

# IMPROVING PHONE ACCESS ACROSS CAMBRIDGE HEALTH ALLIANCE

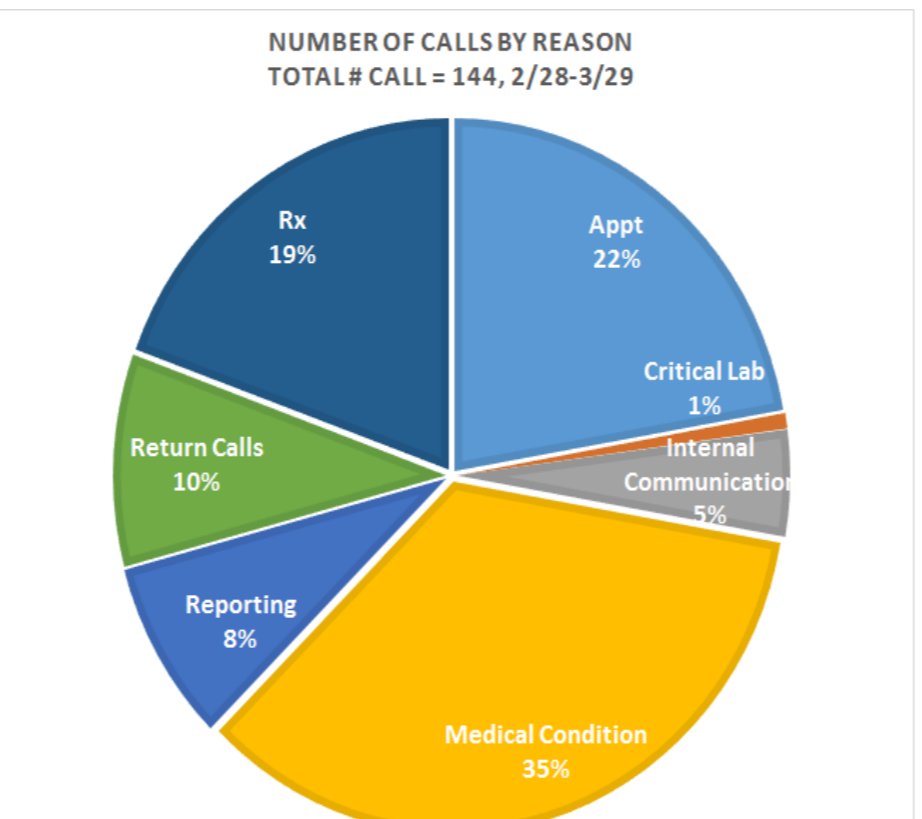
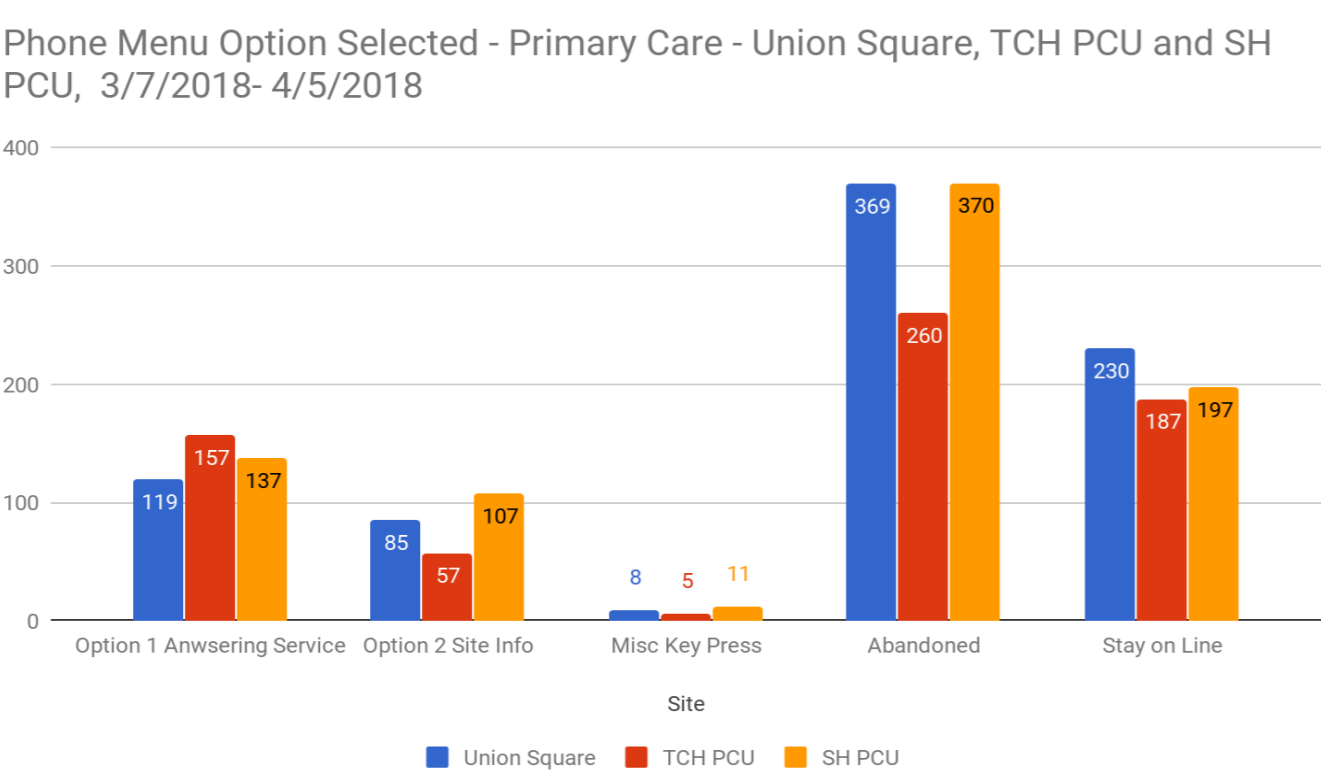
## BACKGROUND AND AIM

