Implementation of a Toolkit to Improve Engagement in Nursing Professional Governance

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Background

Nursing professional governance (PG) is associated with improved nursing job satisfaction and quality and safety ratings.

COVID-19 resulted in high staff turnover in leadership and bedside nursing positions resulting in the loss of nursing professional governance council activity, members, and chairs.

Decreased unit practice council (UPC) engagement results in underrepresentation of nursing and patient-care staff which prevents unit level nursing practice enhancement from being the driving force of a professional nursing governance model.

Project Purpose & Goals

Quality Improvement (QI) Project:
Development of customized Toolkit as a strategy to increase nursing engagement and strengthen the existing professional governance model

Structure Goals:
• Development of customized, evidence-based professional governance Toolkit
• Online publication of Toolkit

Process Goals:
• To operationalize a UPC on specialty nursing unit utilizing Toolkit
• To introduce Toolkit to nursing unit with established UPC

Outcomes:
• Nurses will report increased satisfaction with UPC structure, activities, and membership as measured by Council Health Survey
• 100% of nurses in attendance of UPC meetings will utilize Toolkit
• Specialty unit will operationalize a UPC by :
    • Establishing members
    • Establishing officers
    • Completing UPC Charter template

Methods

Pre-intervention: Creation of a customized Toolkit guided by the evidence-based Council Health Survey (CHS) and the strategic goals of the organization.

Intervention:
• Toolkit introduced to nursing unit with existing UPC to educate, promote, and support current council activities
• Toolkit introduced to specialty nursing unit to operationalize a UPC including:
    • Recruiting members
    • Securing officer(s)
    • Completing UPC charter

