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Workforce Healing & Recovery

A Pathway Forward with Empathy Education to Improve the Patient Experience

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Learning Objectives

- Explain why prioritizing self-empathy is essential to employee healing and recovery and working at the top of their license.
- Discuss why self-caring and caring for others is needed to be fully integrated to foster a compassionate culture of excellence.
- Discuss leadership's role in adopting an empathetic model to foster organizational safety and trust, a positive patient experience, which provides both organizational stability and loyalty.

References


- Enhancing Patient Experience through use of Empathetics® Program, Case Report, Beryl Institute, January 2021
- Riess H, Kelley, JM, Bailey, RW, Dunn, EJ, Phillips M. Empathy training for resident physicians: A randomized controlled trial of a neuroscience-informed curriculum. *J Gen Int Med*, 2012; 27(10) 1280–1286.
- Riess H. Institutional Resilience: The foundation for Individual Resilience, Especially During COVID-19. *Global Advances in Health and Medicine*. April, 2021.



**Love and
compassion are
necessities, not
luxuries. Without
them humanity
cannot survive.**

- Dalai Lama

**Why is
Empathy
Essential?**

A photograph of a sunset or sunrise over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright reflection on the water's surface. The sky is filled with scattered, dark clouds, some of which are illuminated from behind by the sun, creating a dramatic, golden light. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

“Compassion is one of the impulses
that nature has implanted in us to do
what duty alone may not accomplish.”

Immanuel Kant

Empathy Training RCT: Study Objectives

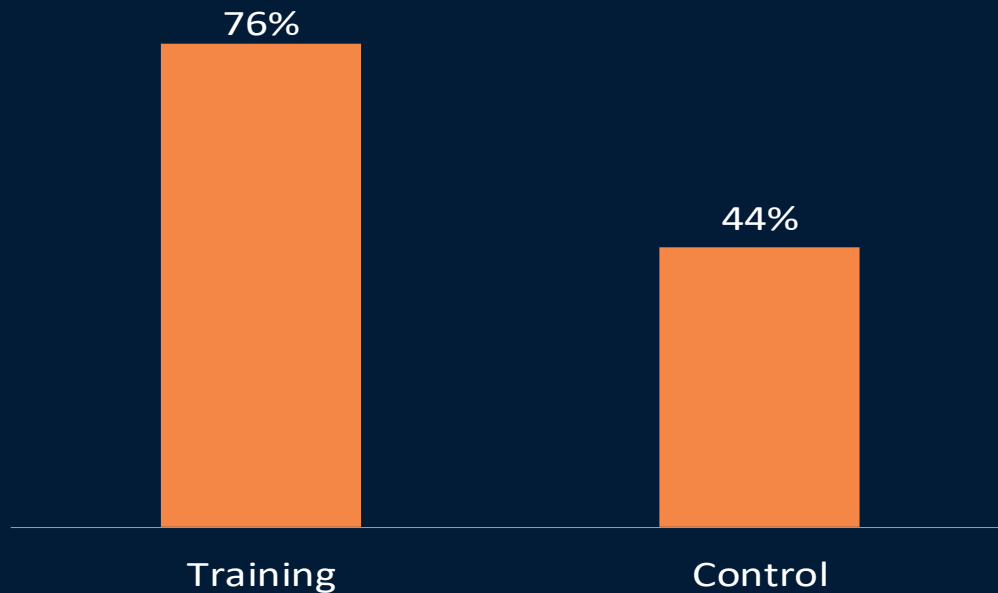
- To determine whether physicians can improve their empathy and relational skills through a training skills program that focuses on the neurobiology and physiology of affect sharing, self regulation, perspective taking and emotional communication.
- To determine whether improvement in empathy can be demonstrated in patient ratings of physician empathy.



Improvement in Knowledge

PHYSICIAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE NEUROBIOLOGY OF EMPATHY

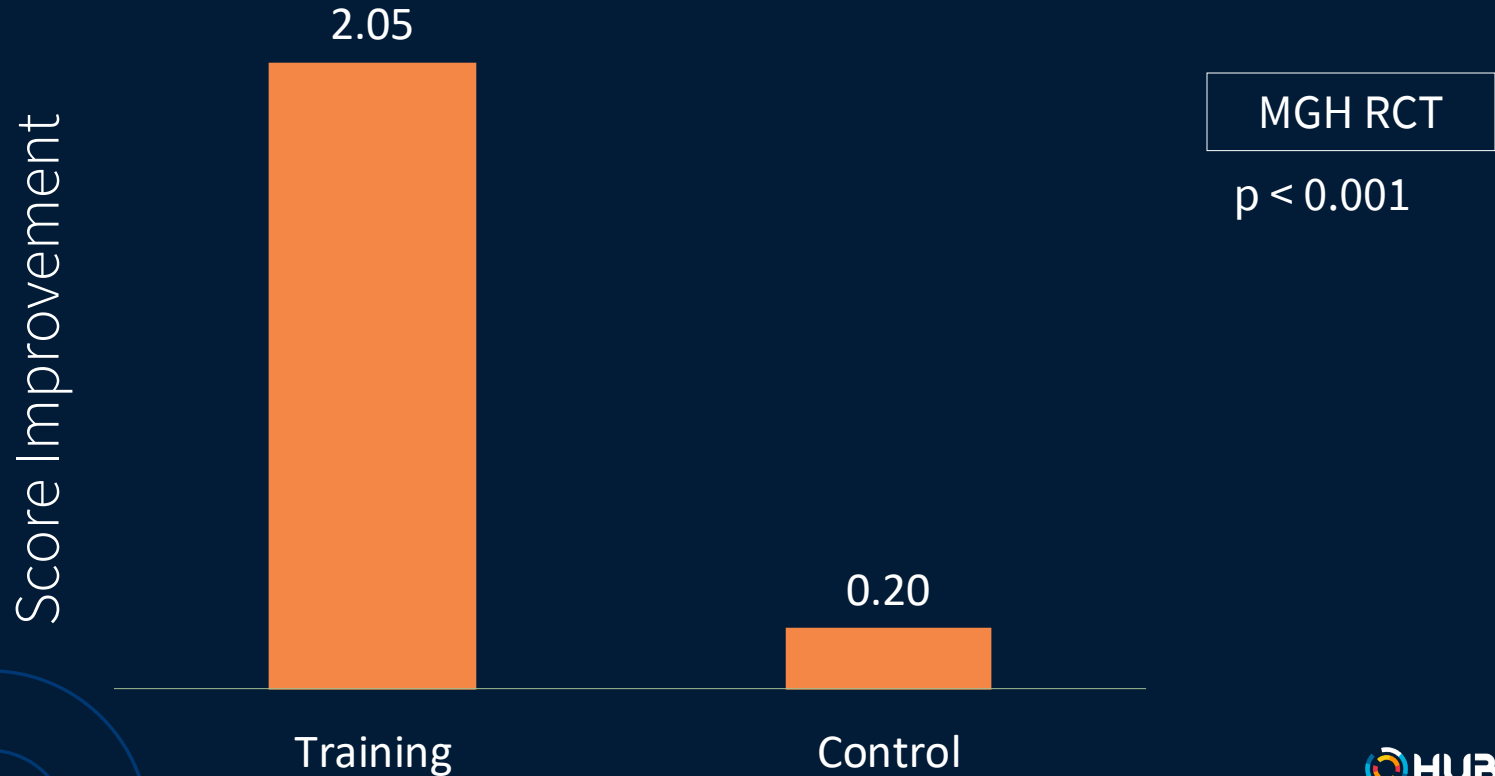
Percentage of Physicians



MGH RCT

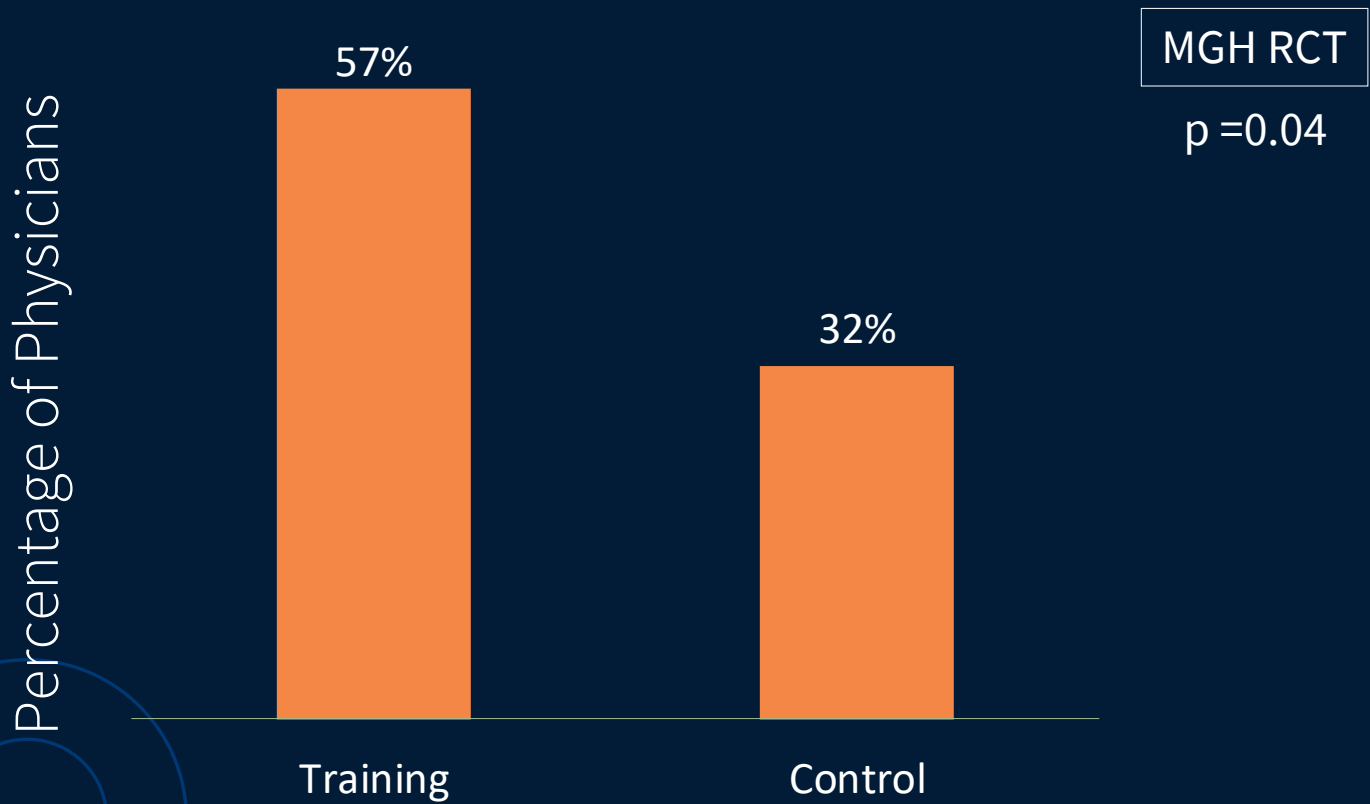
$p < 0.001$

Emotion Decoding



Improvement Patient Ratings

GIVEN BY PATIENTS TO PHYSICIANS' EMPATHY (CARE)

