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INTRODUCTION

With funding from the BC Renal Agency, Vancouver Coastal Health's (VCH) Regional Palliative Program partnered with the VCH Renal Program to embed a more **patient-centred** approach into the KCC. With renal patients having to navigate chronic disease progression and complex treatment decisions, the *What Matters* Conversation Project **used elements from the Serious Illness Conversation Guide** to explore patient priorities and wishes as part of routine care.

AIM

The project aims were to:

1. Increase the KCC team's confidence and engagement in Goals of Care (GOC) conversations using the Serious Illness Conversation Guide.
2. Improve the frequency of documentation of patients' values, wishes and understanding.
3. Communicate patients' GOC across care settings.
4. Improve patient understanding and satisfaction with care.

METHODS

A 0.8 FTE Project Lead specializing in Goals of Care was embedded into the KCC from May 2022 to April 2023 to support approximately 25 multidisciplinary clinicians through:

- **Education** on the Serious Illness Conversation (SIC) Guide and GOC documentation in two electronic medical record (EMR) systems—PROMIS and Cerner.
- **Workflow modifications** to prompt GOC
- **Coaching and role modelling** of GOC conversations and documentation
- **Enhancing partnerships** with Home Health and other community partners through presentations, particularly for Conservative Care
- **Development of clear community palliative referral pathways**
- **Development and modification of patient education materials** (posters and handouts) to improve understanding of kidney disease, self-management, care options, and to encourage GOC conversations.



Image 1: Example of poster created for KCC exam rooms.

RESULTS

Clinician surveys

Two surveys were administered to the multidisciplinary team and nephrologists in the KCC— a pre-intervention survey (June 2022) and a post-intervention survey (March 2023). These surveys evaluated clinicians' prioritization of GOC in their care, their use of GOC questions in patient visits, and their confidence in engaging in GOC conversations.

Figure 2. Staff and Physician Rating of Changes in Confidence to Engage in *What Matters* Conversations Compared to Before Project

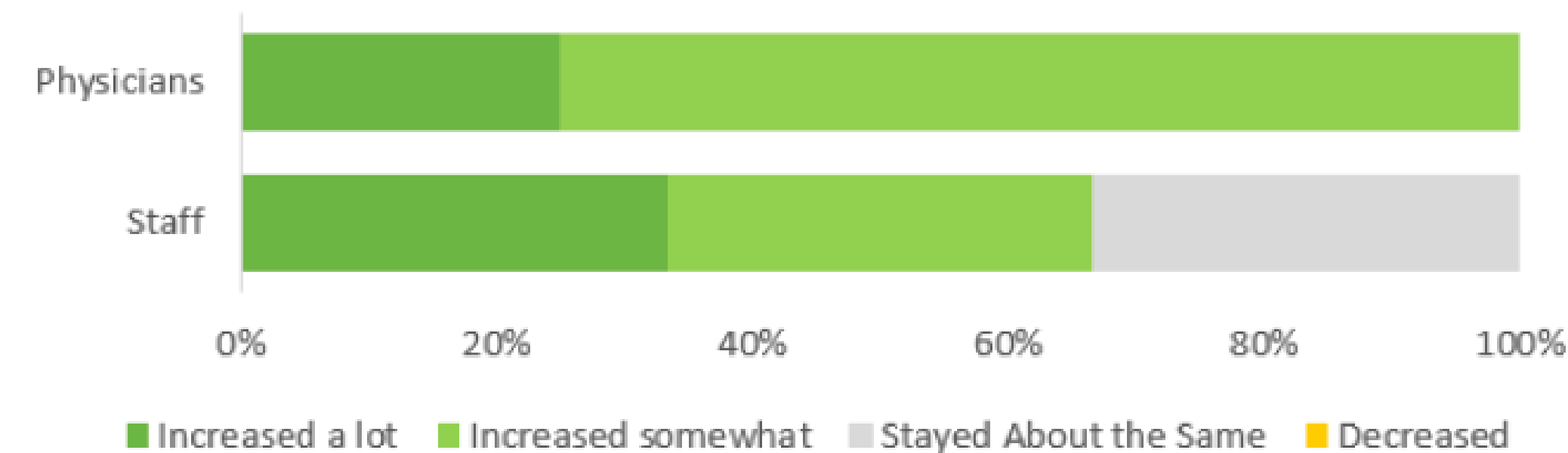


Figure 4. Frequency of Incorporating *What Matters* Conversations into Patient Visits: Baseline (June 2022) and Follow-Up (March 2023)

