale, Contact Center Director
- Randy Gonchar, Patient Family Advisor
- Tobie Atlas, Patient Family Advisor
- Katherine Chiulli, Clinical Nurse
- Melissa Cote, Clinical Nurse
- Catherine J. Ivkovic, Clinical Nurse
- Chris Rodrigues, Senior Project Manager, Office of Improvement and Innovation – i²
- Deb Crowley, Telecommunications Manager
- HCA Patient Service Representatives and Clinical Nurses

The Interventions



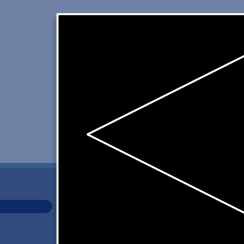
Results



Clinical triage nurses answered on average over 2,000 calls that contributed to an improvement in service levels

For more information, contact:

Candace Reynolds, HCA Nursing Director, creynol1@bidmc.harvard.edu

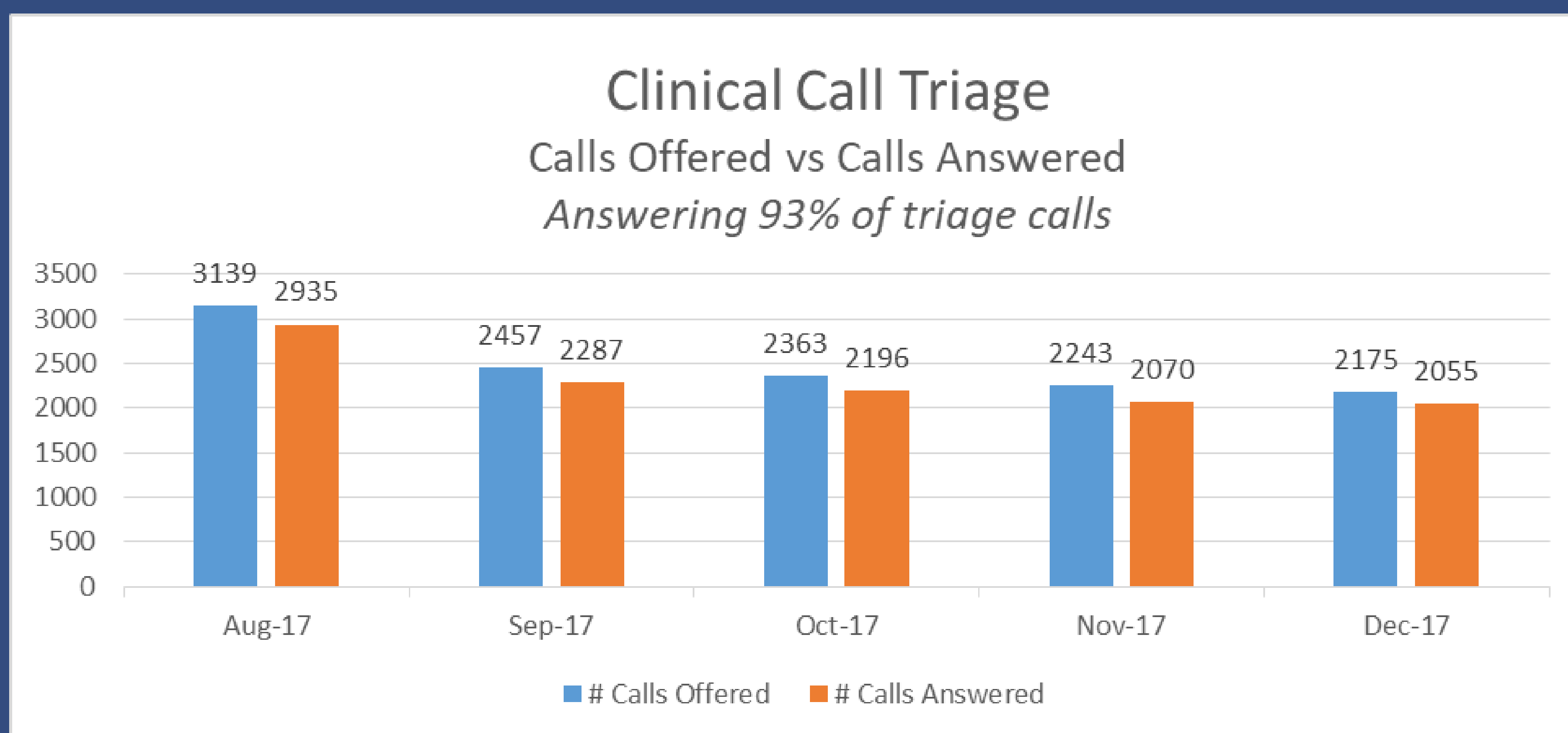


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More Results/Progress to Date



- Centralized a rotation of 2-3 nurses to directly answer patient calls who are sick or have urgent medical needs
 - Created a single access point to connect patients with RN's in real time
 - Reduce handoffs between contact center and suites
- 3 iterations of phone menu / decision tree to ensure callers are directed appropriately
- Simplification of patient screening guidelines
- Co-located patient service representative to assist with scheduling, queue management, prescription renewals, & patient site messages

Lessons Learned

- Aligning roles with the right skill and right knowledge is most efficient and satisfying for staff and patients
- Multi-disciplinary approach fosters teamwork and collaboration
- Process simplification streamlines communication
- Centralized service strengthens team based care
- Creating a call management system to have patients self determine their needs is possible but a challenge

Next Steps

- Determine final location for centralized triage nurse location and optimize space
- Continue to refine tasking of co-located provider with triage nurses
- Streamline process for prescription refills by reducing/eliminating the need for voicemail retrieval

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