

Nurse Driven Palliative Care Consults in the ICU

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Background

- Patients admitted to the ICU have serious illnesses with complex medical needs
- Patients and families need support with decision making and care options
- Evidence supports involving the palliative care team within 48 hours of admission to the ICU:
 - decreases overall length of ICU and hospital stay
 - reduces ICU mortality rates
 - reduces health care costs
 - improves the quality of life for patients (Ma et al., 2019)
- Improving access to palliative care promotes alleviation of nurses' moral distress (Hilton, 2020)

Problem

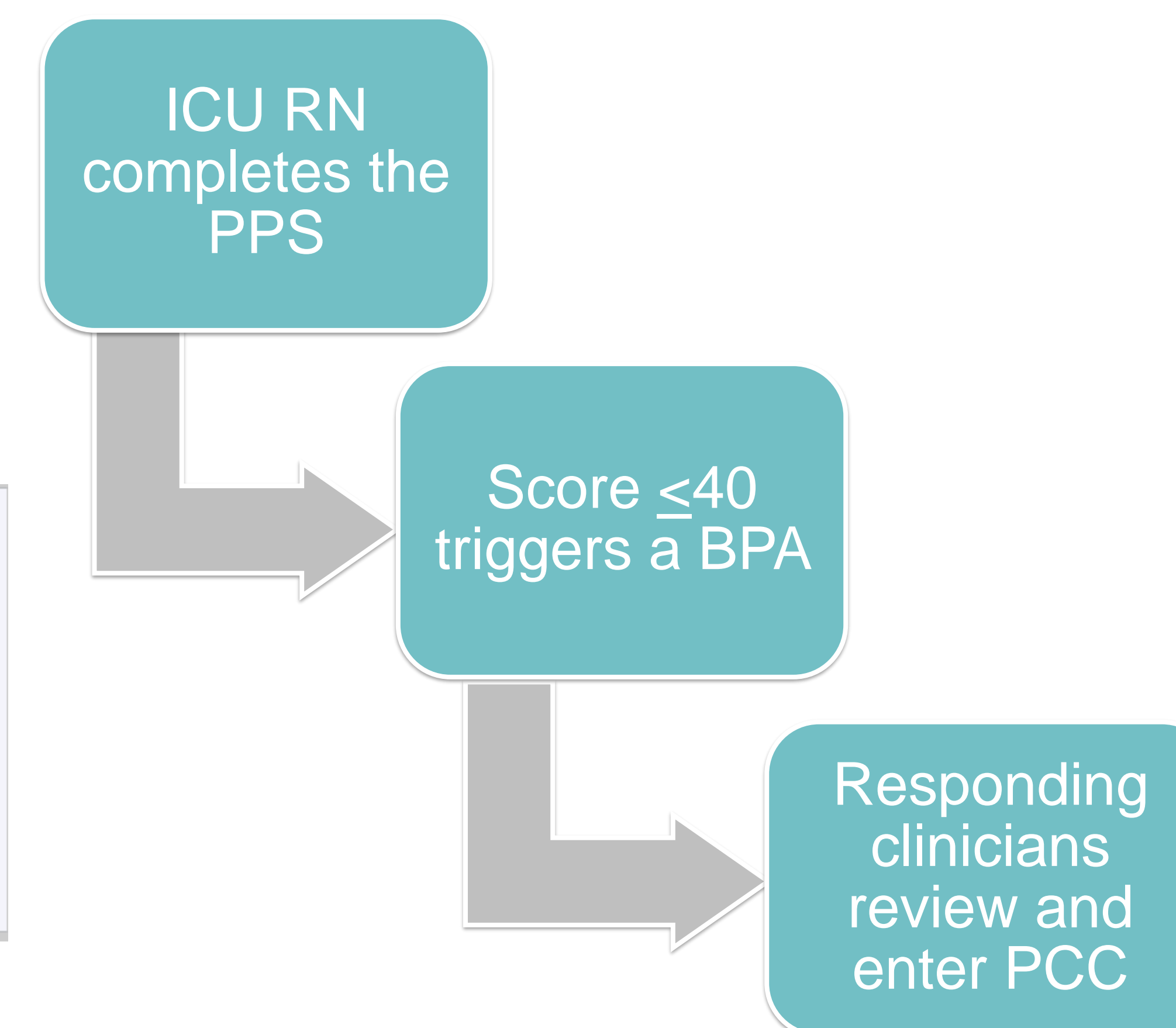
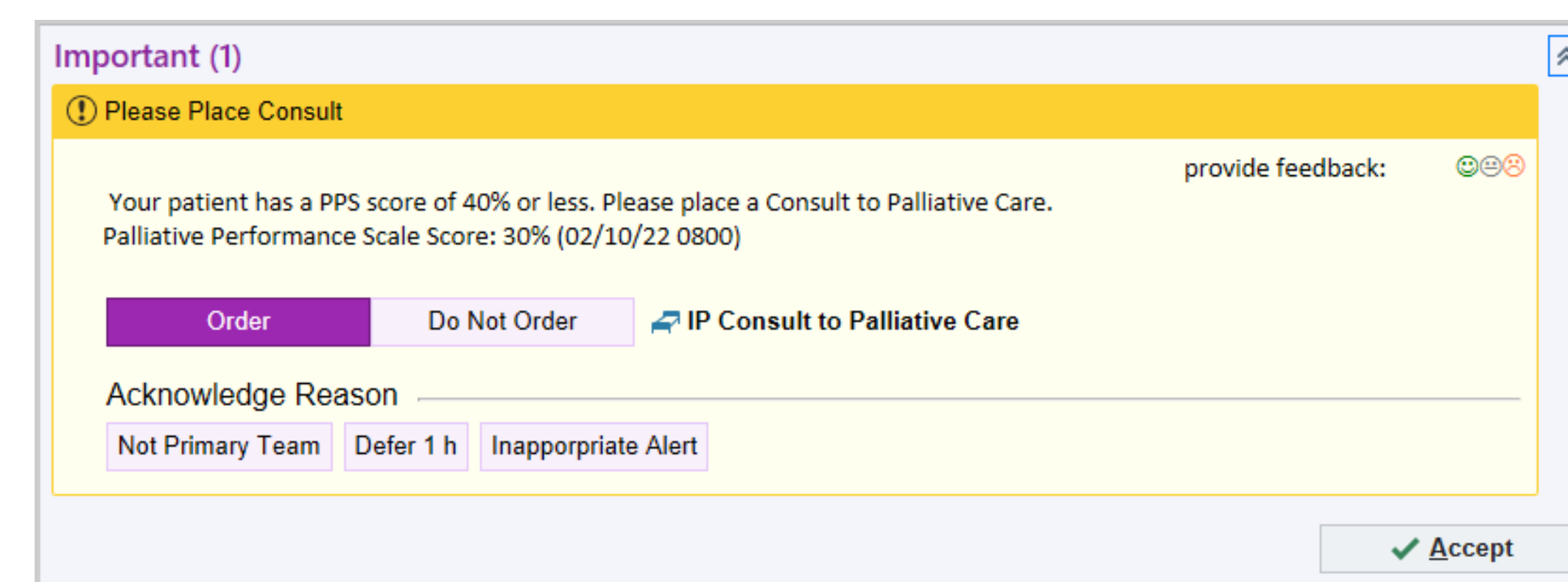
- Lack of standardized criteria to identify patients in need of a palliative care consult (PCC)
- When PCCs initiated, it was very late in the patient's stay
- Consults must be initiated by a provider in the organization

