

THE PROBLEM

In 2011, through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between WORTH (World Organization of Renal Therapies), the Government of Belize, Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital and La Loma Luz Adventist Hospital, the first national hemodialysis program was established in Belize. The dialysis unit was named after Jose Miguel Cruz, a healthcare advocate for the improvement in the care and treatment provided to kidney patients in Belize. From then until the present day, the Jose Cruz Dialysis Center continues to be a provider for the national hemodialysis program.

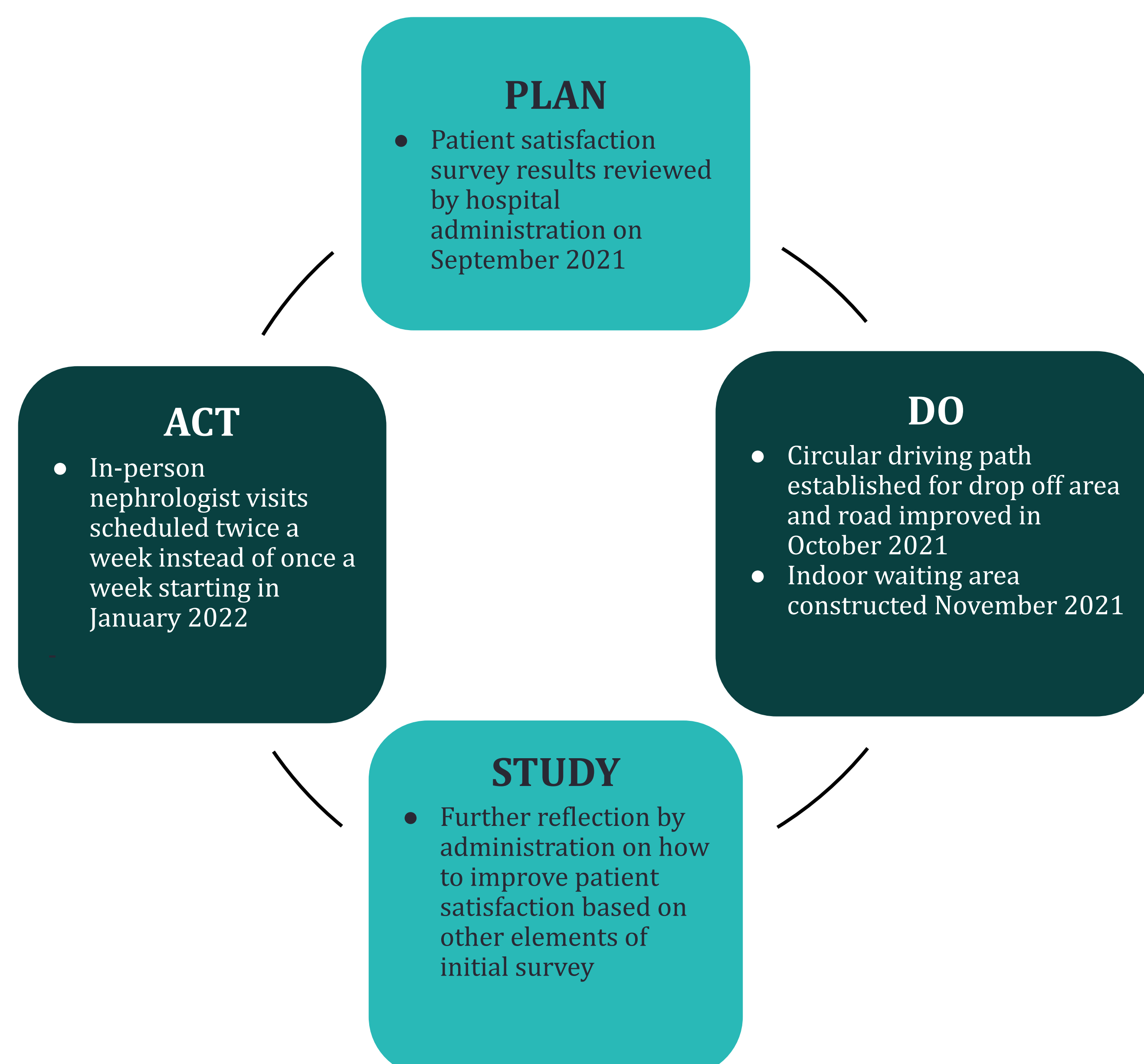
In order to gather feedback from the hemodialysis patients, in June 2021 we introduced the Jose Cruz Hemodialysis Center In-Center Hemodialysis Survey. This survey was adapted from the In-Center Hemodialysis CAHPS® Survey. This survey evaluates the performance and perceived quality of 4 main areas which are: the nephrologist, dialysis staff, the dialysis center structure, and the dialysis treatment itself.