Implementation Strategies:
• Changes to existing structures:
    • Expanded membership eligibility
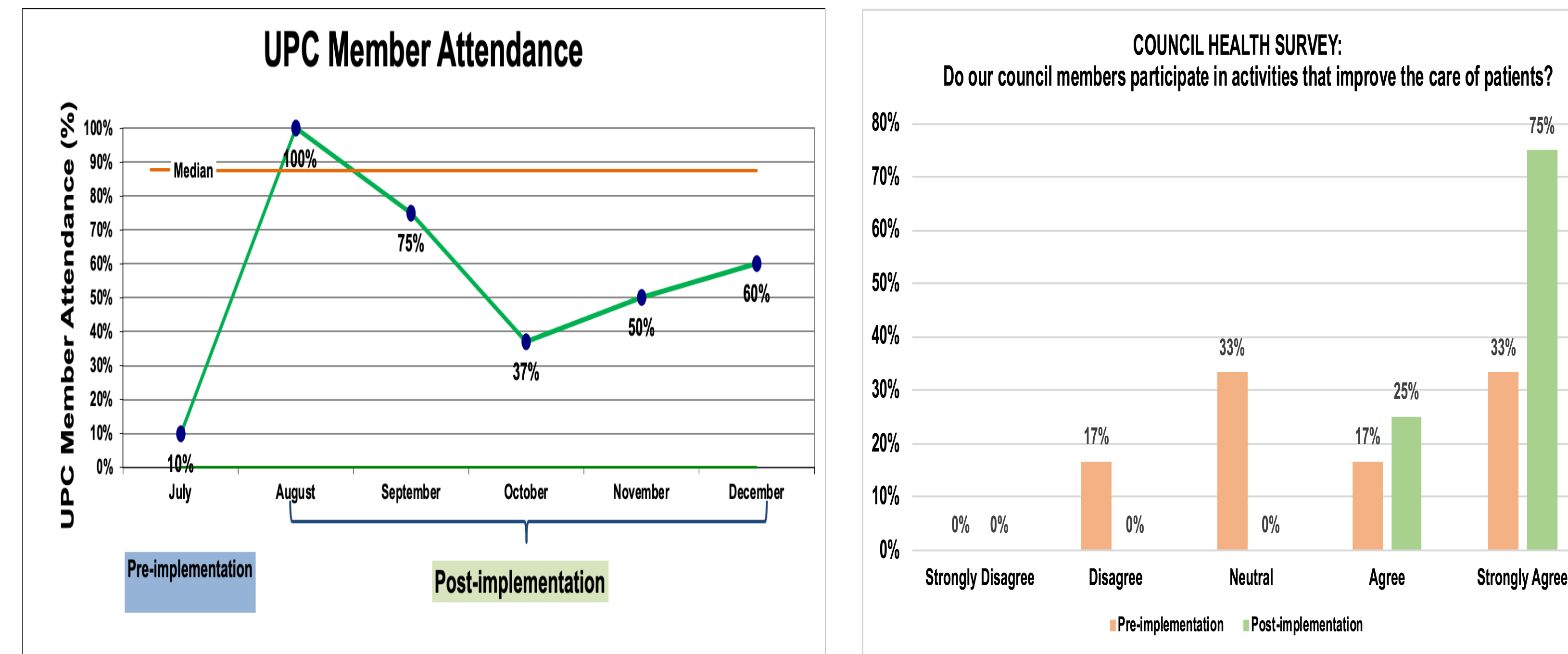   • Updated service requirement
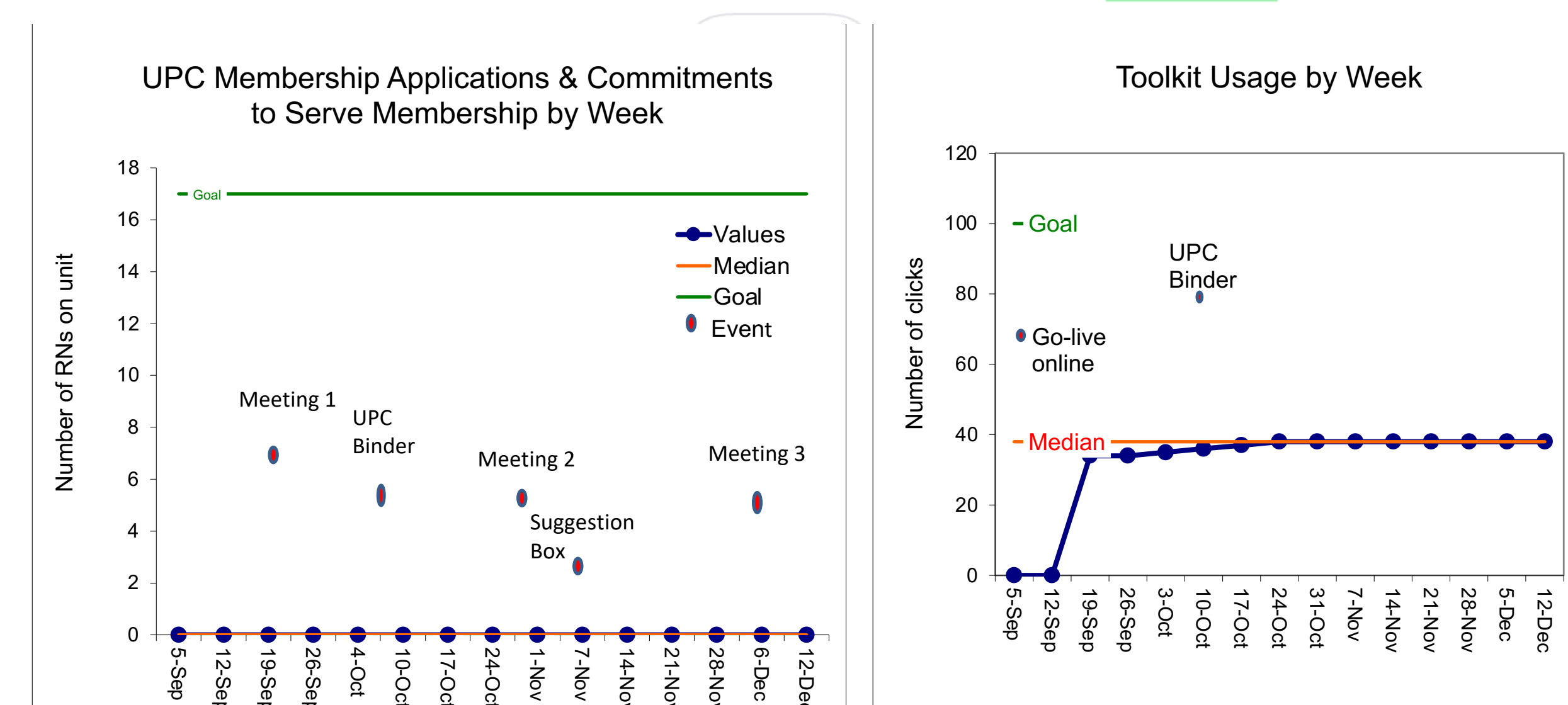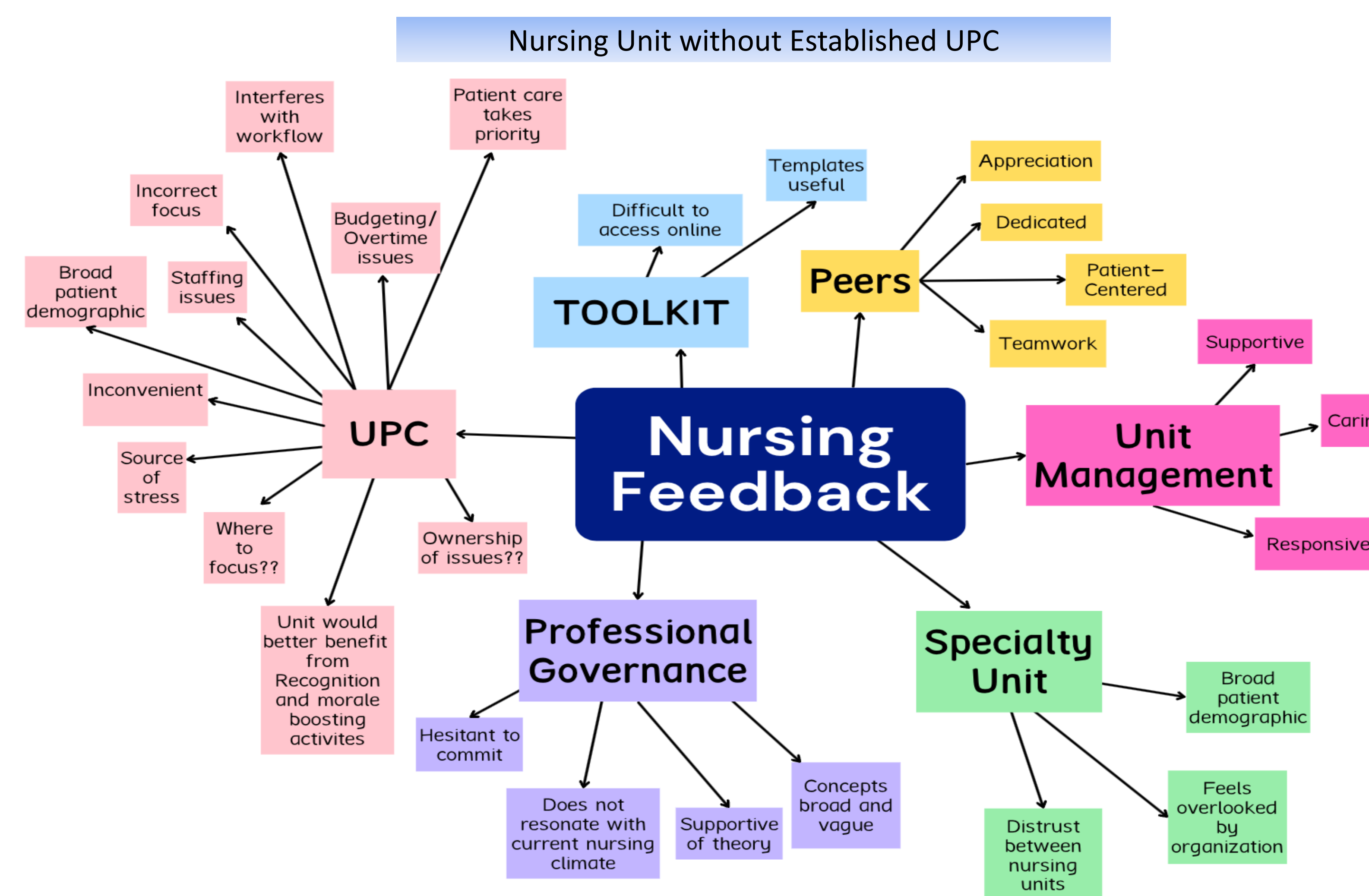   • Online access to Toolkit

