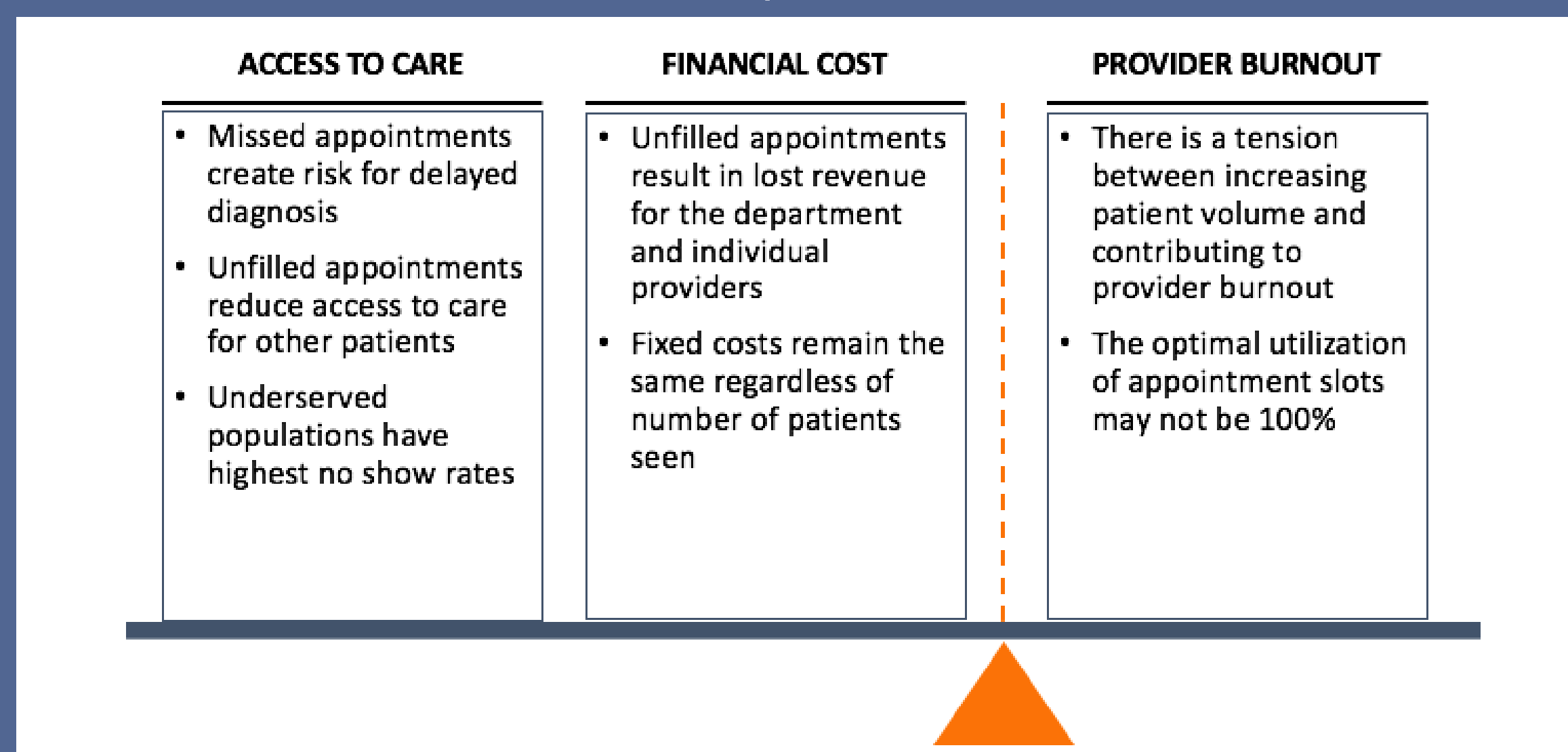# Qualitative factors associated with "no shows" in outpatient dermatology

Nicole Gunasekera MD MBA, Pallavi Basu BA, Rachel Reynolds MD, Martina Porter, MD

Introduction/Problem

Wait times for outpatient dermatology appointments can be months long. When patients do not keep their appointments, there is a missed opportunity to provide timely care to another patient. "No shows" have implications for access to care, financial costs, and provider burnout.