Guided by the data collected in the surveys as well as concerns voiced by patients to the social worker, it was clear that we needed to work on three main areas of concern: the waiting area, the conditions of the drop off area, and the infrequent visits of the nephrologist to the dialysis unit.

AIM

Increase patient satisfaction in the dialysis center by November 2021, prior to submitting the application for re-accreditation of the dialysis center.

PLAN-DO-STUDY-ACT CYCLE



Before Improvements



Image 1. Waiting area prior to renovations

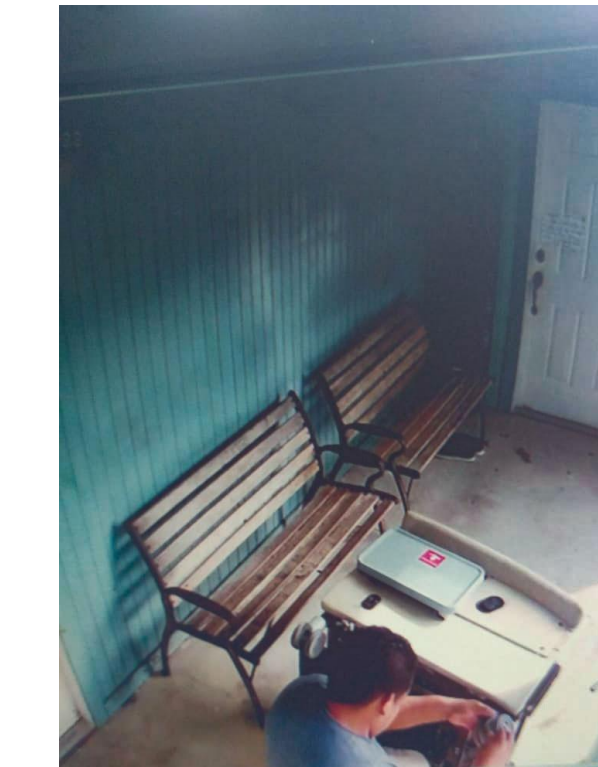


Image 2. Social worker's office entrance prior to renovations

After Improvements



Image 3. Waiting area entrance after renovations



Image 4. Social worker's office entrance after renovations

DATA

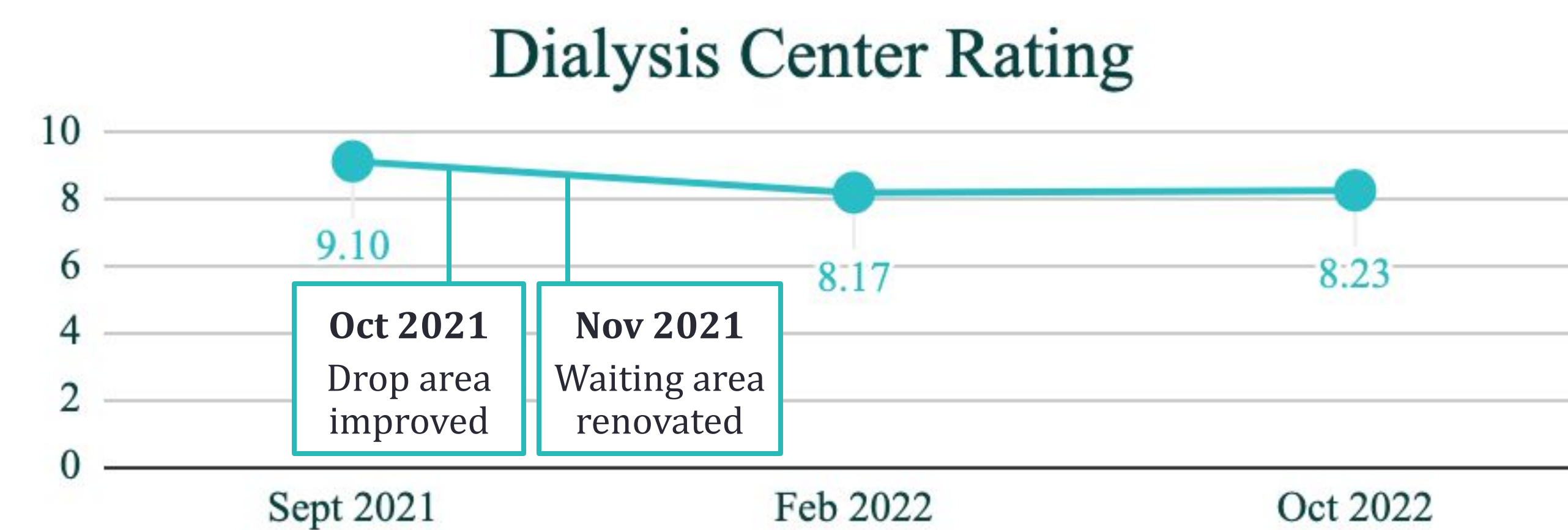


Figure 1. Patients' ratings of the dialysis center on a 10-point scale (0 = poor; 10 = excellent)