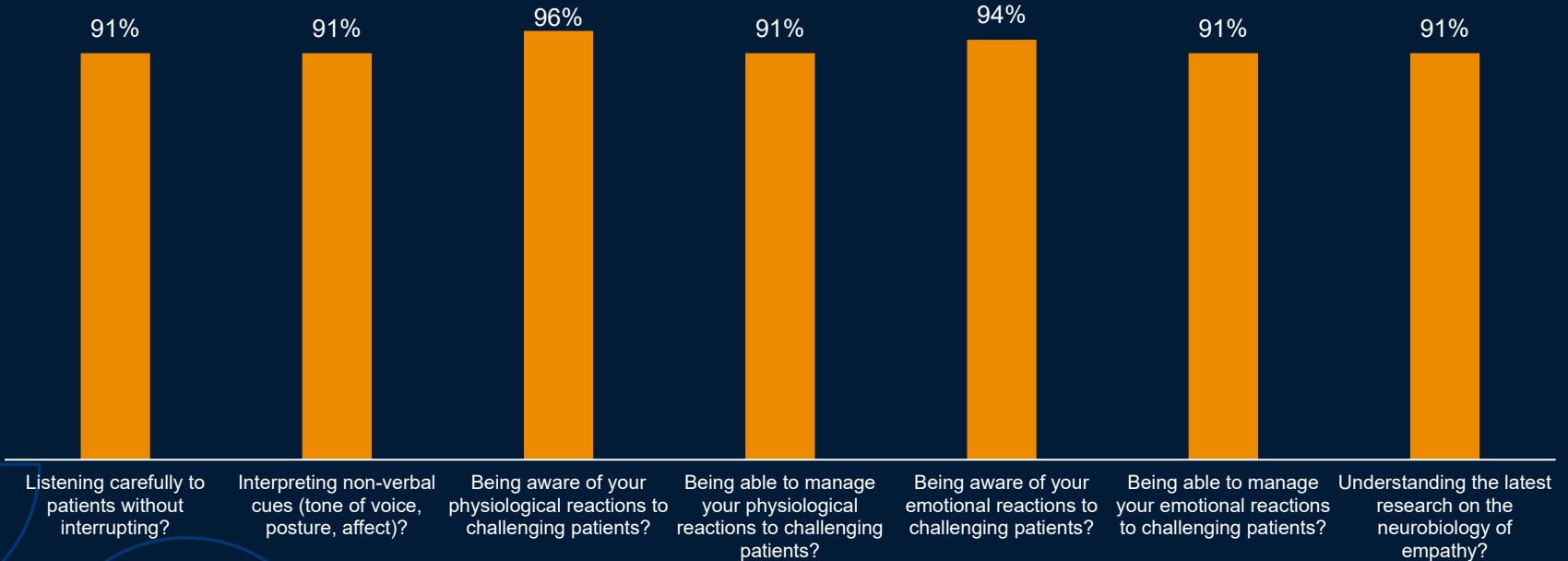


Patient-Rated CARE Items

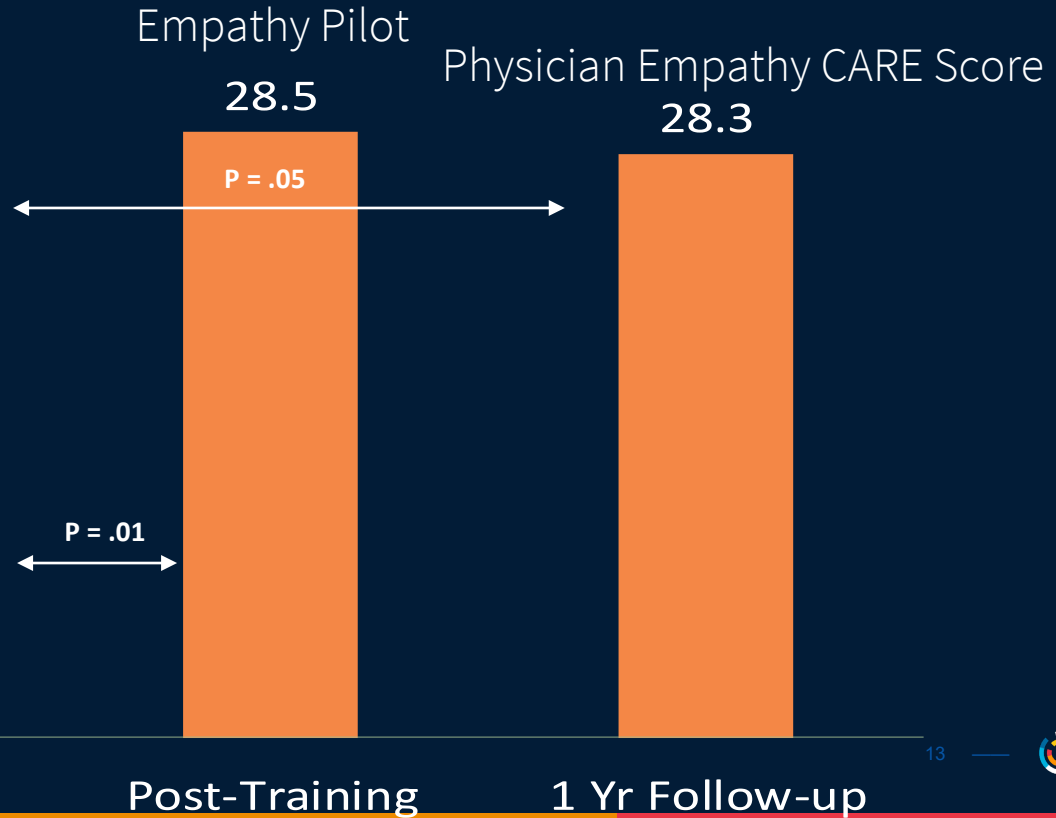
At today's meeting, how was your doctor at ...	p-value
Making you feel at ease	0.02
Really listening	0.02
Being positive	0.02
Explaining things clearly	0.02
Letting you tell your story	0.03
Showing care and compassion	0.04
Helping you to take control	0.05
Making a plan of action with you	0.06
Fully understanding your concerns	0.07
Being interested in you as a whole person	0.11

Program Evaluation and Self-Assessment of Improvement

After the training, did you improve in...



One Year Follow-up Study



Institutional Empathy

Global Advances in Health and Medicine 2021

Interventions to Improve Well-Being of Health Professionals in Learning & Work Environments

Institutional Resilience: The Foundation for Individual Resilience, Especially During COVID-19

Helen Riess, MD¹ 

Global Advances in Health and Medicine

Volume 10: 1–3

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DOI: 10.1177/21649561211006728

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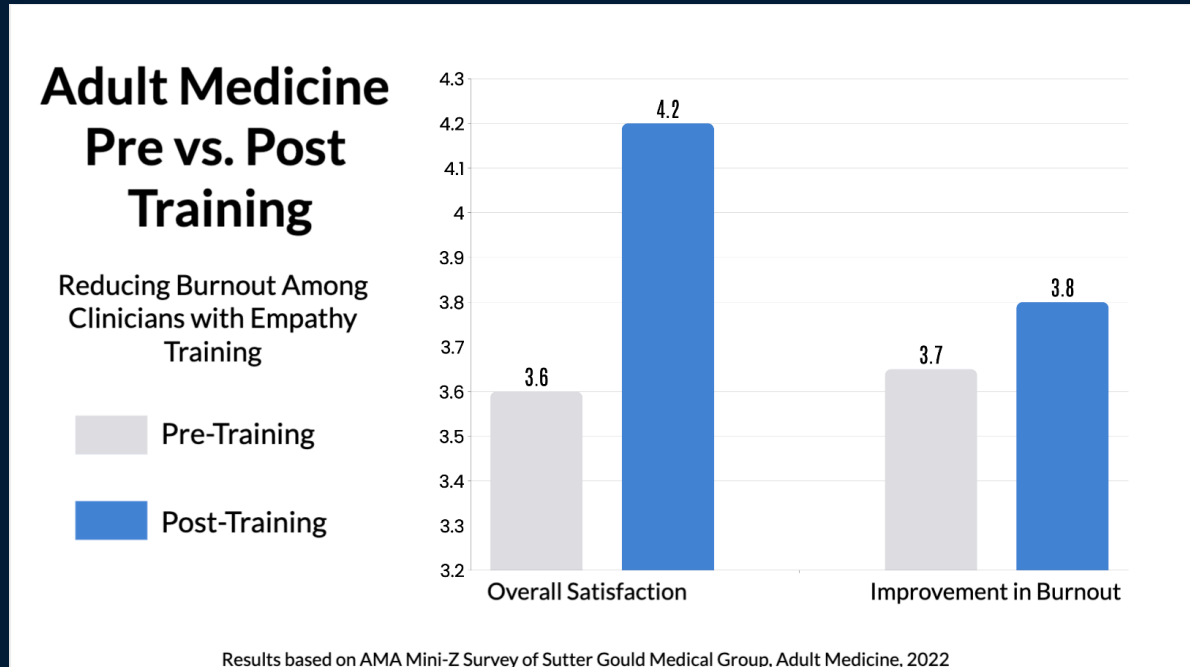


Abstract

In the protracted healthcare crisis that the COVID-19 pandemic has become, healthcare professional wellness and resilience are a national concern. Physicians, nurses and medical staff have been profoundly negatively affected due to the inability of institutions to prepare for this pandemic. Institutional fixed point standards such as Eudaemonics, Inherent Value, and Amplifying Assumptions are essential to make it possible to steer an organizational course during a crisis. Fixed point standards must be embedded in hospitals and systems so they are positioned to do the most good. Employees must feel safe, valued and cared for always, so they can be resilient when crises strike. The best way to do that is by viewing the healthcare professionals through the lens of empathy. Institutional values of safety, access to accurate and caring information, human connection, and emphasis on mental health, are hallmarks of resilient organizations and will result in resilient individuals.