Patients of Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA), a public hospital in Massachusetts with 15 ambulatory sites that serves vulnerable and diverse populations, experience barriers accessing health services through the phone system such as long wait times (avg=41 sec), complex phone trees, and call disconnections.

This initiative aimed to improve phone access through standardizing and simplifying operating hours and after hours phone menu across CHA.

## UNDERSTANDING CURRENT STATE

Data from thirty-nine phone lines revealed low utilization of multilingual menu (<10%) and a high abandonment rate with 7.31% average among pilot sites. According to a report of 1,445 after hours calls, only 60.3% triaged to on-call providers required medical input.

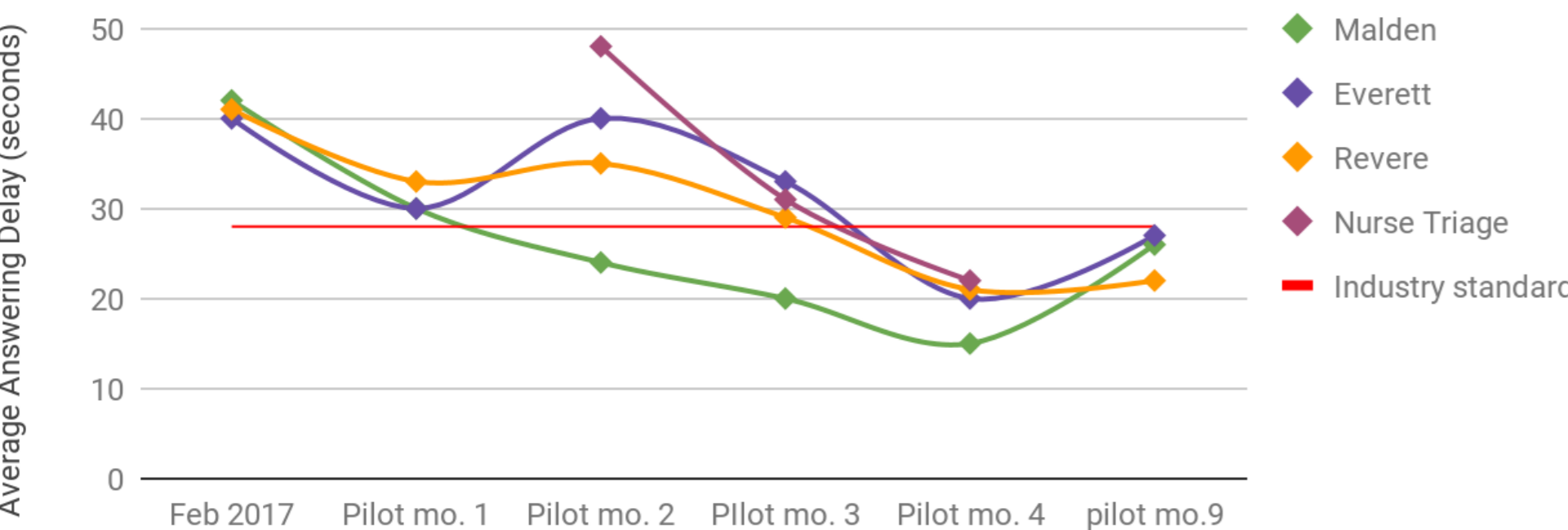


## IDENTIFYING AND IMPLEMENTING SOLUTIONS

Simpler, standardized, and patient-friendly scripts were piloted and cascaded for operating hours and after hours phone menus. Changes included reduced options (including languages), discontinuation of underused voice mailboxes, addition of a “return to main menu” option and consolidation of answering services for after hours calls.

