



Singapore Healthcare  
Management 2019

# Reducing Patient Waiting Time at Dietetics Outpatient Clinic



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## INTRODUCTION

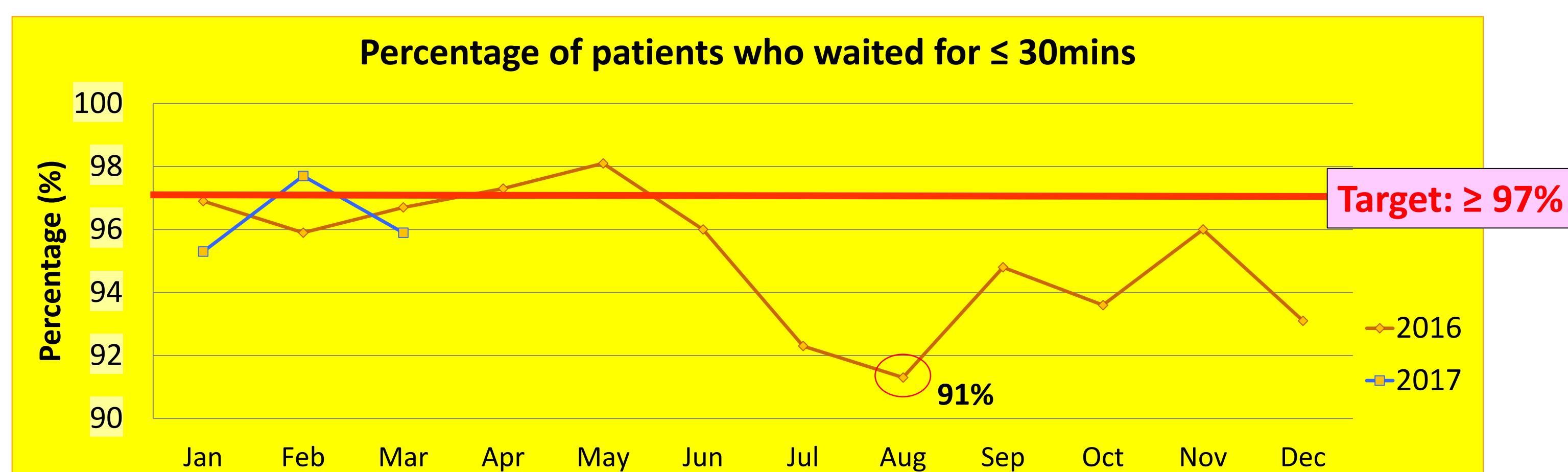
Waiting time has a significant impact on overall patient's experience and affects perceptions of quality and satisfaction. Long waiting time contributes to high default rate, resulting in disruption of clinic schedules and manpower planning.