The Data

- Adult Medicine: Reducing Burnout with Empathy Training
- Note: Higher score indicates improved wellness on mini-z.



Can Empathy Be Taught?

“Nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.”

-Theodore Roosevelt



Sutter Gould Overview



Overview – Who We Are

Founded after WW2 by Maino brothers
Located in the Central Valley

380 Clinicians

1,250 Foundation Staff

65,000 Patients Served Each Year

300,000 active patients lives

- **Divisions/Locations of Service**
19 Care centers in Modesto, Stockton and several other communities in the Central Valley.
- **Specialty Services**
30 Specialties in 3 counties

Marla Arata, MFT



- Marriage and Family Therapist
- Chair the Physician Wellness Committee

BIO



The Journey

Human Experience Story

What We Are Hearing:

- “I thought I was the only one”
- “I did not know how to enjoy time with family”
- “We just didn’t know what to do”
- “I didn’t grow up here”
- “How do I handle my teenager?”
- “I don’t know how to relax”
- “I don’t have time to plan things with my family”
- “I have no social life: it’s just work, kids and work”



Dr. Adam Dodd



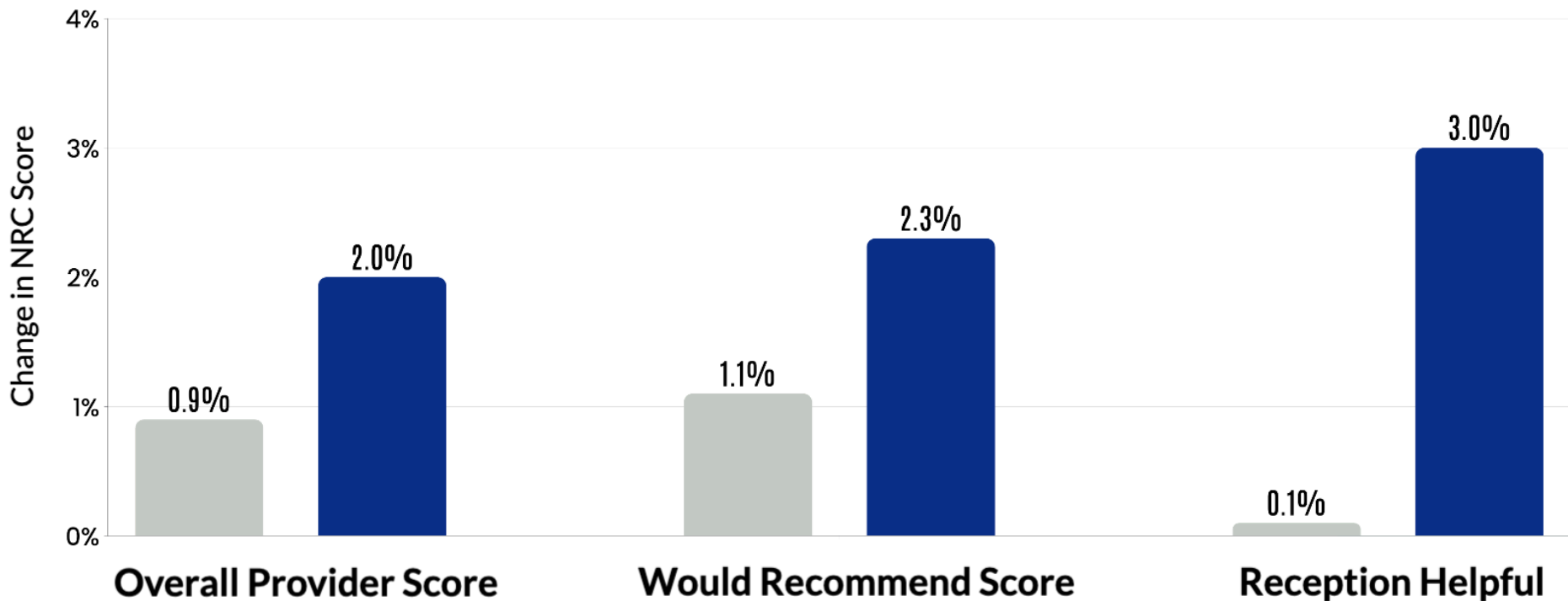
- Medical Director of Patient Experience
- Practicing OB/GYN
- Published Patient Experience work based in our OB/GYN Department

BIO

Empathy 2019 Pilot Group: Score Growth Q2 to Q3

In the quarter immediately following empathy implementation, patient experience scores grew more for the treatment group than at SGMF at large.

All SGMF
Empathy Pilot Group



Pilot Results – Highlights

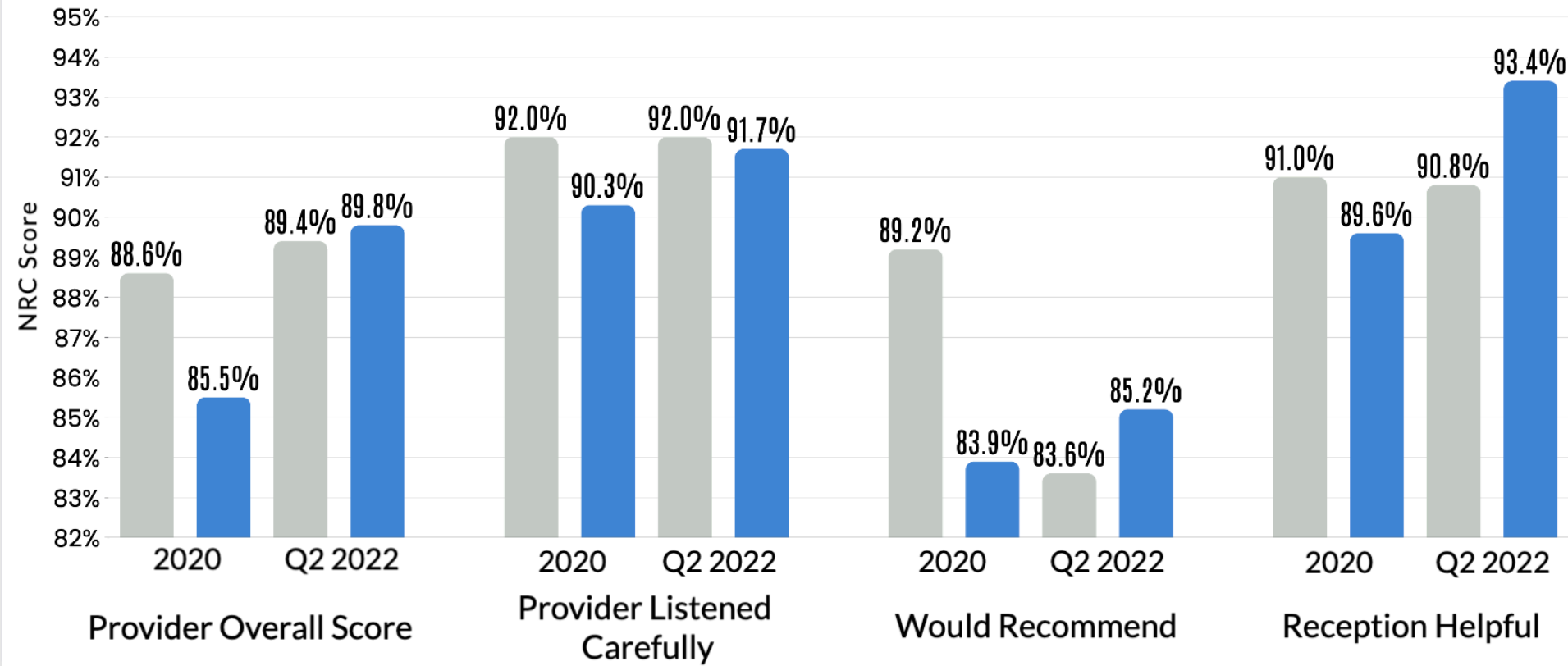
- Increased Would Recommend Score from 88.2% to 90.4%
- OB/GYN department achieved the 91st percentile at end of pilot
- During the same time frame the Reception Helpful score increased from 79.8% to 83.6%, enabling staff to obtain their full bonus for 2019



Phase 2 Results: Adult Medicine vs. All SGMF

In 2020, Adult Medicine PX lagged total SGMF PX Scores. After empathy training, Q2 '22 scores surpass SGMF PX Score growth.