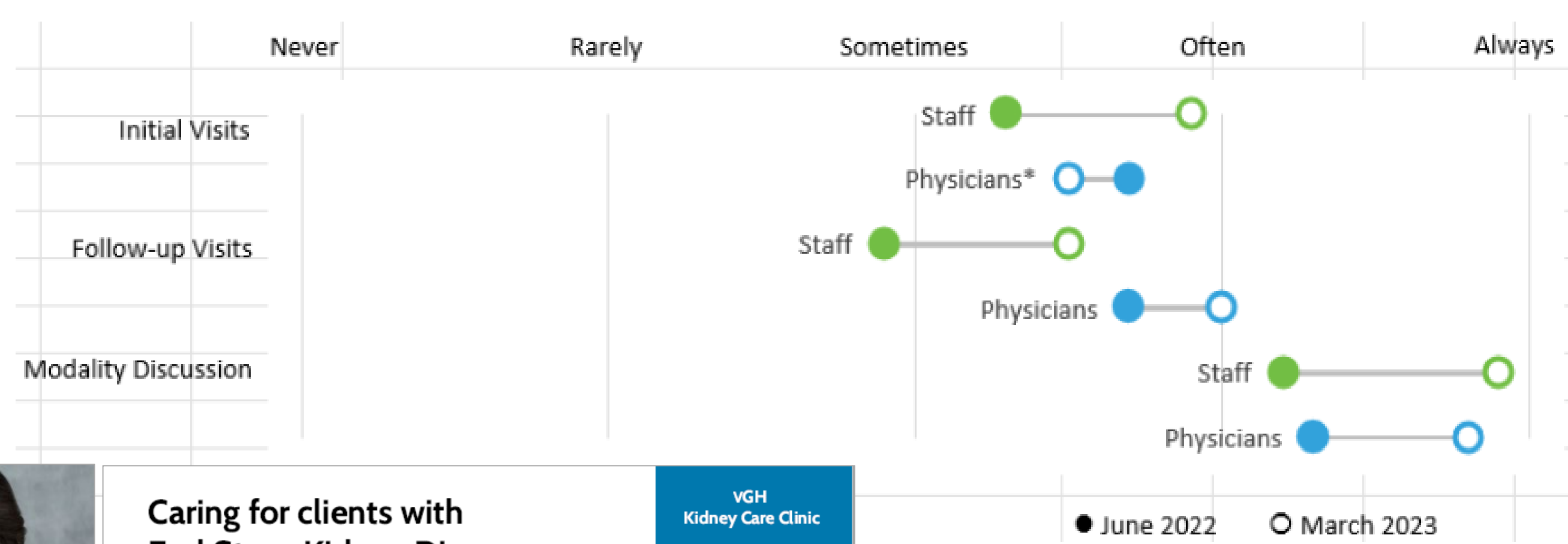


Image 2: Handout provided to Home Health to raise awareness of the KCC, ESKD, and partnerships in care.

Patient/Family surveys

Two surveys were voluntarily completed by KCC patients or families. The pre-intervention survey in June 2022 was completed by 94 participants, while the post-intervention survey in March 2023 was completed by 33 participants. These surveys evaluated their perceptions of their understanding of their illness and their self-management options for care, as well as their overall satisfaction that their care was based on their unique needs and preferences.

Figure 7. Patients' Self-Reported Understanding of their Illness and Self-Management Strategies at Baseline (June 2022) and Follow-up (March 2023)