## GOAL

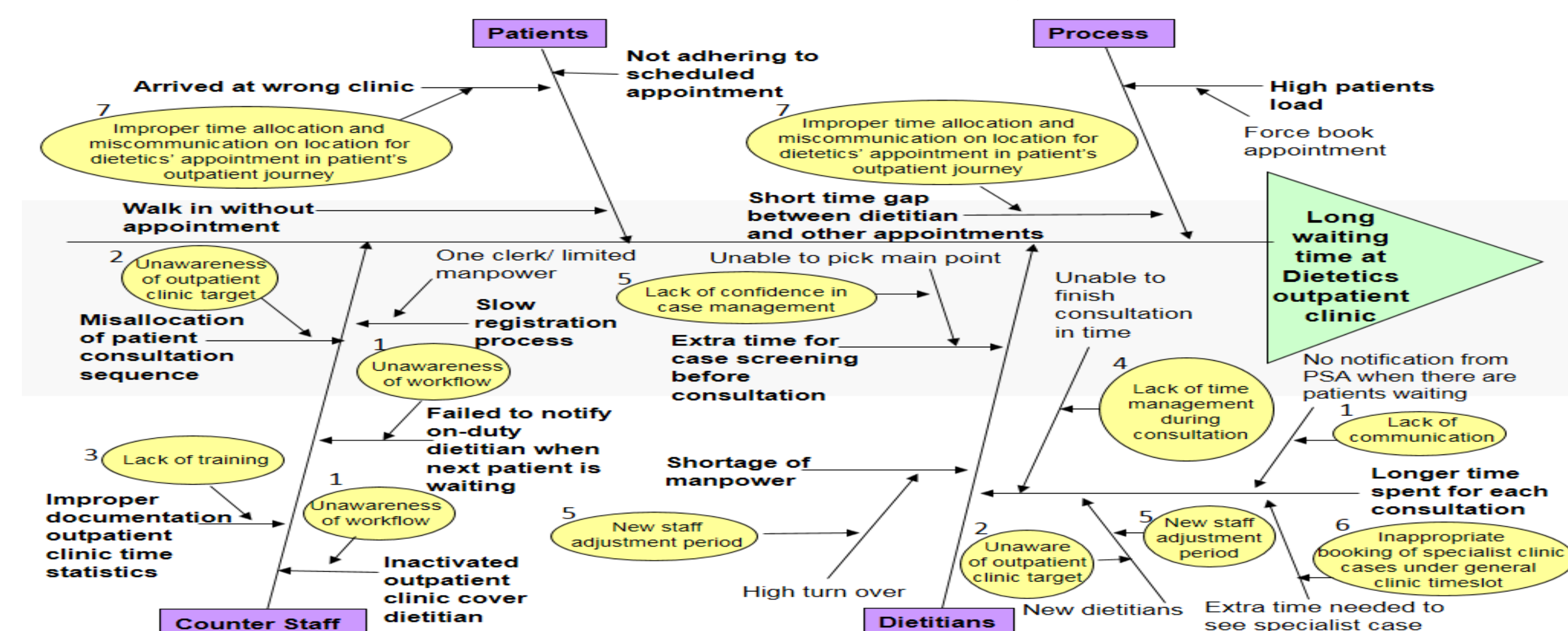
To improve the percentage of outpatients seen by a dietitian within 30 minutes of the scheduled appointment time from 91% to 97%.

## METHODOLOGY

### 1. Problem analysis using Run Chart



### 2. Root causes identified by Fishbone diagram



### 3. Targeted intervention towards reducing patients' waiting time

Problem	Intervention	Date of Implementation
<b>Root Cause 1</b> - Unawareness of workflow - Lack of communication	Improved current clinic workflow and revised outpatients' waiting time calculation	10 April 2017
<b>Root Cause 2</b> Unawareness of outpatient clinic target	Created awareness of outpatient clinic target to all dietetics staff	18 April 2017
<b>Root Cause 3</b> Lack of training (counter staff)	Provided comprehensive training to all support staff	8 April 2017
<b>Root Cause 4</b> Lack of time management during consultation	Enhanced dietitian's time management during consultation	18 April 2017
<b>Root Cause 5</b> - Lack of confidence in case management - New staff adjustment period	Delivered more comprehensive orientation and training to equip new dietitians	Ongoing
<b>Root Cause 6</b> Inappropriate booking of specialist clinic cases under general clinic timeslot	Improved workflow of appointment booking in specialist clinic	1 May 2017
<b>Root Cause 7</b> Improper time allocation and miscommunication on location for dietetics' appointment in patient's outpatient journey	Educated all counter staff on standardized outpatient appointment booking process and created template for tracking errors	24 April 2017