All SGMF (380)
Adult Medicine (83)



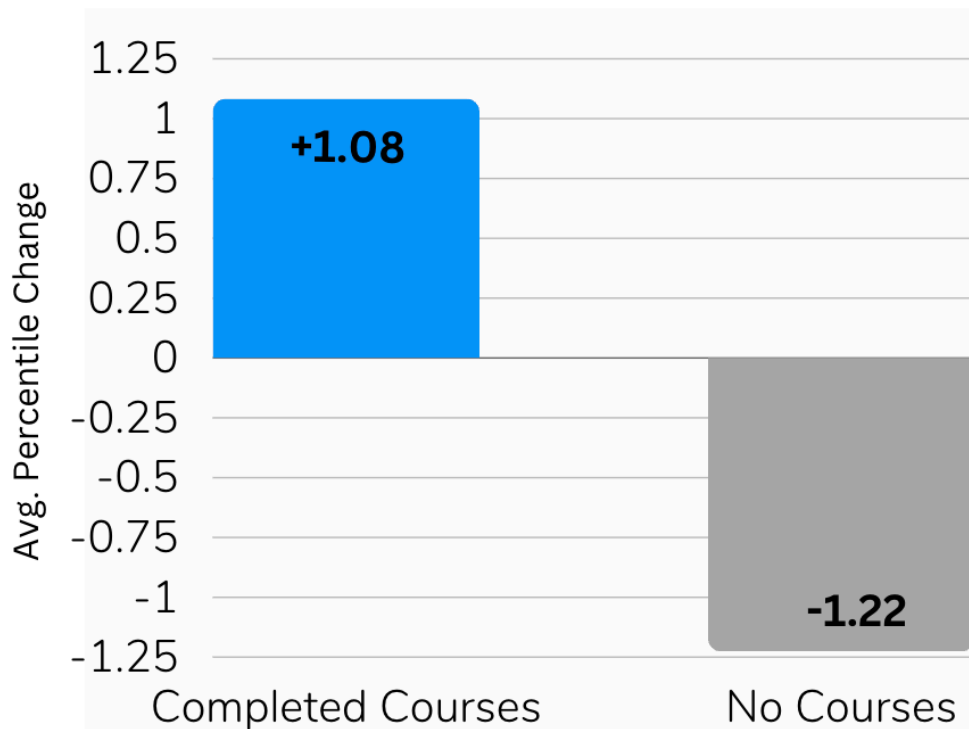
Change in NRC Percentile: Overall Provider Rating by Patient

Complete

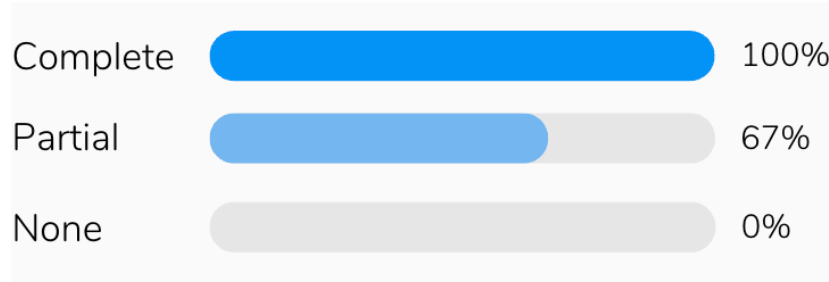
66 participants completed empathy training courses.

None

10 participants in the group completed no empathy training courses.



Change in NRC Overall % Provider Rating by Patient



Complete

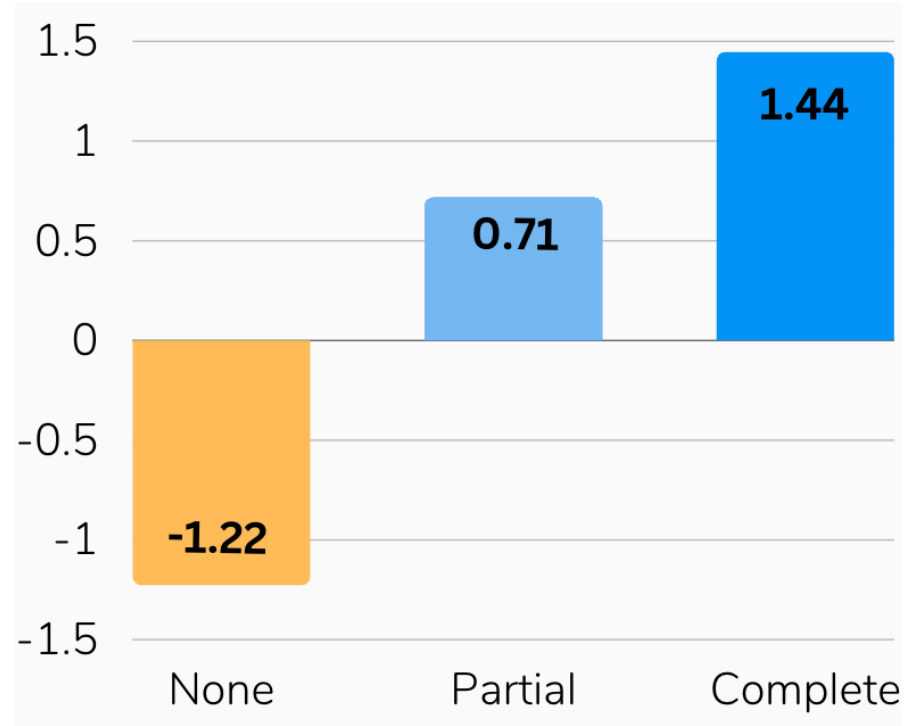
34 participants completed all empathy courses.

Partial

32 participants completed an average of 67% of their empathy training.

None

10 participants completed no empathy courses



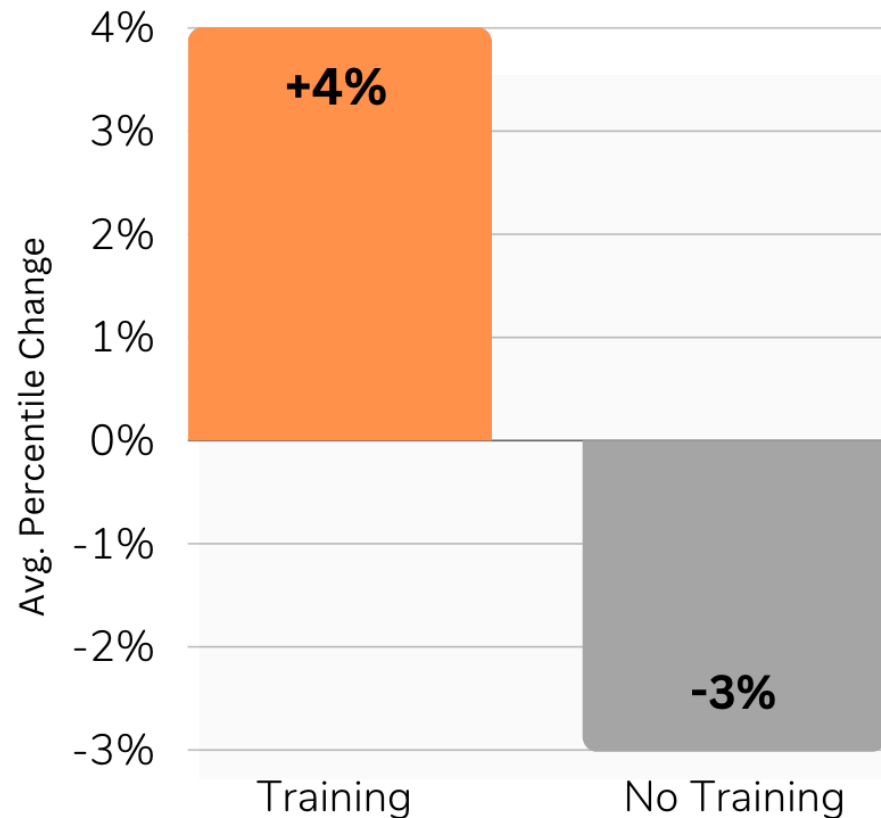
Change in Provider Listened Carefully Rating by Patient

Two groups, each comprised of individuals with a baseline under 95%.

30 Providers who completed empathy training courses grew an average of 4%.

The 10 providers who completed no empathy training courses declined 3% on average.

Difference in average score after one year: 7%



Difference measured between Q4 2021 and Q4 2022 among participants at Sutter Gould Medical Group

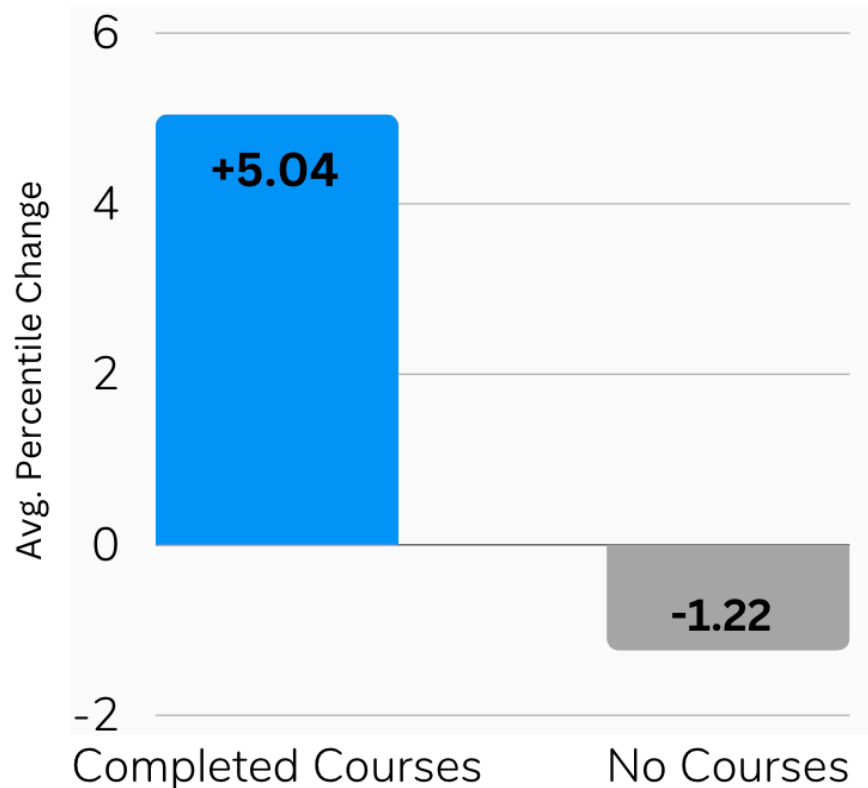
Change in NRC Overall % Provider Rating by Patient - Participants with a Baseline under 50

Completers, Low Baseline

28 participants with a baseline score under 50 completed all courses.