Data Collection:
• CHS pre- and post-surveys on perceptions regarding UPCs
• UPC meeting attendance
• Toolkit utilization
• UPC membership applications & Commitments to Serve

Scan for CHS

Results

Nursing Unit with Established UPC

UPC Member Attendance

COUNCIL HEALTH SURVEY:
Do our council members participate in activities that improve the care of patients?

• CHS post-implementation: 75% of members "strongly agreed" that they participate in activities that improve the care of patients and that they use consensus to make decisions

Nursing Unit without Established UPC

Nursing Feedback — TOOLKIT, Peers, Unit Management, UPC, Professional Governance, Specialty Unit

UPC Membership Applications & Commitments to Serve Membership by Week

Toolkit Usage by Week

• Limited response to Council Health Survey
• Zero membership or commitment applications collected
• Limited attendance to council meetings
• Toolkit access likely from IT department vs nursing staff
• Nursing feedback indicates wrong focus and timing to implement UPC

Discussion

Achievements:
• Creation, adaptation and online publication of customized Toolkit
• Nurses educated on PG fundamentals, process, and significance and on Toolkit purpose, contents, function, and accessibility
• Suggestion Box and Toolkit Binder provide alternative opportunities for engagement in PG activities

Barriers:
• Unit staffing
• Staff workload
• Budgeting
• Post-COVID nursing climate
• Overturning of leadership positions

Facilitators:
• Project designated by the nursing executive leadership of the healthcare organization and the UMSON
• Unit with established UPC

Limitations:
• Limited timeframe
• Nature of specialty unit:
    o Broad patient population
    o Messaging did not resonate with nursing staff
    o Early stages of development

Conclusion

Customized professional governance Toolkit:
• Provides standardization, purpose, and direction
• Successful in increasing engagement in established UPCs
• Limited strategy in operationalizing UPCs

Professional governance is continuous and dynamic process where support and resources must be customized to facilitate each individual UPC's success. Ongoing nursing engagement relies heavily on **organizational leadership stability, existing council structures**, *and the organizations commitment to supporting nurses and prioritizing professional governance activities.*

Sustainability: Future endeavors should include:
• Utilizing evidence-based tools such as the CHS to assess UPC function and health
• Utilizing PG Welcome Packets included in Toolkit in new hire orientation
• Improving end-user experience for online Toolkit usage
• Optimizing structural changes introduced in by-laws
    • Expanded membership
    • Mentoring roles
    • Incorporating nursing clinical ladder in by-laws

References & Acknowledgements

Scan for Toolkit

Scan for References