Project Objective

- The purpose of this nurse led initiative was to improve the rate of Palliative Care Consults for ICU patients

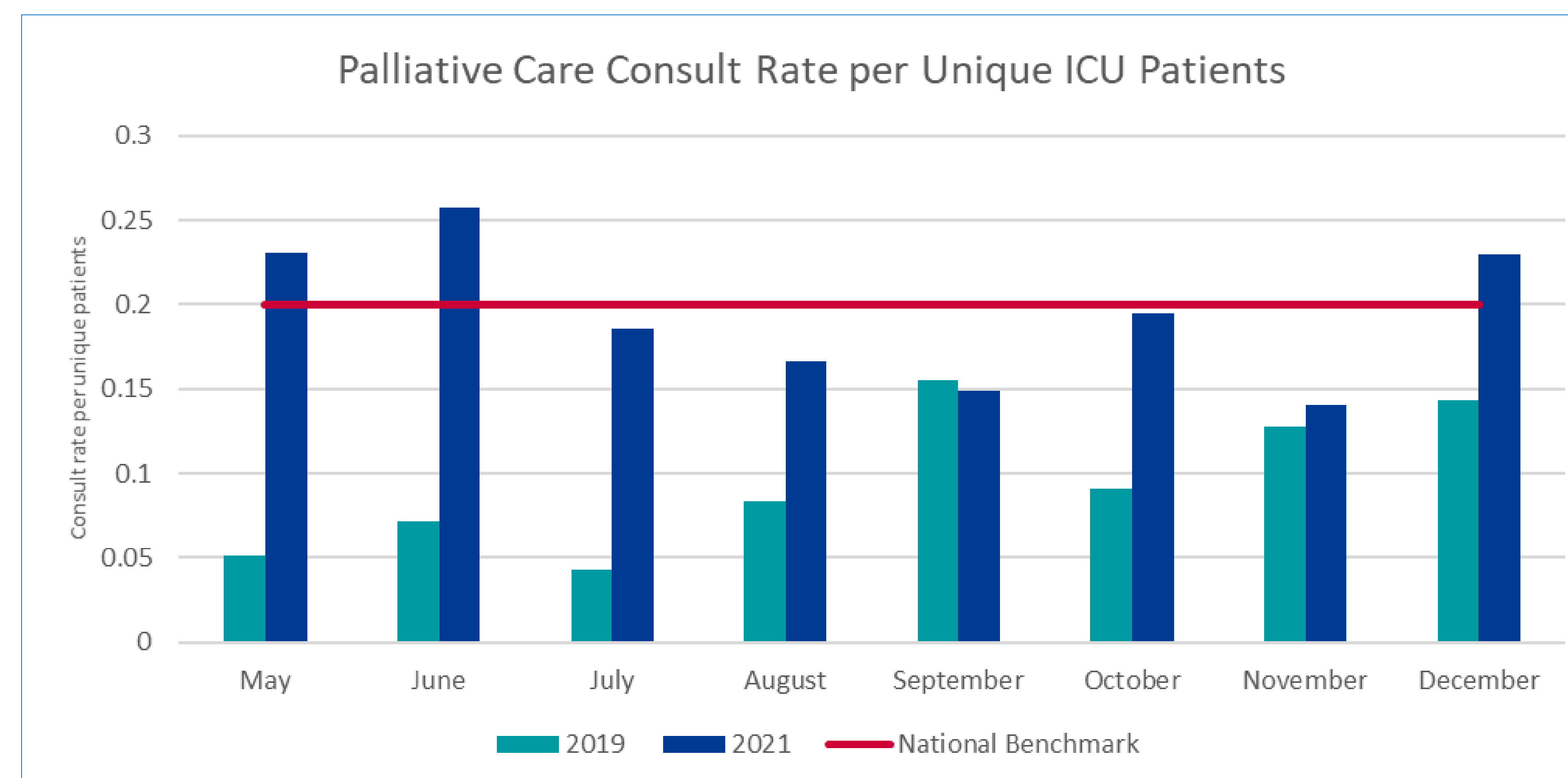
Practice Change/Implementation Process

- Implement use of the Palliative Performance Scale (PPS)
- Educate nurses and providers
- Recruit PPS champions
- Enhance workflow to ↑ compliance
- Discuss PPS results in rounds/handoff



Results

- Implementation of the PPS increased the rate of unique ICU patient PCCs



Outcomes

- **PPS/ PPC Process**
 - Incorporated into ICU orientation
 - Added to the Daily Rounding Bundle
 - Collaborated with Palliative Care team to determine PPS score to trigger BPA
- **Best Practice Alert (BPA) for Palliative Care Consults**
 - System Go Live March 2022

Next Steps

- Review workflow to identify strategies that will support initiation of PCCs to meet or exceed national benchmarks
- Disseminate practice to inpatient medical-surgical units
- Collaborate with healthcare system colleagues to advance consistent use of the PPS

Conclusion

- Critical care nurses are change agents at the local and system levels
- Implementing use of the PPS is an effective strategy to increase the rate of unique PCCs initiated in the ICU

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