No Courses, Low Baseline

10 participants with a baseline under 50 completed no courses.

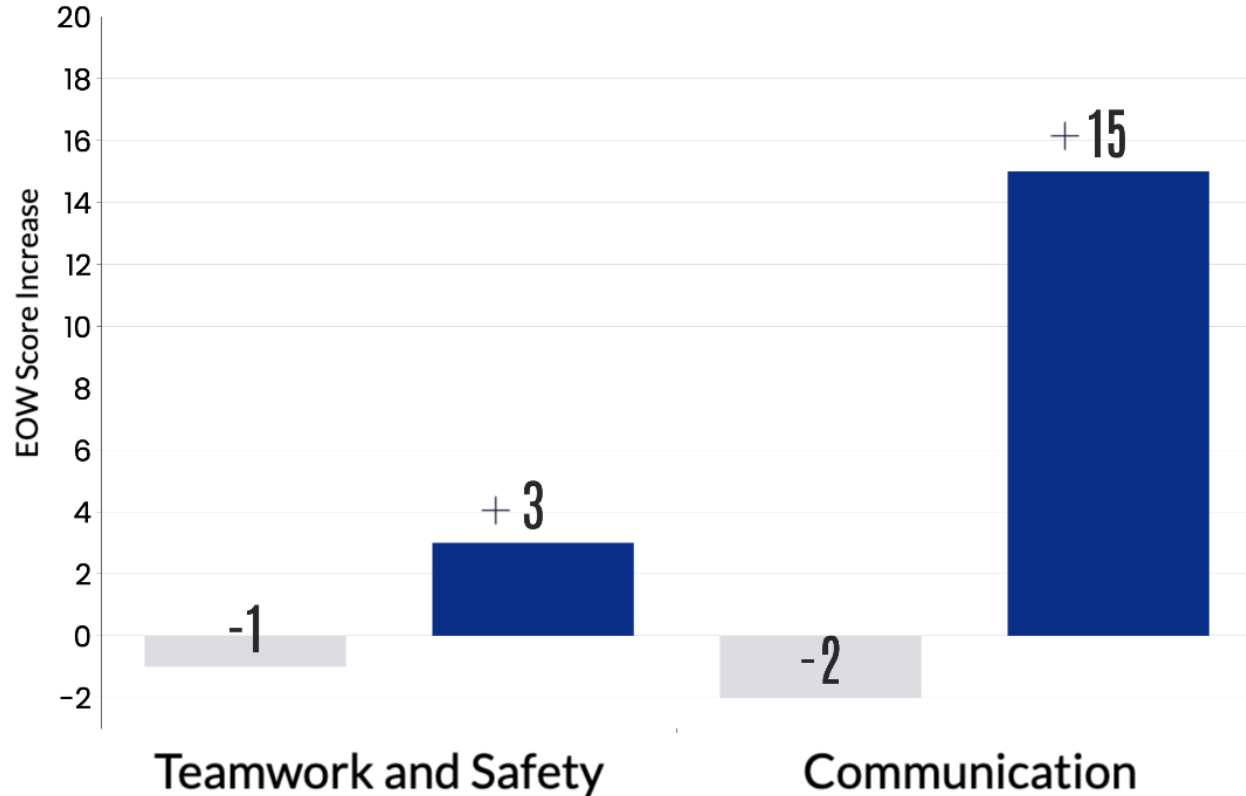




Front Line Staff Post-Training Improvement: Reported Teamwork, Safety, and Communication

"Experience of Work" survey results recorded a greater one-year increase in the favorability score for teamwork and communication among empathy trained front line staff.

- All of SGMF Front-Line Staff, 2021-22
- Empathy Cohort, Front-Line Staff, 2021-22

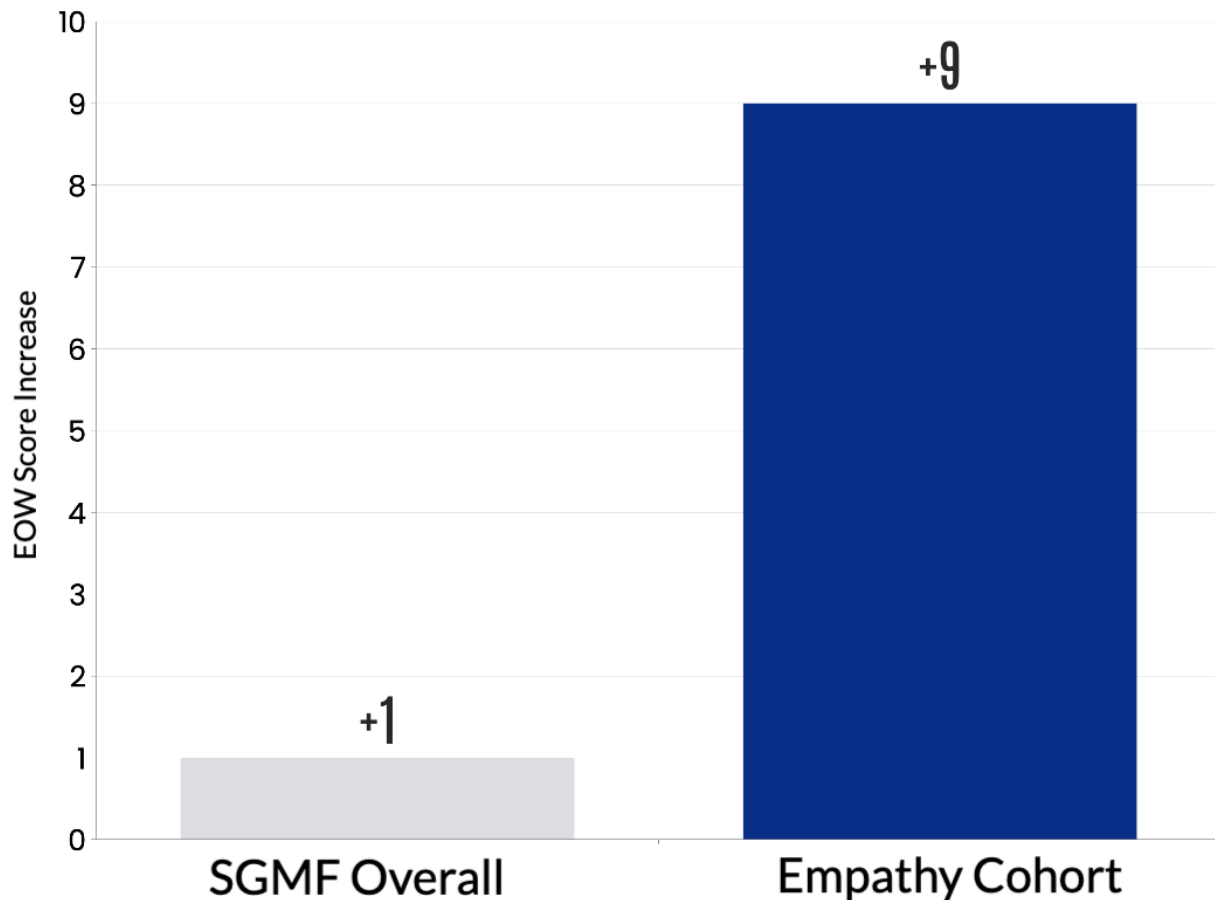


Post-Training Improvement in Wellness

"Experience of Work" survey results, conducted by Willis Towers Watson, recorded a greater one-year increase in the favorability score for burnout and resilience among empathy trained front line staff than untrained front line staff.

- All of Sutter Health, Front-Line Staff, 2021-22
- Empathy Cohort, Front-Line Staff, 2021-22

