



# Early Discharge for Inpatients - Effective Communication is the Cornerstone of Change Management Process

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## INTRODUCTION



Delayed discharges of inpatients in the wards who are "medically ready" for discharge create significant admission bottlenecks in our Emergency Department (ED):

- 1 Lack of bed availability in wards
- 2 Long bed waiting time for transfers to wards from ED



13 hours average ED bed waiting time

### Change management process

SKH Communications Department collaborated with various stakeholders hospital-wide via different platforms to ensure successful implementation of **early discharge for inpatients** from 9 January 2023, as part of a change management process.

Discharge time changed from:



#### Aims:

- 1 Reduce long bed waiting time at the ED
- 2 Allow doctors on afternoon ward rounds to attend to newly admitted patients from the ED

## METHODOLOGY

Various stakeholders were engaged using different platforms to communicate the changes.

### Internal communications:

To gain buy-in and feedback from impacted staff, through staff briefings, FAQs and scripts posted on Infopedia, management sharing at Townhall and Management Bulletin, and via screensavers and staff Electronic Direct Mails (EDMs)

- 1 Created awareness of the need for change
- 2 Provided staff with information to address potential questions or issues from patients and NOKs



### External communications:

Created public awareness and informed patients and NOKs of the early discharge time at each patient touchpoint:



#### Admission:

- Emphasis on **additional charges for stays beyond 11.30am and no lunch served**
- **Leaflet** in 4 languages distributed at admissions and wards
- Updates on **website**
- Postings on **social media**
- E-poster on **digital signages** and **QTVs**
- **Pull-up banners** at lift lobbies to wards
- **Posters** in public lifts and wards



#### Discharge:

- **Inform NOKs early** to fetch their loved ones home
- Transfer patients to **discharge lounge** to wait for pick up
- **SMS medication readiness alert**



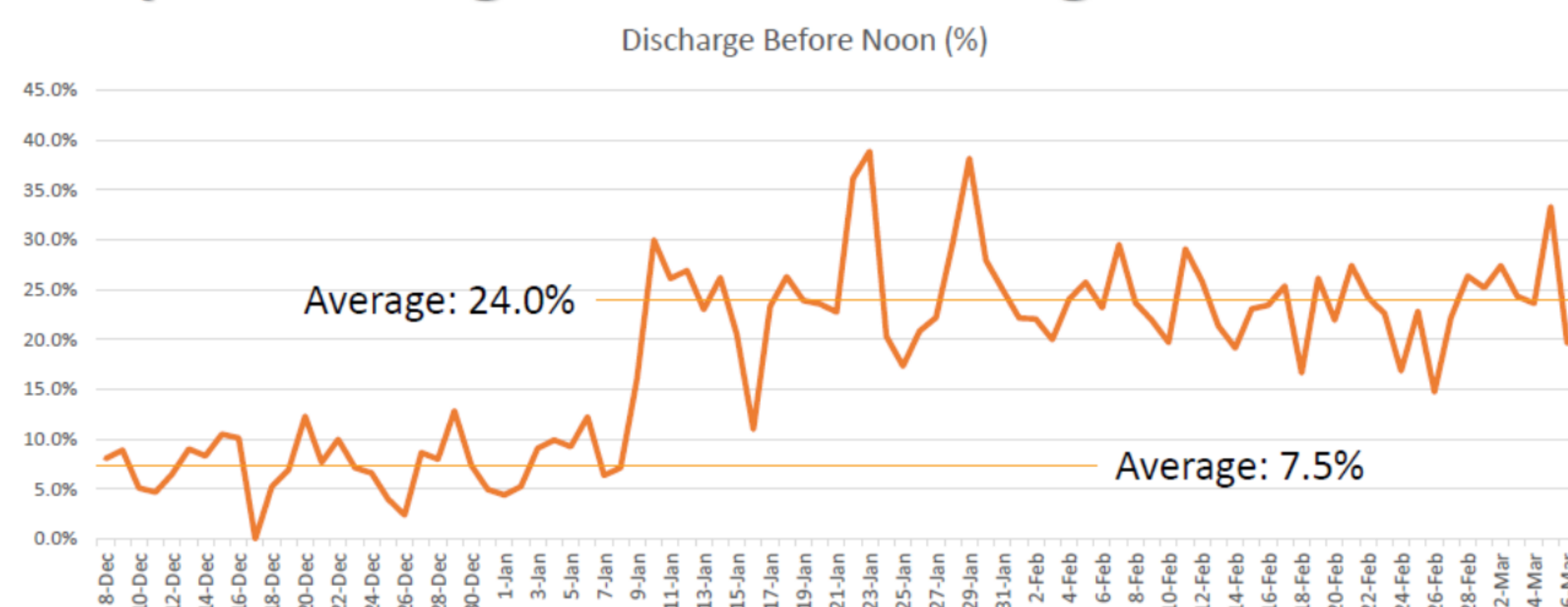
#### Post-discharge:

- **Discharge documents** and follow-up **appointments** available on HealthHub SG app/SMS



## RESULTS

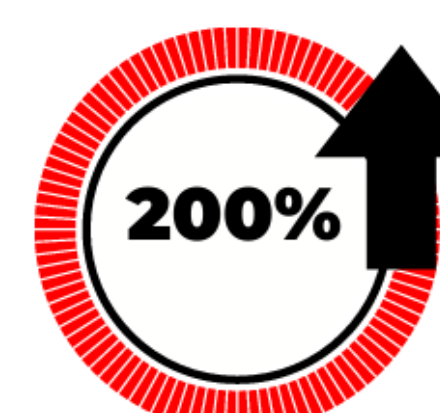
### Implementing 11:30am Discharge Time



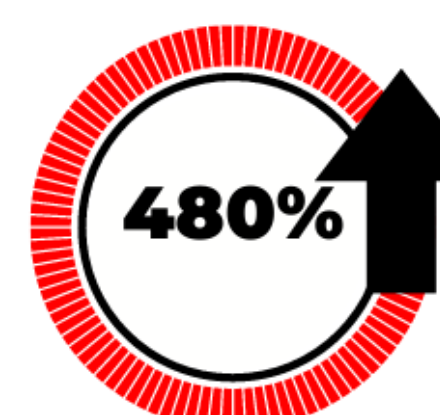
Discharge Before Noon (%)	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23
	8 Dec - 8 Jan	9 Jan - 31 Jan	1 Feb - 28 Feb	1 Mar - 12 Mar
	7.5%	25.1%	22.9%	24.7%



**Number of discharges before noon** (from 8% to 24%)



**Average number of beds available before 12pm on weekdays monthly** (200 to 600 beds)



**Average number of beds available before 12pm on weekends monthly** (30 to 185 beds)



Number of patients reaching the wards in time for doctors' afternoon ward rounds **doubled** = **270 wait hours saved monthly**

## CONCLUSION

The key to a successful change management process is:

- detailed communication plan and strategy
- clear messaging
- getting feedback from the ground
- interprofessional collaboration

Successful implementation has:

- 1 Enhanced patient care and experiences
- 2 Increased bed availability to serve patients more efficiently and effectively