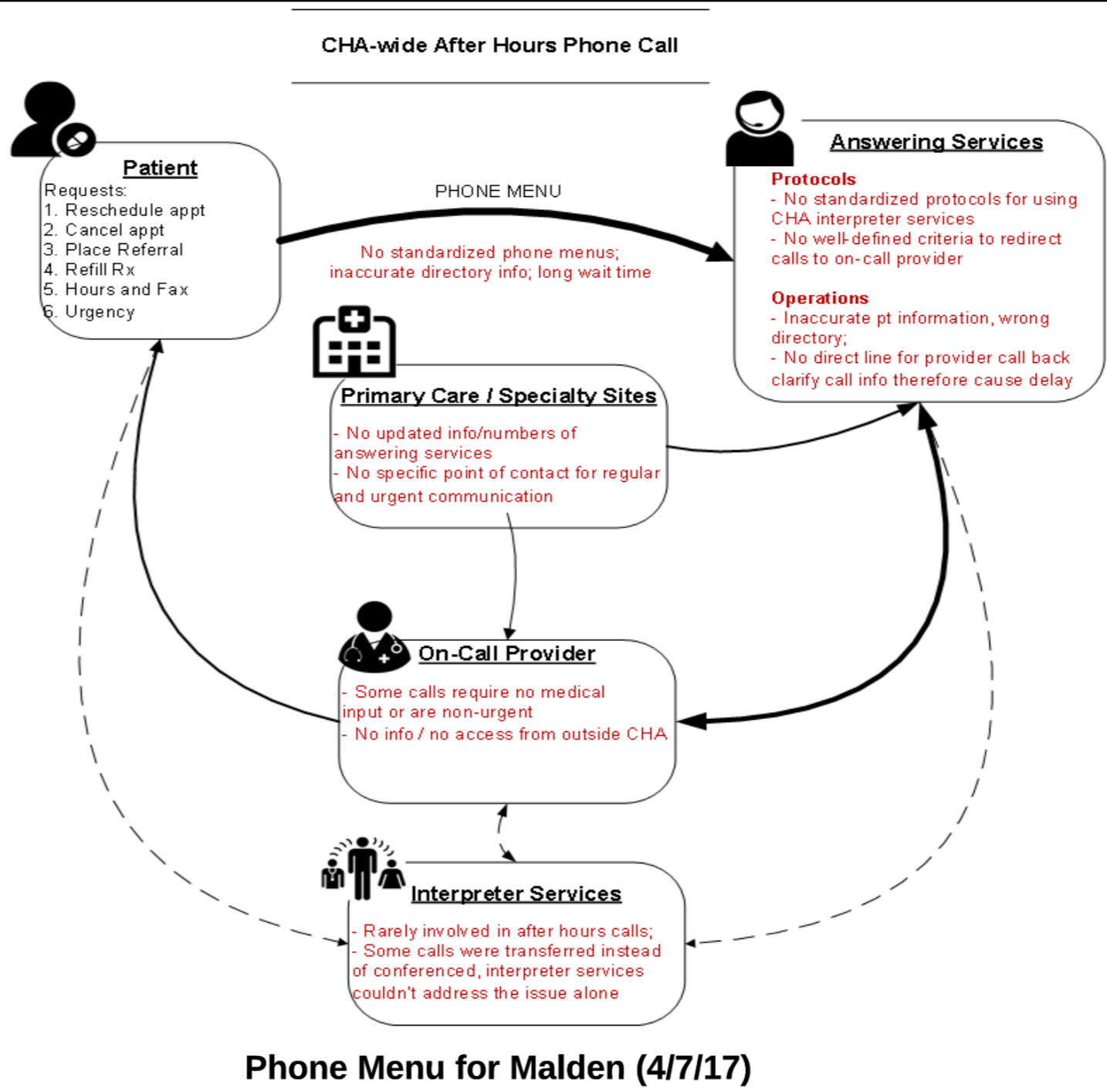
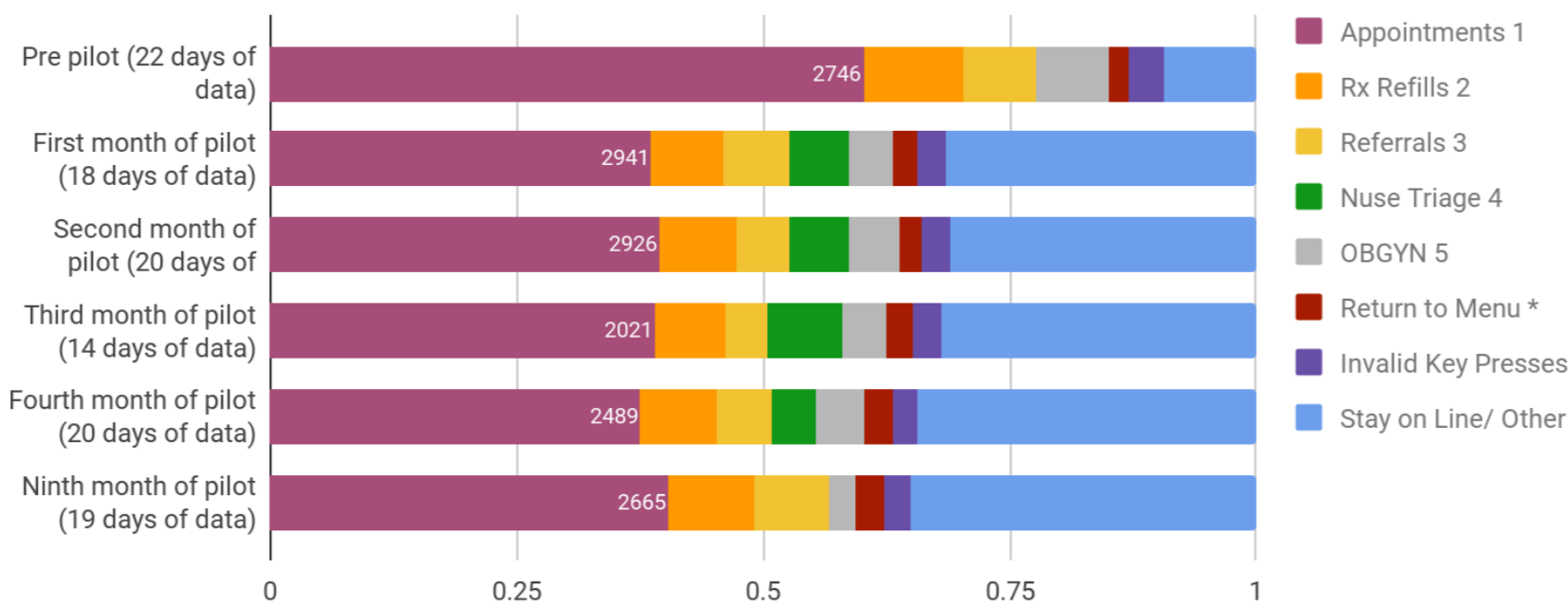
### Average Answering Delays in CHA MCREW Sites