2021-2022 Change in "Resilience to Burnout" Score

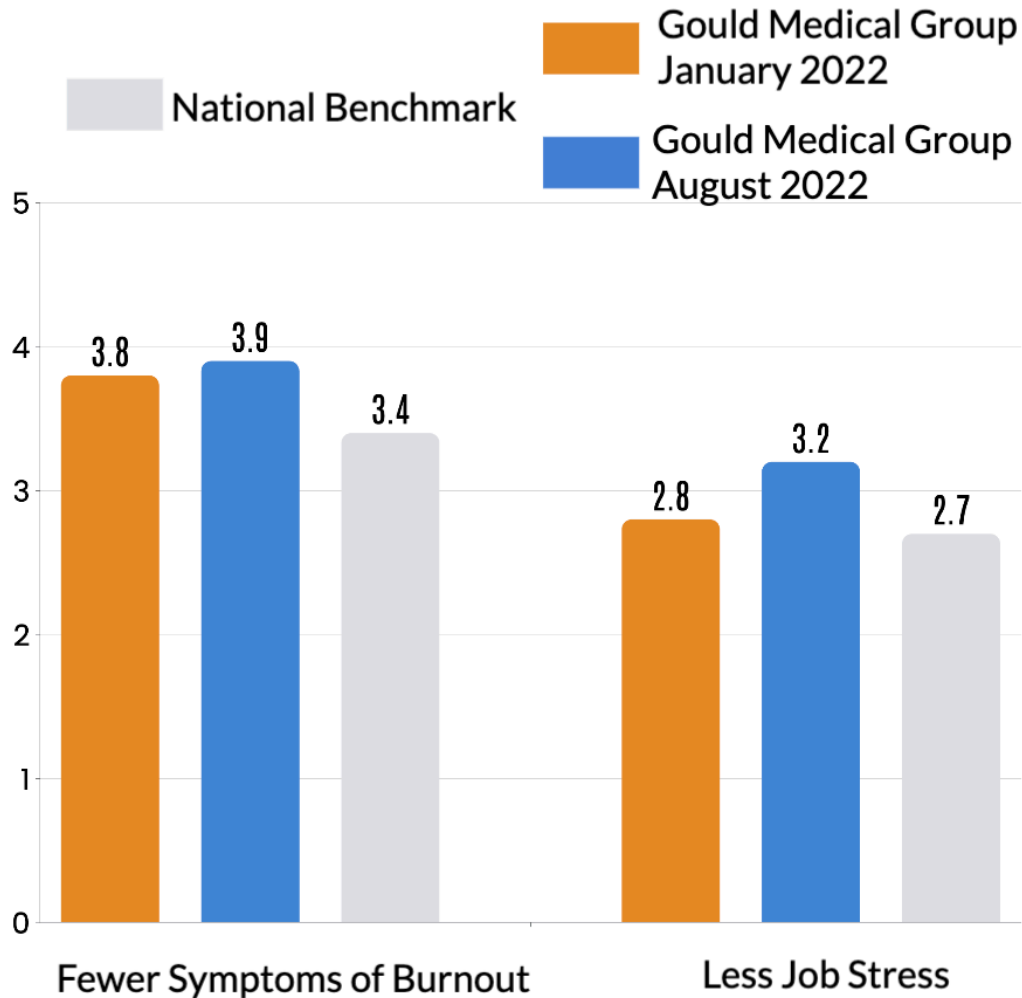


Mini-Z Results: Improvement in Stress and Burnout

Participants reported less stress and fewer symptoms of burnout following empathy training implementation in 2022.

In both metrics, Gould Medical Group surpasses the national benchmark based on AMA responses in 2020 and 2021.

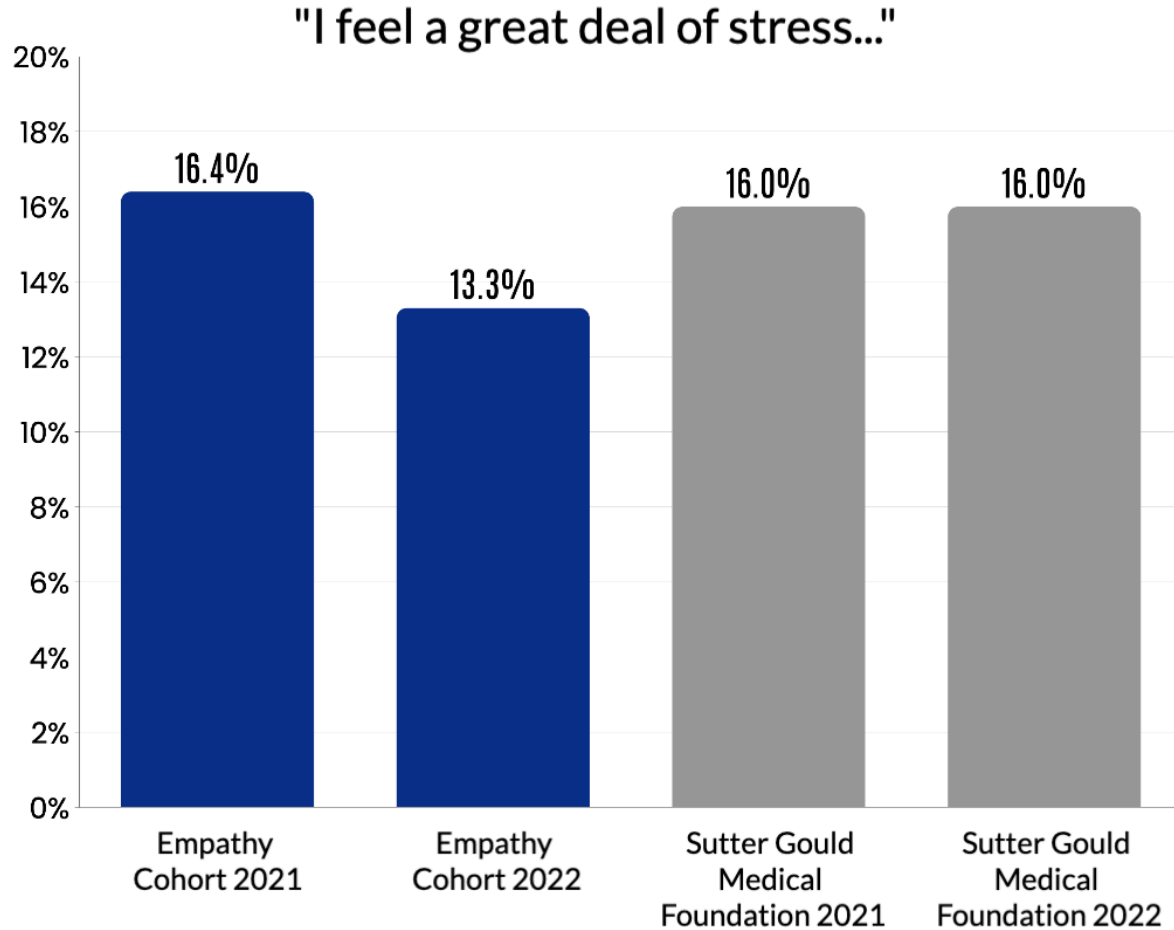
Note: Higher scores indicates improved wellness on Mini-Z.



AMGA Survey Insights: Reduced Stress in Adult Medicine

After empathy training, the top box percentage of respondents indicating "I feel a great deal of stress because of my job" decreased 3.1%.

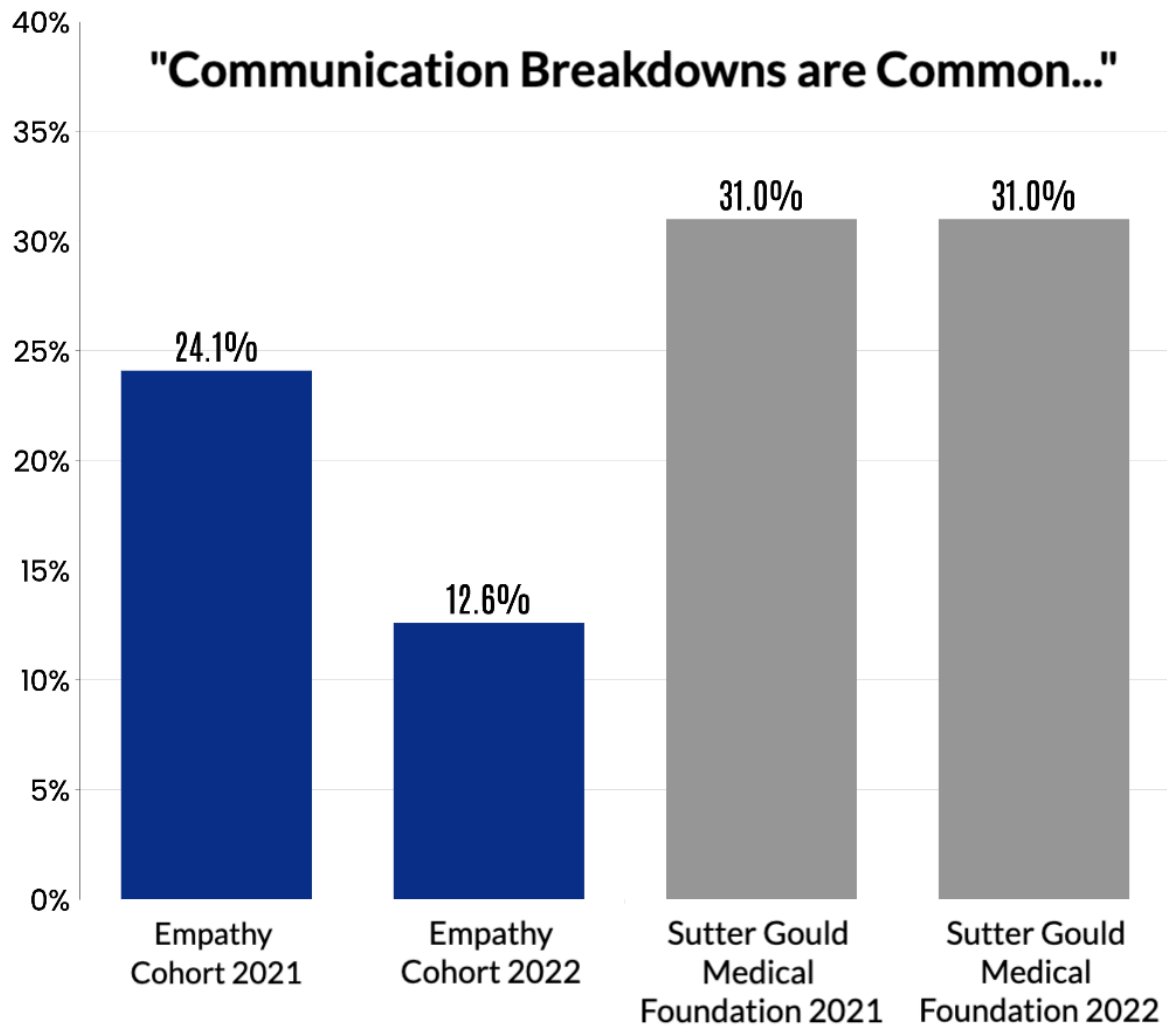
Results for the trained cohort improved compared to Sutter Health overall, which did not change.