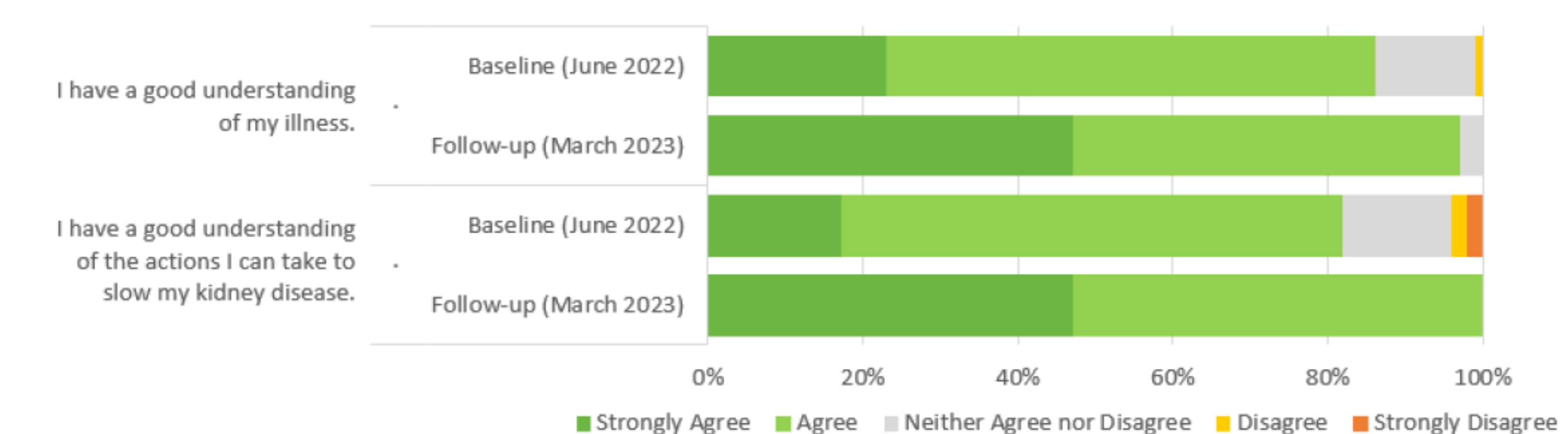
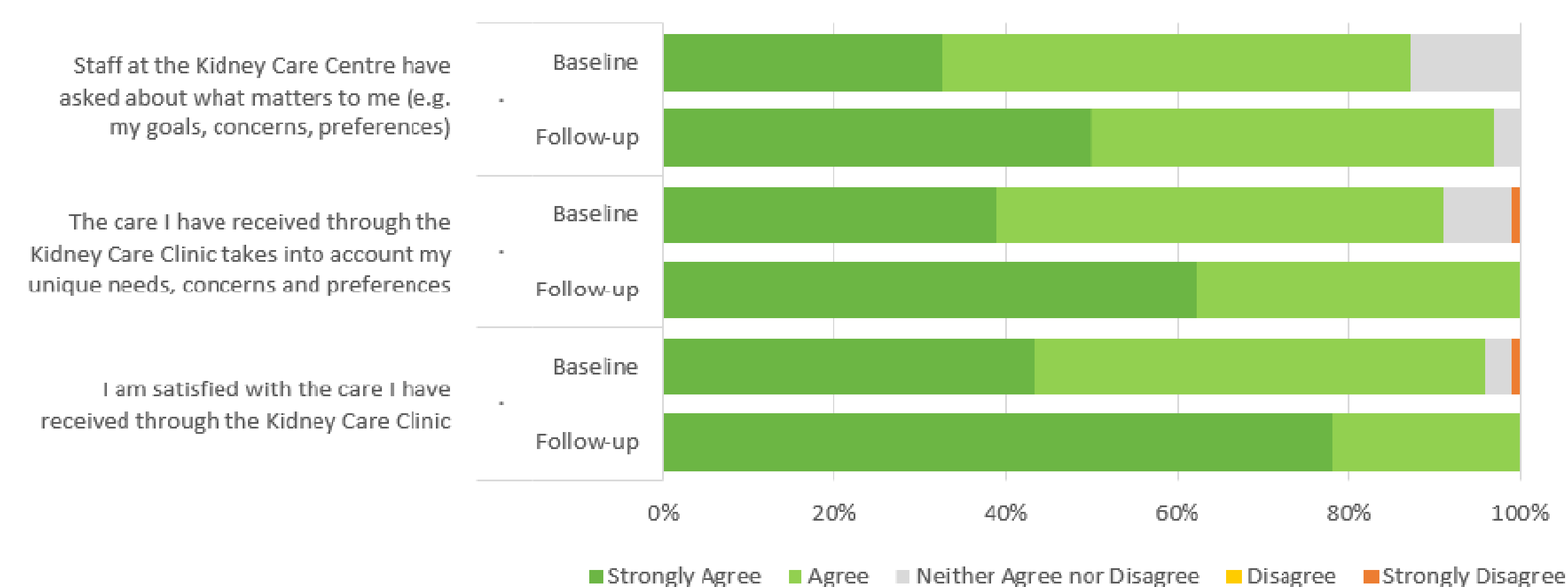


Figure 8. Patients' Satisfaction with their Experience in the KCC at Baseline (June 2022) and Follow-up (March 2023)