## RESULTS

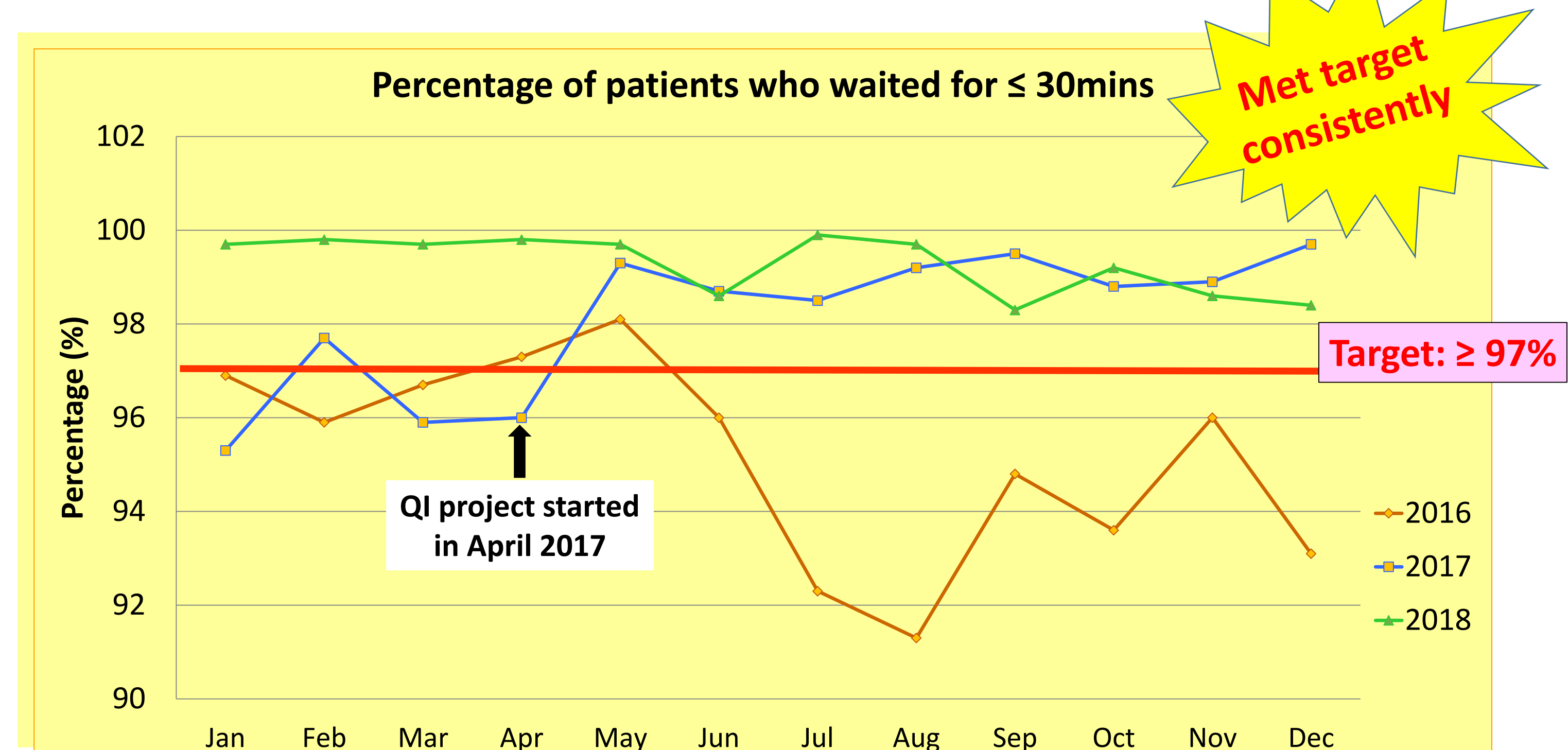


Figure 1: Percentage of Dietetics Outpatient Clinic wait time within 30 mins from scheduled appointment time

Month and Year	Total number of patients who waited >30 mins	Average (Number of patients who waited >30 mins per month)
April 2016 – March 2017	352	29.3
April 2017	22	-
May – December 2017	44	5.5
January – December 2018	54	4.5