Jan 17- Jan 18; n=104,697

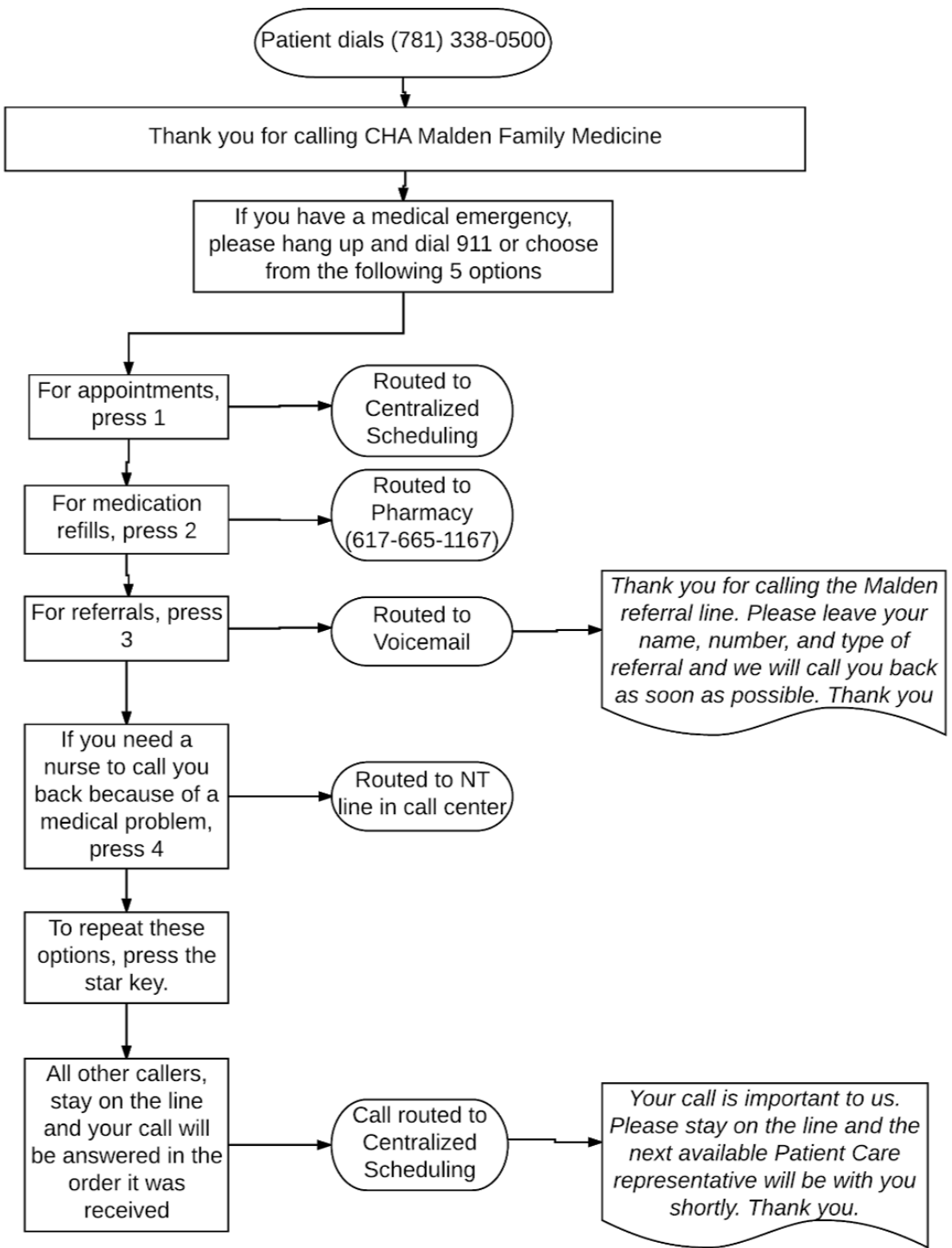


### Why do people call? Breakdown of options selected as a percentage of total calls

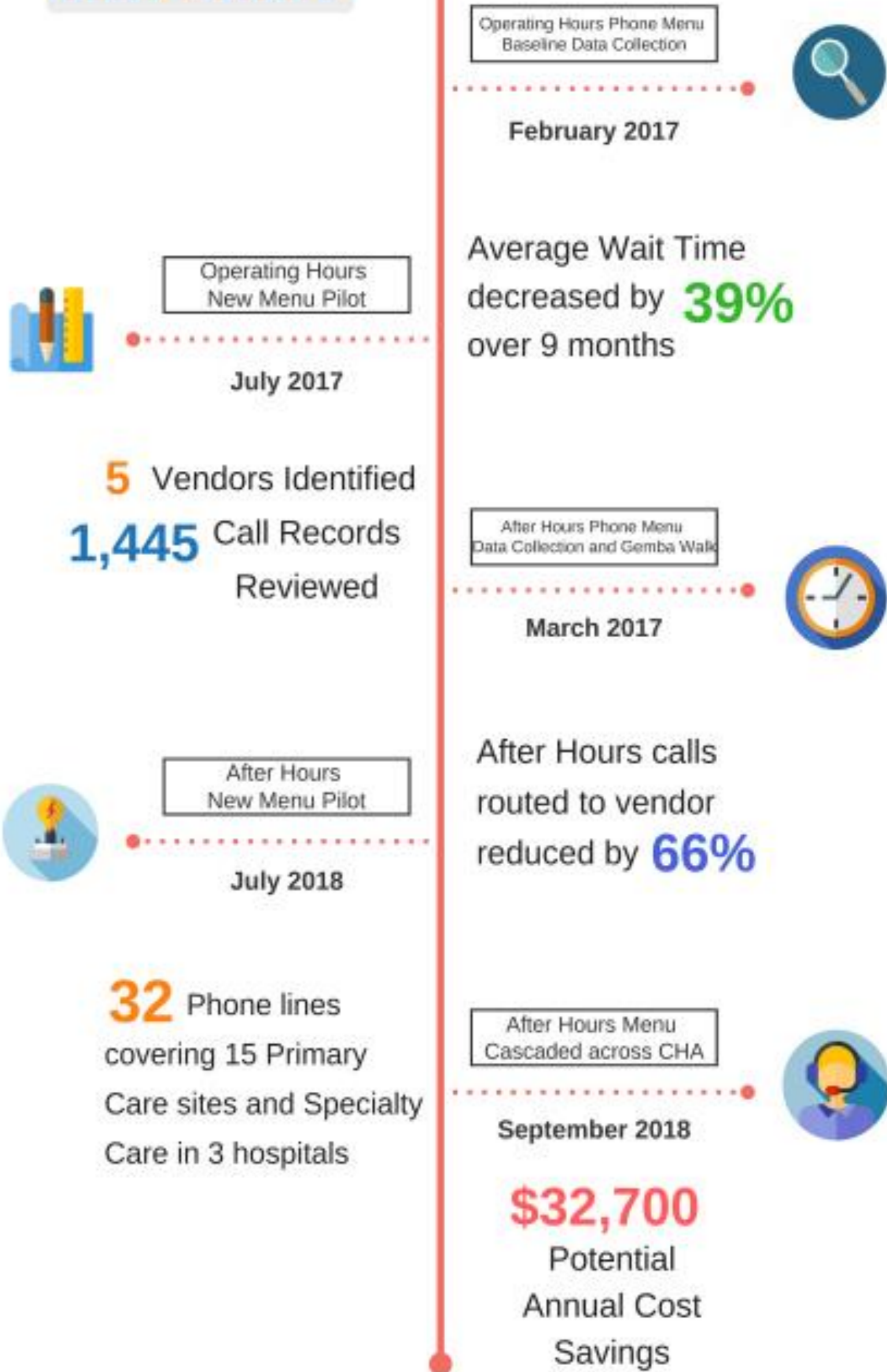
Revere Health Center, pre and post pilot (January 2017-January 2018)



### Phone Menu for Malden (4/7/17)



## TIMELINE



## IMPLICATIONS

In addition to the standardization of the phone menus across CHA, this project also established an effective framework that engages multidisciplinary stakeholders (Patient, Interpreter Services, Call Center, Answering Services, Operations team, Performance Improvement team) to identify, apply, and disseminate best practices to improve patient access and reduce system inefficiencies.

## NEXT STEPS

- Develop call triage protocols
- Continue monitoring the metrics
- Consolidating after hours answering service vendors
- Build capacity to clinically triage and handle after hour calls