Reduction in Communication Breakdowns

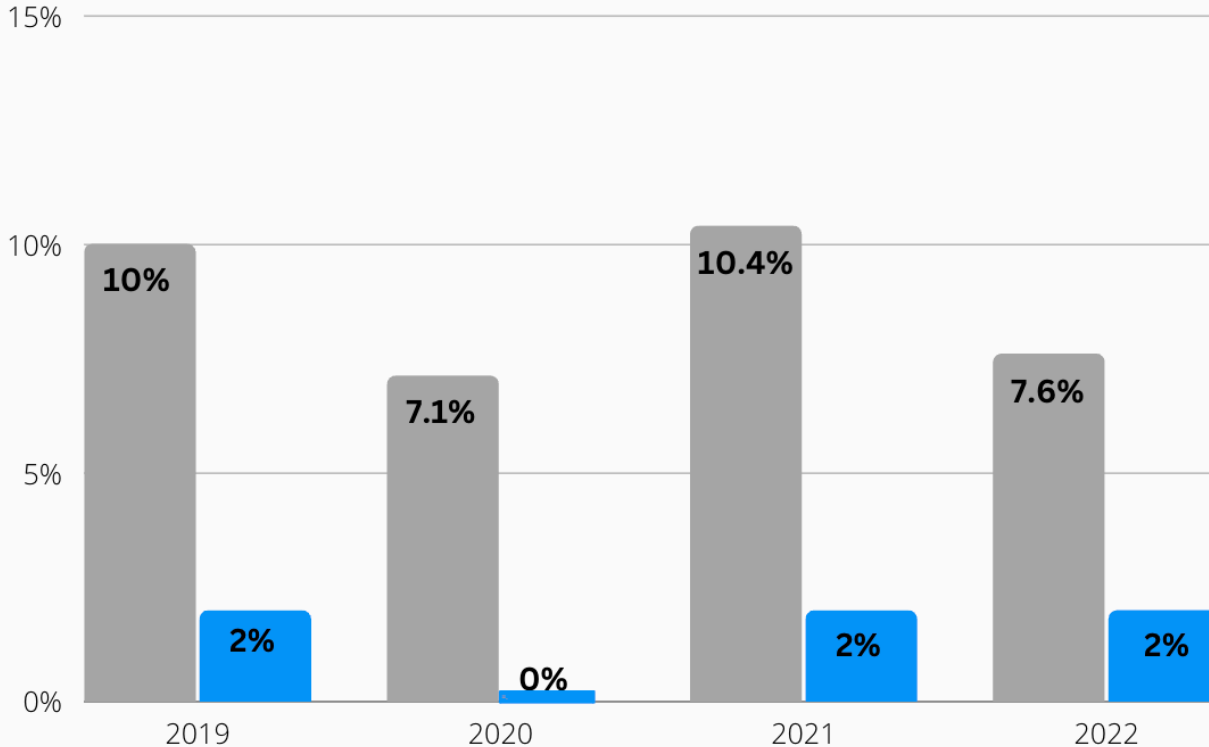
After empathy training, respondents indicating "Communication breakdowns are common in my department" decreased 11.5% on the 2022 AMGA Survey.

Results for the trained cohort, comprised of Adult Medicine providers, improved compared to Sutter Gould Medical Foundation providers overall, which did not change.



REDUCTION IN TURNOVER

■ All SGMF ■ Empathy Pilot Cohort



**Average
Turnover rate
for All SGMF**

2019-2022

8.8%

**Average
Turnover Rate
for Empathy
Pilot Group**

2019-2022

1.5%

In the Empathy Pilot group, comprised of 53 clinicians, only three positions turned over within four years. In 2020, no clinicians in the pilot group turned over.

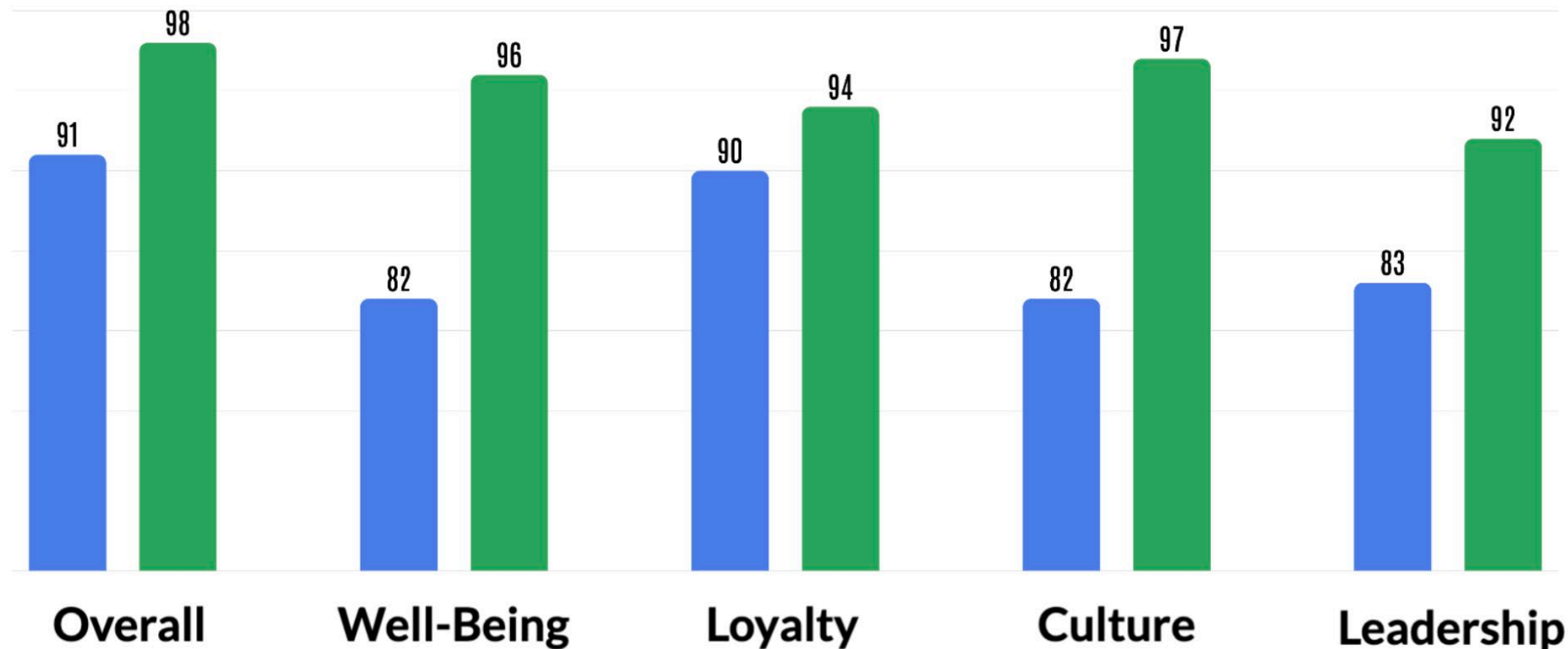
AMGA National Comparison: Top Box Percentile Ranking



SGMF 2021



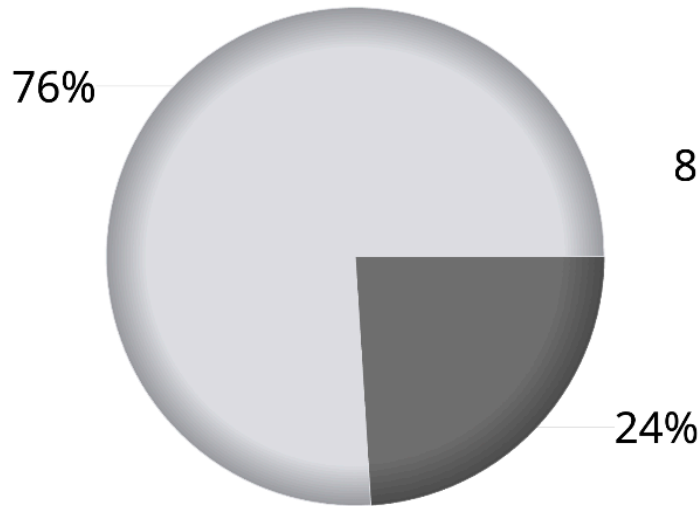
SGMF 2022



Improved Retention Among Trained Front Line Staff

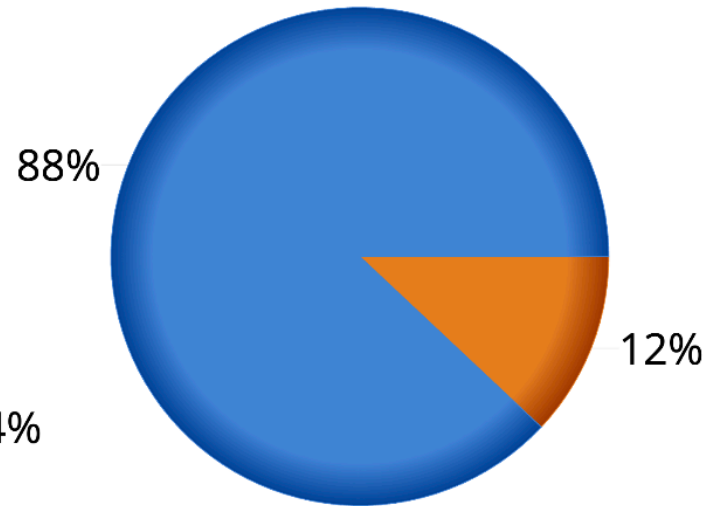
Among Front Line Staff, rolling 12-month % turnover was significantly less in the empathy trained cohort compared to Sutter Gould Medical Foundation at large.