ACCESS TO CARE	FINANCIAL COST	PROVIDER BURNOUT
• Missed appointments create risk for delayed diagnosis • Unfilled appointments reduce access to care for other patients • Underserved populations have highest no show rates	• Unfilled appointments result in lost revenue for the department and individual providers • Fixed costs remain the same regardless of number of patients seen	• There is a tension between increasing patient volume and contributing to provider burnout • The optimal utilization of appointment slots may not be 100%

Aim/Goal

The aim of our study is to quantify the appointment non-attendance rate at each of our clinic locations and to identify qualitative patient and appointment characteristics that are associated with increased risk to miss appointments. Based on these findings, we hope to identify and pilot interventions to reduce wasted appointments by 15% over 2 years.
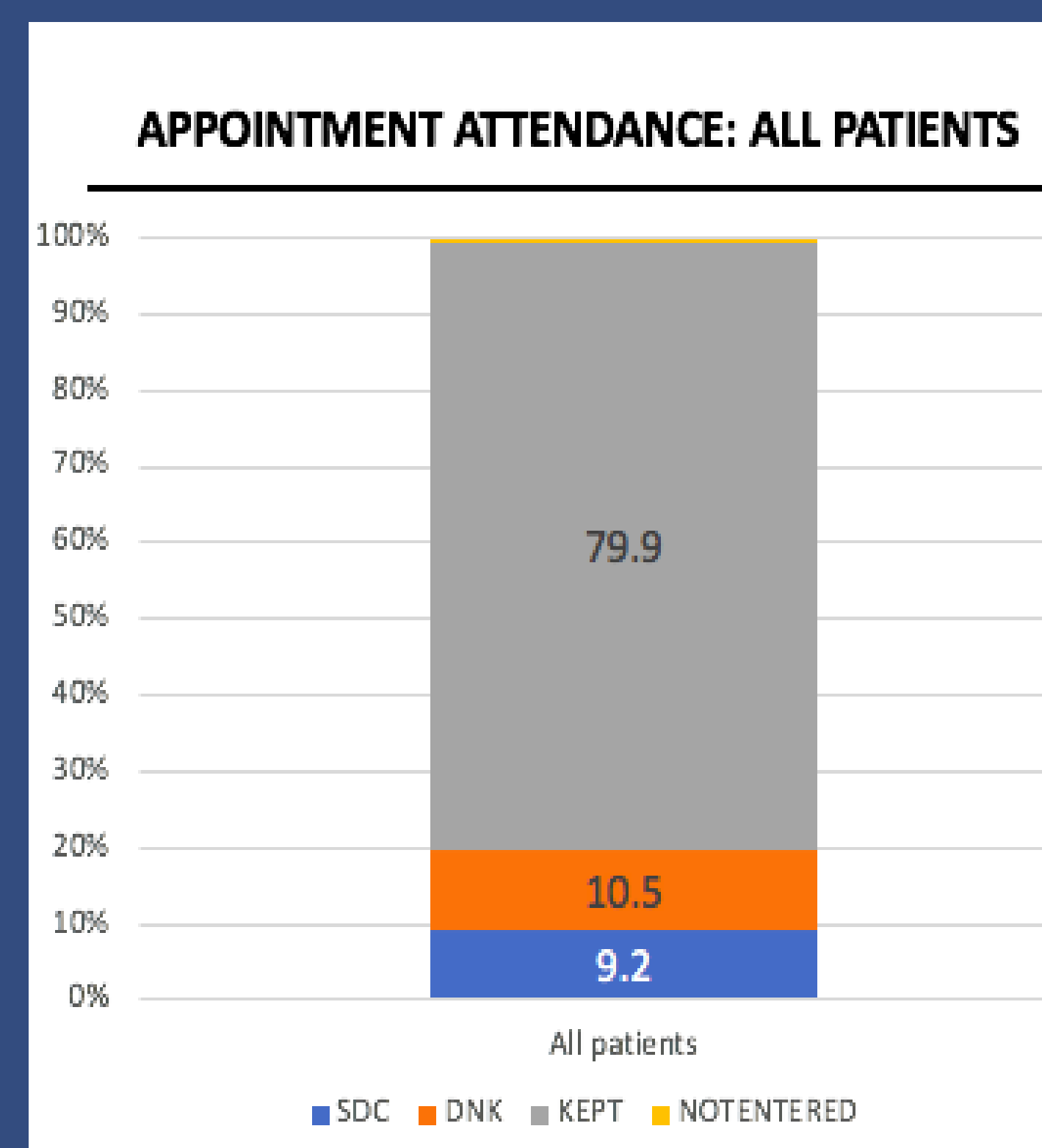
The Team