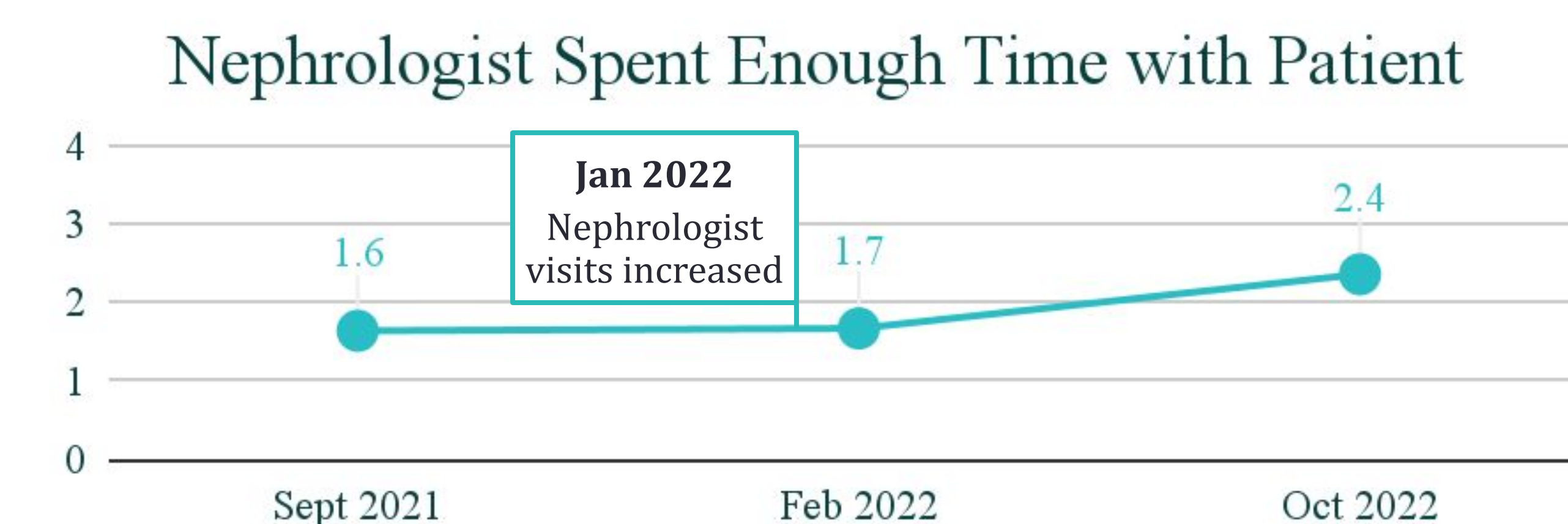


Figure 2. Patients' perception that nephrologist spent enough time with them scored on a 4-point scale (1 = Never; 2 = Sometimes; 3 = Usually; 4 = Always)

RESULTS

The dialysis center improvements were completed on November 2021. Interestingly, the patient satisfaction surveys did not reflect an improvement in the patient experience despite the renovations. One possible explanation for this lack of improvement is that 4 new patients (out of a total of 14 patients) were enrolled at the dialysis center after the waiting area had already been renovated, so they were not as appreciative of the recent improvements. The survey included a section for comments. In the survey conducted September 2021, there were 4 comments recommending the addition of a waiting area. In the February 2022 survey, the only comment about the waiting area was a positive one: "thanks for the new waiting area," which suggests that patients appreciated the change, but there were other elements of the dialysis center that needed to be addressed to optimize the patient experience.

In terms of the patients' perspective on the frequency of the nephrologist's visits, the score improved after increasing the number of half days of in-person visits, but it appears that patients would appreciate more time available with the overseeing physician.

SUMMARY

- What did we learn?
 - Importance of collecting qualitative data. Quantitative data does not tell the whole story.
- What is the result for your patients and institution?
 - The overall environment in the dialysis unit improved as a direct result of patient feedback.
 - Improved patient experience. They feel validated and listened to by hospital administration and staff.
 - The Jose Cruz Dialysis unit was reaccredited and commended by the Ministry of Health

FUTURE STEPS/ WHAT'S NEXT?

- What do you want to do next?
 - Add television or provide tablets for entertainment (12 comments requesting television over the course of the 3 sets of surveys)
 - Explore possibility of telehealth visits with nephrologists
 - GP visit unit when nephrologist not available
 - Continue renovations
- Will you work on a similar process? Or is there another part of the problem that you want to work on?
 - Reaccreditation coming up - strive for continuous improvement
 - This project highlights the importance of listening to patient feedback to provide optimal care. We would like to become more proactive about gathering customer satisfaction data in other areas of the hospital.