All of SGMF (n = 1250)



■ Turnover ■ Retained

Adult Medicine (n = 153)



■ Turnover ■ Retained

Sutter Memorial Medical Center 2023

By the numbers:

92,575 Emergency Room Visits

18,487 Hospital Discharges

10,671 Surgical Procedures

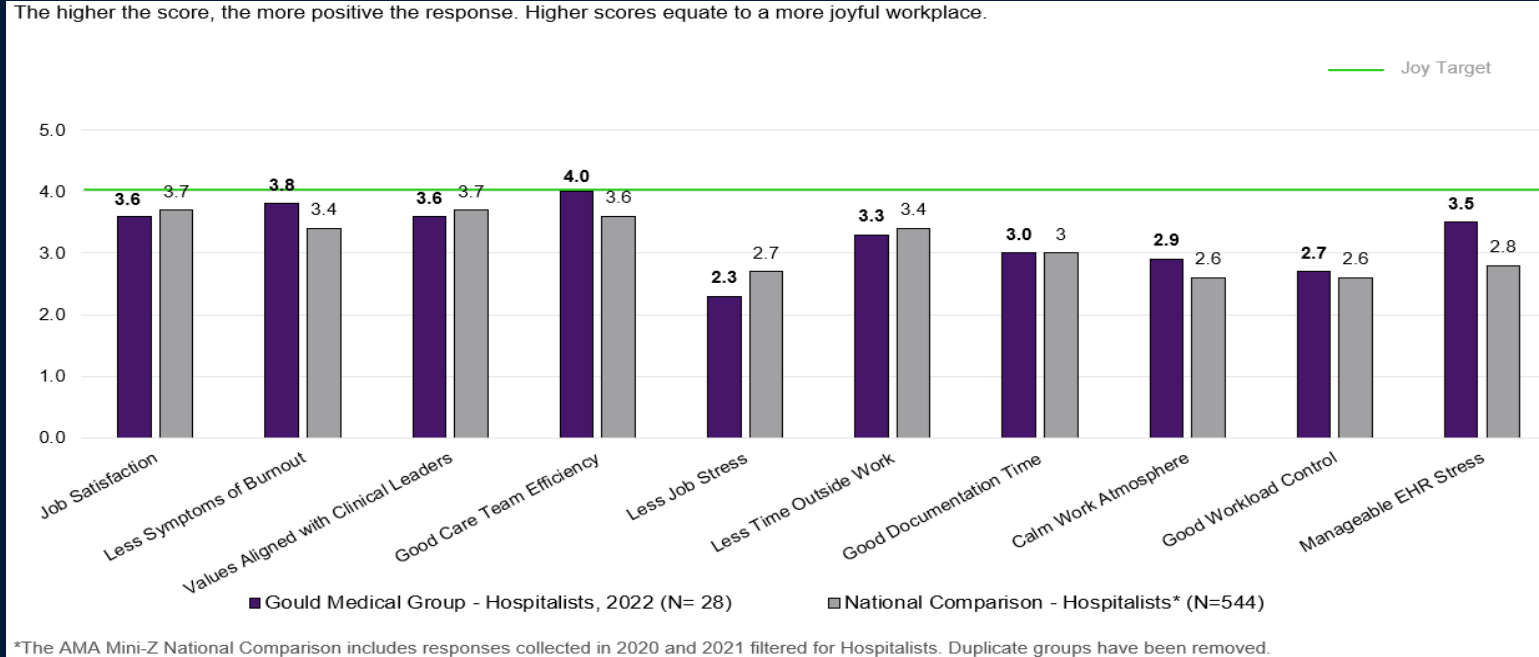
265 Average Daily Census

65.6% Patient Satisfaction Score for Communication with Doctors

67.9% Gould Medical Group Hospitalists reported level of stress



Hospitalist: Reducing Burnout with Empathy Training

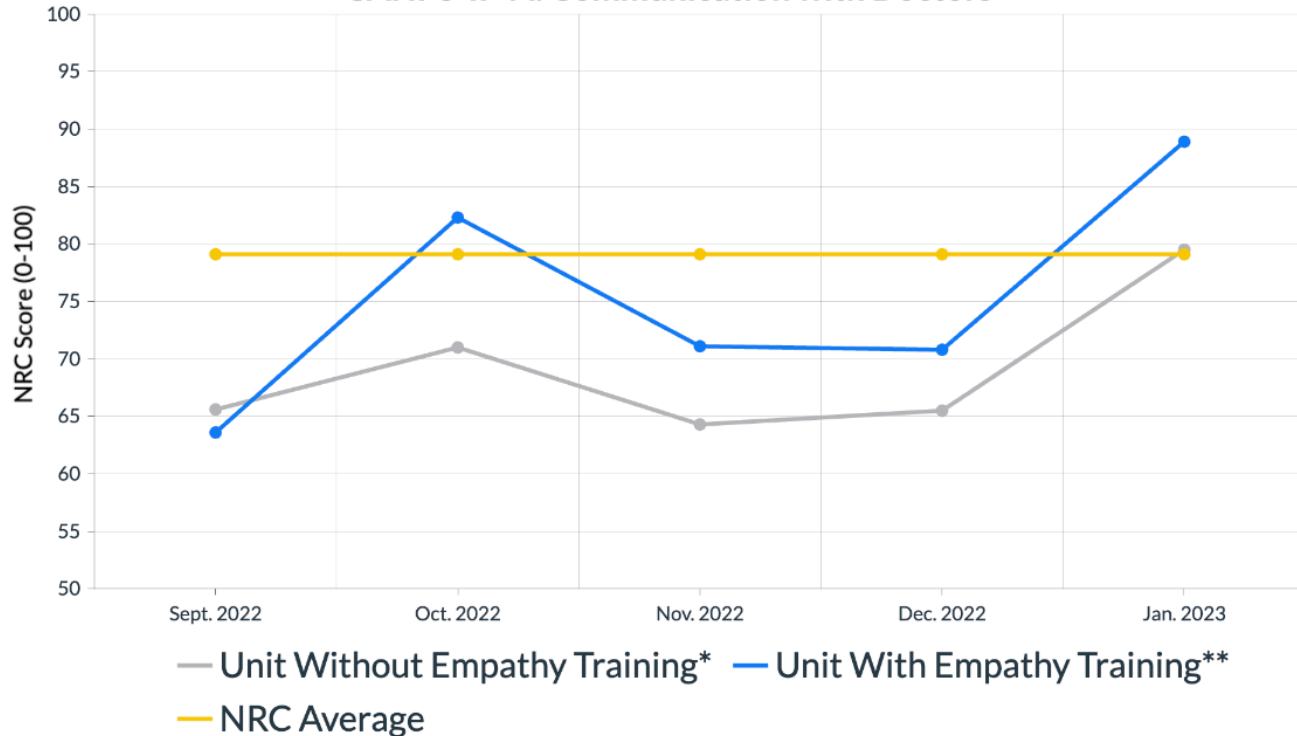


Inpatient Results

Trained Hospitalist Units Show Greater Patient Satisfaction Score Improvement

Over the five months since courses launched in September 2022, the unit with empathy training surpassed the NRC average twice, consistently outperforming the unit without empathy training.

CAHPS-IP-A: Communication with Doctors



Unit with empathy training
Average Score: 74.1%

Unit without empathy training
Average Score: 68.7%

*n=9-32; **n=13-31

2022 Award



Sutter Health Award Winners:

- Sutter Medical Foundation – Sutter Medical Group
- Top Ten Percent Performance in Clinical Quality
- Excellence in Healthcare
- Sutter Palo Alto Medical Foundation – Palo Alto Foundation Medical Group
- Top Ten Percent Performance in Clinical Quality
- Top Ten Percent Performance in Patient Experience
- Sutter Palo Alto Medical Foundation – Mills–Peninsula Division/MPMG
- Top Ten Percent Performance in Clinical Quality
- Top Ten Percent Performance in Patient Experience
- Sutter Pacific Medical Foundation – Sutter West Bay Medical Group
- Top Ten Percent Performance in Clinical Quality
- Sutter Pacific Medical Foundation – Sutter Medical Group of the Redwoods
- Top Ten Percent Performance in Patient Experience
- Sutter Gould Medical Foundation – Gould Medical Group**
- Top Ten Percent Performance in Patient Experience
- Sutter Independent Physicians
- Excellence in Healthcare



2021 Measurement Year Star Ratings

QUALITY OF MEDICAL CARE

PATIENTS RATE OVERALL EXPERIENCE

TOTAL COST OF CARE

QUALITY OF MEDICAL CARE (details on next slide)

Commercial HMO

Medicare HMO

Sutter East Bay Medical Foundation – Sutter East Bay Medical Group



Sutter Palo Alto Medical Foundation - Palo Alto Foundation Medical Group



Sutter Palo Alto Medical Foundation - Mills-Peninsula Division/Mills-Peninsula Medical Group



Sutter Pacific Medical Foundation - Sutter Medical Group of the Redwoods



Not enough data to score reliably



Sutter Pacific Medical Foundation - Sutter West Bay Medical Group

Too few patients in sample to report

Too few patients in sample to report



Not enough data to score reliably

Sutter Independent Physicians



Sutter Medical Foundation - Sutter Medical Group



Sutter Gould Medical Foundation - Gould Medical Group



QUALITY OF MEDICAL CARE

- ▶ Appropriate Use of Treatments, Tests and Procedures
- ▶ Asthma Care
- ▶ Diabetes Care
- ▶ Heart Care
- ▶ Preventive Screenings
- ▶ Treating Children: Getting the Right Care

PATIENTS RATE OVERALL EXPERIENCE

- ▶ Rating of Doctor and Care
- ▶ Communicating with Patients
- ▶ Coordinating Patient Care
- ▶ Health Promotion
- ▶ Helpful Office Staff
- ▶ Timely Care and Service

TOTAL COST OF CARE

Higher cost care does not necessarily mean higher quality care

Medical groups may actually help to keep costs lower by providing better care.

A medical group may have lower costs because it:

- Control costs associated with rent, staff salaries, equipment or the cost of other providers outside of the medical group.
- Provides only tests or treatments that patients need.
- Prevents medical errors such as giving the wrong diagnosis or the wrong medicine when providing care to patients, which have to be corrected with additional resources.
- Follows up with patients and/or their caregivers after a hospital stay, helping to prevent unwanted return visits to the hospital.

Factors like higher rent and staff salaries, serving higher risk or sicker patients, serving more people without insurance, providing medical education, or providing other services that help the community may drive up costs.

Questions?