- Nicole Gunasekera, MD MBA, Dermatology Resident
- Pallavi Basu, BA, Dermatology Clinical Research Student
- Rachel Reynolds, MD, Vice Chief of Dermatology
- Martina Porter, MD, Dermatology Attending

The Interventions

- Analyzing patient and appointment data for the dermatology department from June 2017 to September 2018 across clinics at the Main Campus, Chestnut Hill, Lexington, Needham, and Chelsea offices
- Soliciting input from other BIDMC leaders who have worked on appointment non-attendance in their respective departments
- Conceptualizing pilot interventions to reduce the appointment non-attendance rate in dermatology

Results/Progress to Date

APPOINTMENT ATTENDANCE: ALL PATIENTS

All patients: SDC 9.2, DNK 10.5, KEPT 79.9, NOTENTERED

Legend: SDC, DNK, KEPT, NOTENTERED

Factors associated with significant differences in no show rates include:
- Age
- Insurance type
- Race
- Primary Language
- Marital Status
- Distance from home to clinic
- New v. established patient
- Appointment type (e.g., urgent v. routine, high risk clinics)
- Lead time (time from appointment booking to the appointment)
- Clinic site
- Appointment month, day of week, and time

SDC – Same day cancellation; DNK – Did not keep ("no show")
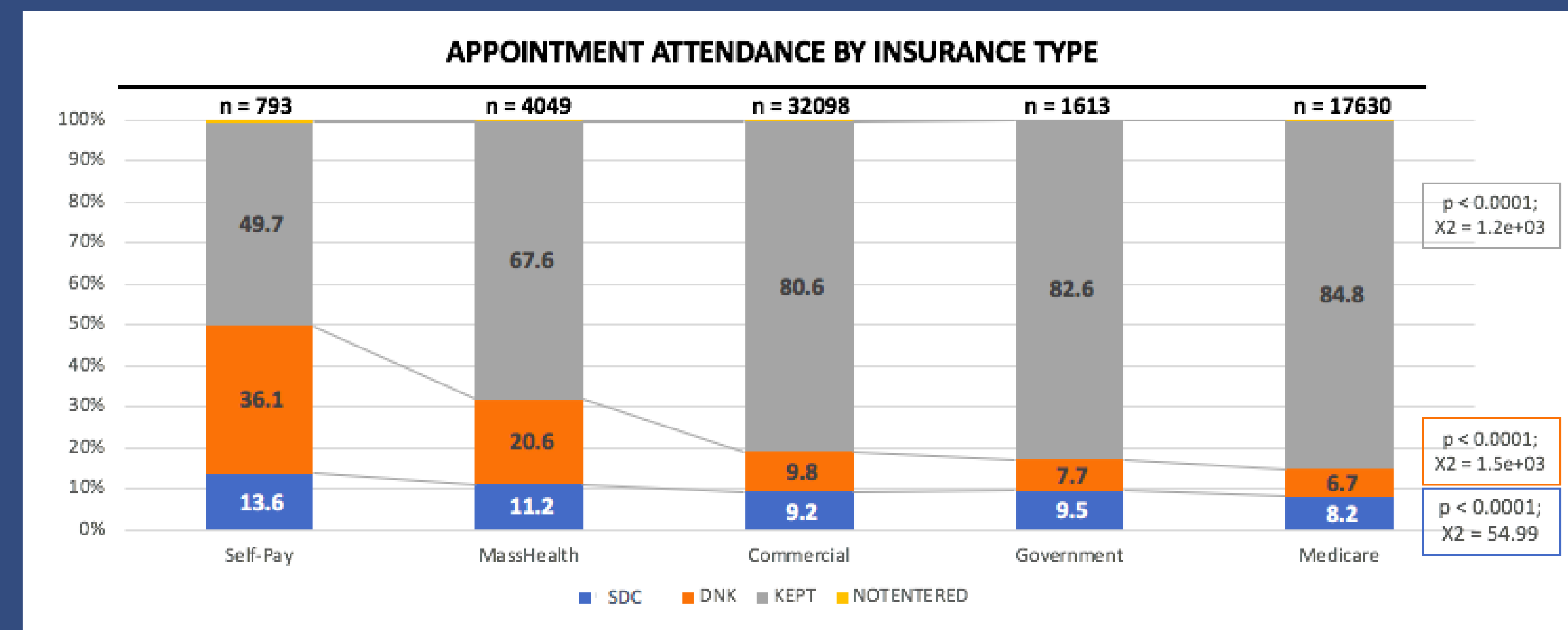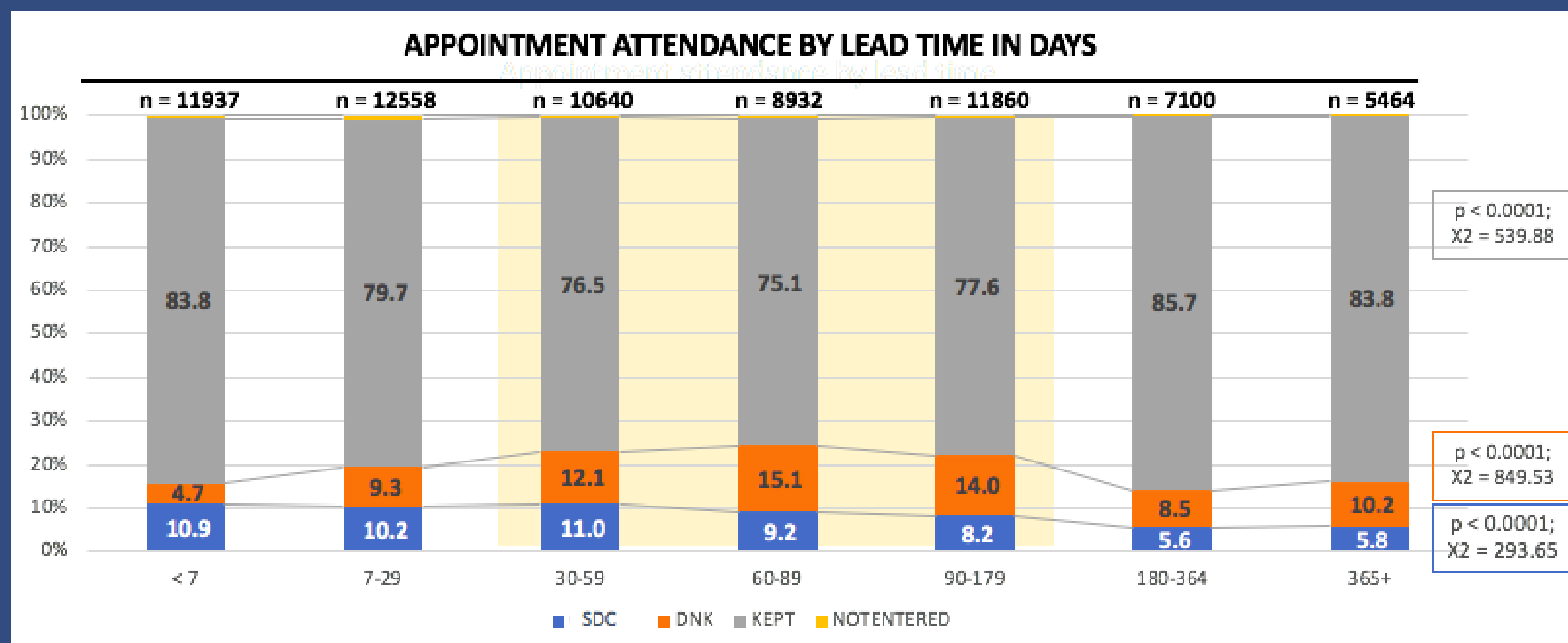
For more information, contact:

Nicole Gunasekera MD, ngunasek@bidmc.Harvard.org; Martina Porter MD, mporter3@bidmc.Harvard.edu
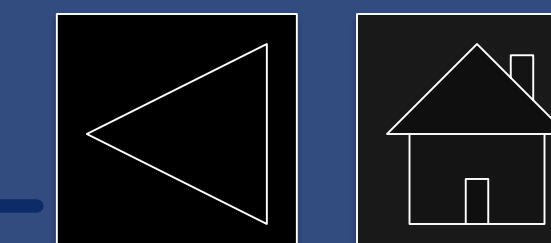
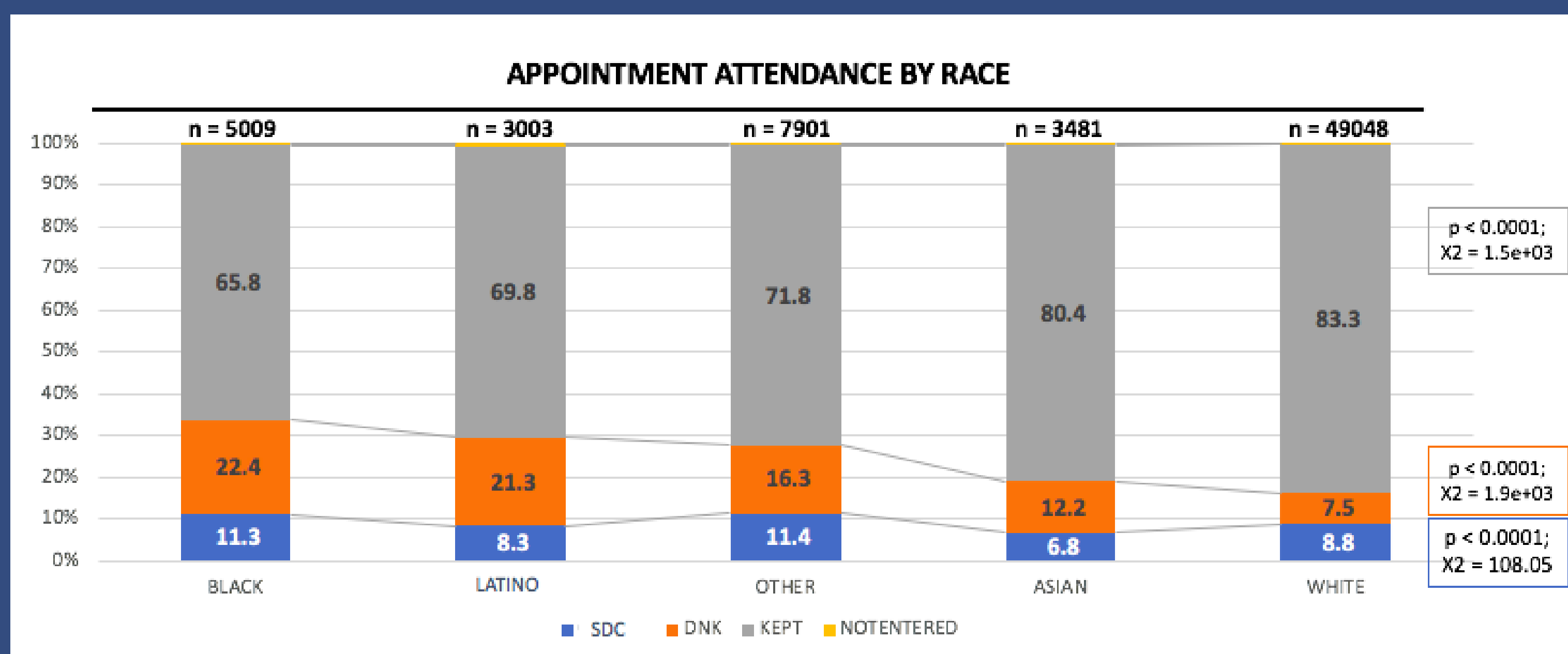# Qualitative factors associated with "no shows" in outpatient dermatology

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More Results/Progress to Date

Lead time is the number of days between when an appointment is booked and the appointment itself. Appointments booked 30-180 days in advance have highest no show rates.

Self-pay and MassHealth patients have much higher no show rates than patients with other insurance types.

Non-white patients have higher no show rates than white patients.

Lessons Learned

➢ Many qualitative factors are associated with high no show rates. Some are likely easier to modify than others.
➢ No show rate does not increase linearly with appointment lead time; appointments with lead times of 30-180 days have higher rates of no shows.
➢ Underserved patients have high no show and same day cancellation rates.

Next Steps

➢ Evaluate most common chief complaints associated with appointments scheduled for 30-180 day follow up, with hypothesis that adjusting the cadence of follow up may reduce no shows
➢ Collect survey data from non-English speaking and non-white patients to understand barriers to attending appointments - based on this data, identify and pilot interventions to reduce these barriers
➢ Pilot a waitlist functionality so that cancelled appointments can be filled efficiently

For more information, contact:

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