Reduced by 81%

Reduced by 84%

Figure 2: Overall Dietetics Outpatient wait time of more than 30 mins

Year	Total number of Outpatient
2016	6914
2017	7026
2018	7328

1.6%

4.3%

Improved by 2.5 times

Figure 3: Total Dietetics Outpatient load for past 3 years

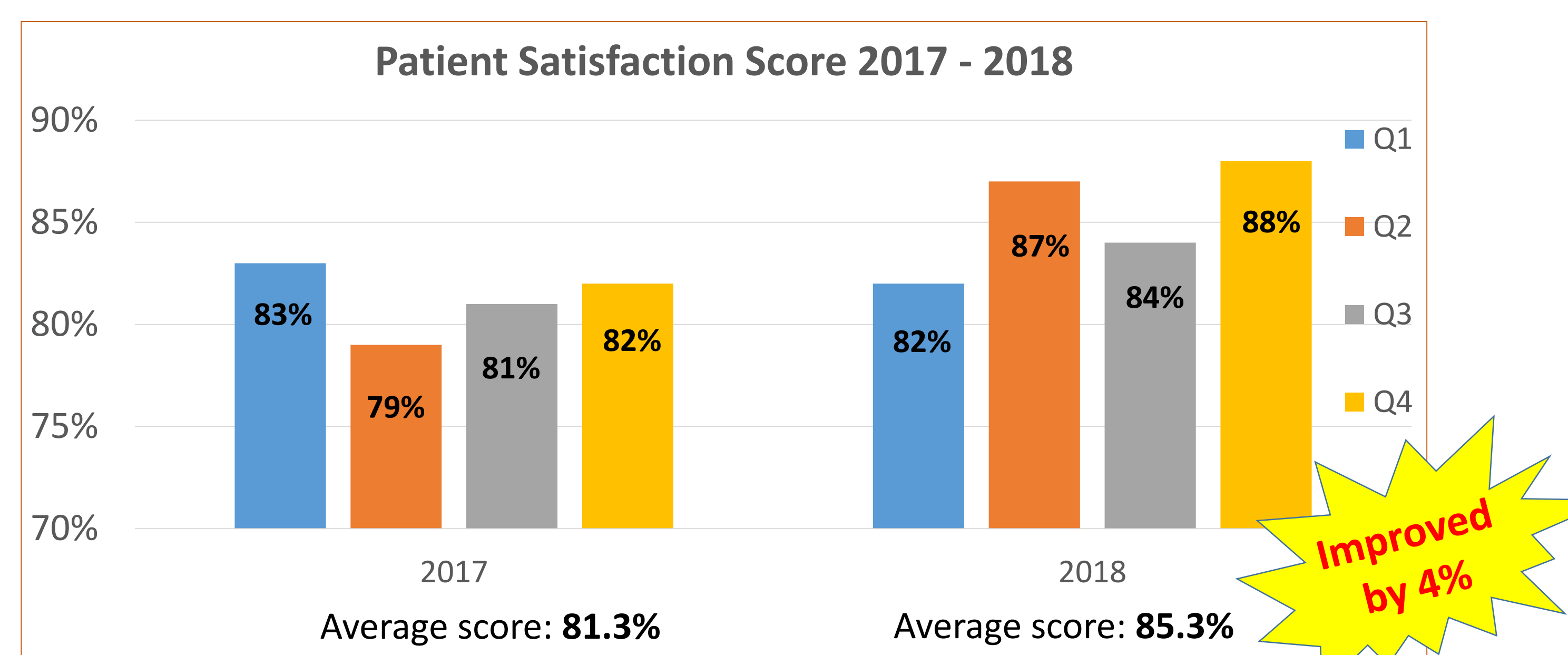


Figure 4: Overall Dietetics Outpatient Satisfaction Score for past 2 years

## CONCLUSION

- Waiting time has improved and patient experience is positive.
- A workflow has been successfully integrated into daily operations and results have been maintained.
- Ongoing monitoring using PDCA cycle is performed to ensure sustenance of outcomes.