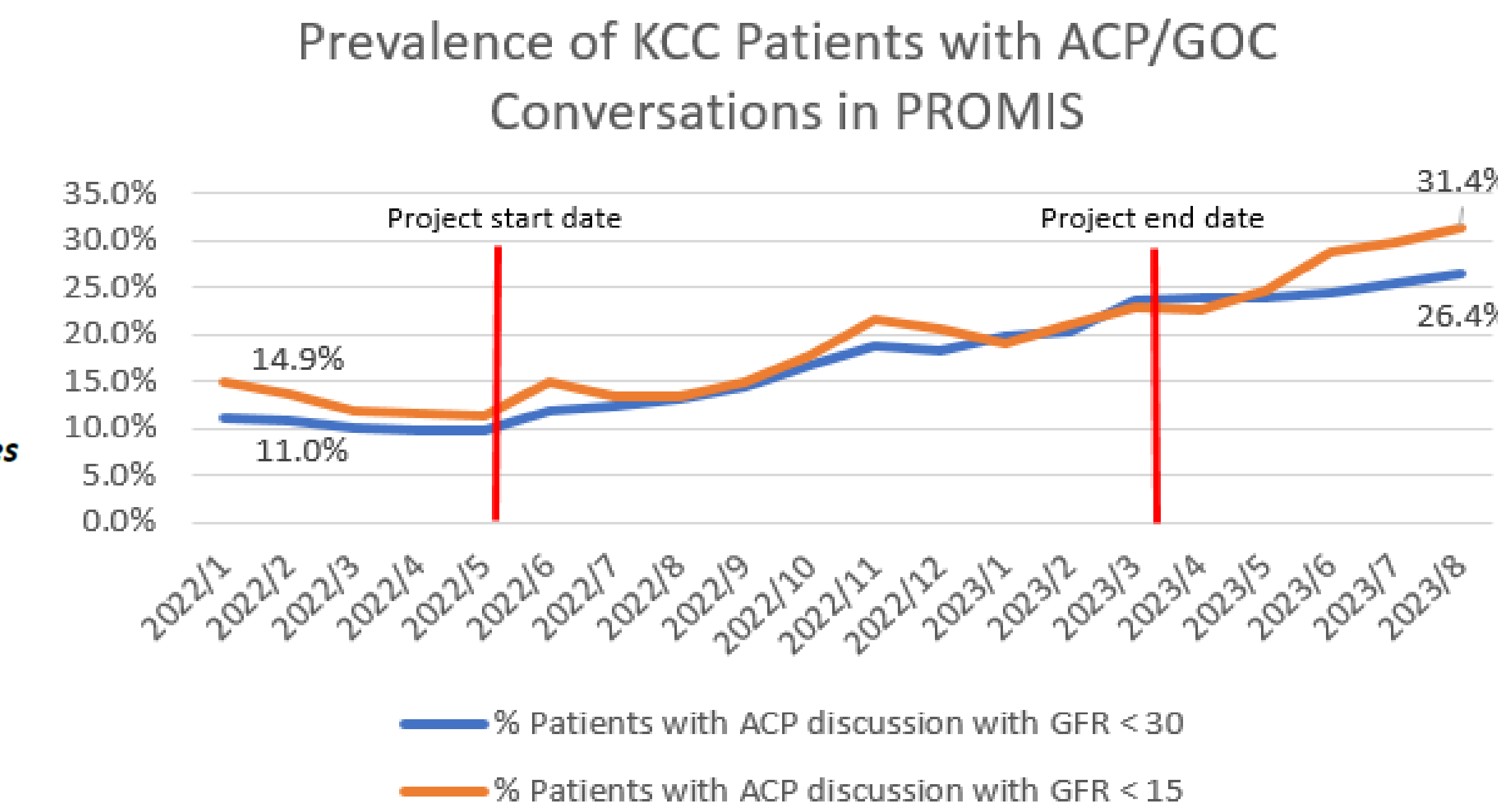
CONCLUSIONS

Embedding a clinician who specializes in Goals of Care into an outpatient kidney clinic can be an effective way of improving the prioritization of Goals of Care conversations, clinician confidence and participation in these conversations, and documentation of patients' values and wishes. Addressing ongoing challenges with workload, time constraints, competing priorities, and multiple EMR systems could lead to even greater success.

REFERENCES

- Serious Illness Conversation Guide. (2016). *Serious Illness Care Program*, Ariadne Labs, Boston USA.
- VCH Renal Palliative Care "What Matters" Conversation Project Evaluation Report by Penny Cooper & Associates (2023).
- VCH Renal Palliative Approach to Care Education (RPACE) team, <https://www.vch.ca/en/service/regional-palliative-approach-care-education-rpace>

GOC documentation metrics



Clinician interviews

- A project evaluator performed 15 follow-up interviews with various KCC clinicians and some community partners. A few key findings included:
- The project raised awareness of the importance of these conversations as **part of everyone's role**, and that these conversations can be used to personalize care. *"Personally, it's more on the radar for me, to try to incorporate GOC. It has changed how I provide KRT education; now it starts with incorporating what matters to the patient."* – KCC RN
 - Nearly all of those interviewed felt that the project's changes have resulted in **positive changes for individual patients**, such as:
 - Improved patient ability to make genuinely informed decisions about treatment modalities.
 - Improved patient understanding of their body which helps them plan for what will happen next.
 - Patients' specific education needs can be adjusted based on what the GOC conversation surfaces.
 - **Greater partnership between the KCC and Home Health** teams in caring for patients on a Conservative Pathway.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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