



Deflect away! Optimizing SGH General Enquiries (GE) Hotline

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Muhammad Haziq Bin Saini, Estee Chan Ching Lian
General Enquiries team, SGH
Telecommunications Services team, SGH



Introduction

SGH General Enquiries (GE) plays a crucial role in handling a wide range of call type; (1) General patient and public enquiries, (2) Internal call transfers, (3) Overseas call connect, (4) Telephony fault reporting, (5) Hospital wide Emergency activations – Code Blue, Trauma, Civil Emergency.

Our GE hotline also connects callers to other services and/or department through our internal phone routing system (IVR). When callers select the appropriate menu option, they will be directed to another service hotline (e.g. X-ray or ultrasound services, Inpatient billing services, Medication top-up, Medical Report request).

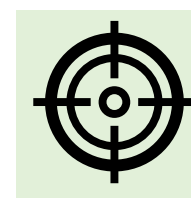
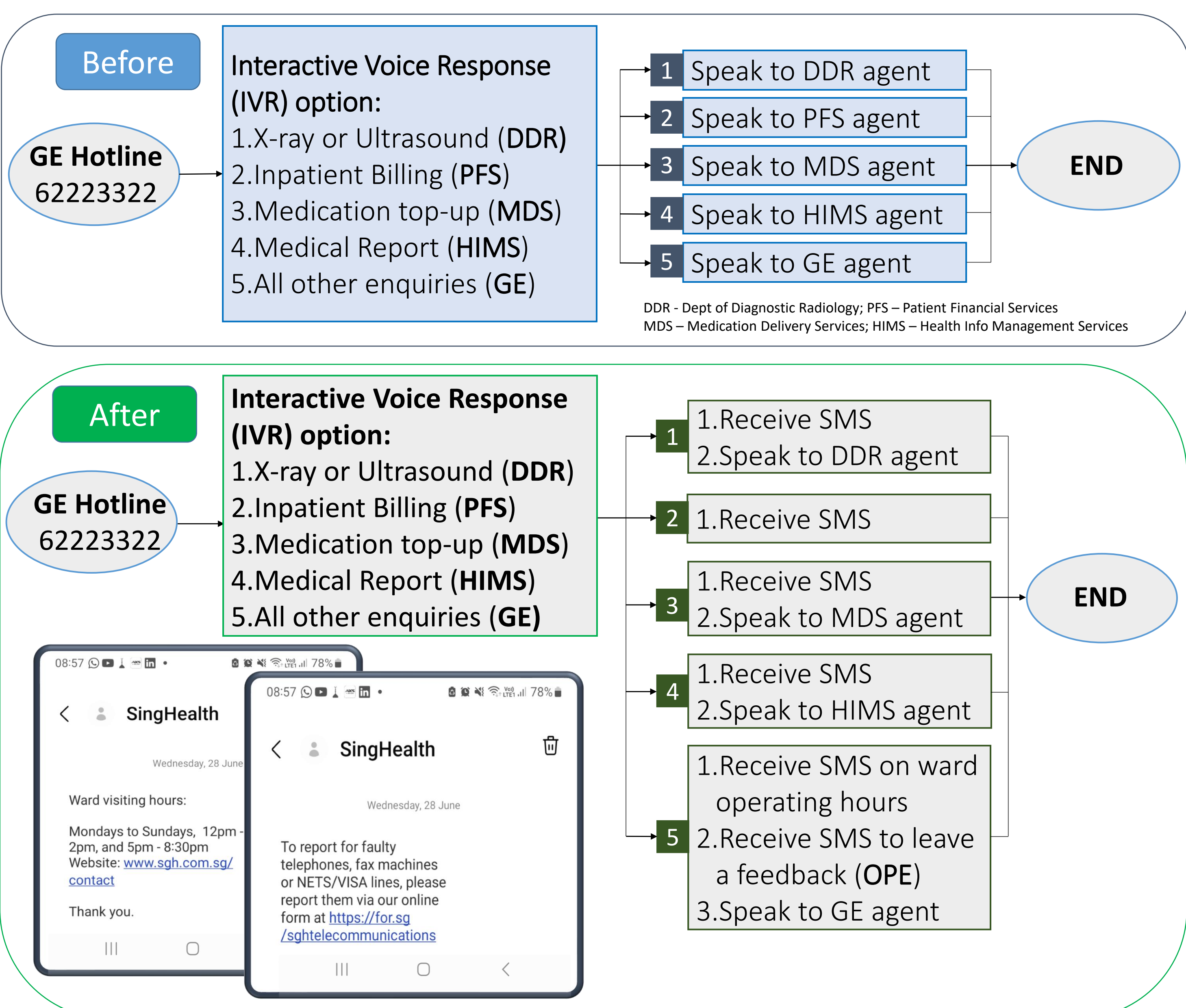
For patient and public enquiries, the type of enquiries that we received varies from simple queries, e.g. ward visiting hours and clinic locations, to complex queries, e.g. post-surgery updates, medication delivery status. On average GE receives 21,850 calls per month. To optimize the management of our calls, we explored various strategies, e.g. adding headcounts, changes to call routing, upgrading of systems etc.

We identified digital deflection as the most suitable approach for General Enquiries, and progressively introducing more advanced deflections such as live chats, or AI chatbots.



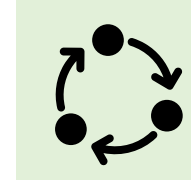
Solution: Digital Deflection

Digital deflection involves redirecting specific inbound calls to appropriate channels (e.g. SGH websites) or platforms (ask BILLIE chatbot), allowing callers to obtain the information they need more efficiently. Our process involves sending an SMS with concise content and accompanying URL for additional information and/or route callers to the relevant channel for self-help. For example, if callers would like to know the ward operating hours, they can simply select the corresponding menu to receive an SMS with the relevant information. Solutioning Cost: \$9,800.



Our Aim

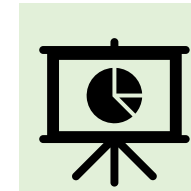
- Further leverage on SGH telephony system capabilities
- Progressively introduce new approaches by the use of technology
- Improve operational efficiency
- Manage incoming calls effectively, and
- Augment pressing manpower resourcing issues



Methodology

To implement digital deflection effectively, we followed a comprehensive methodology:

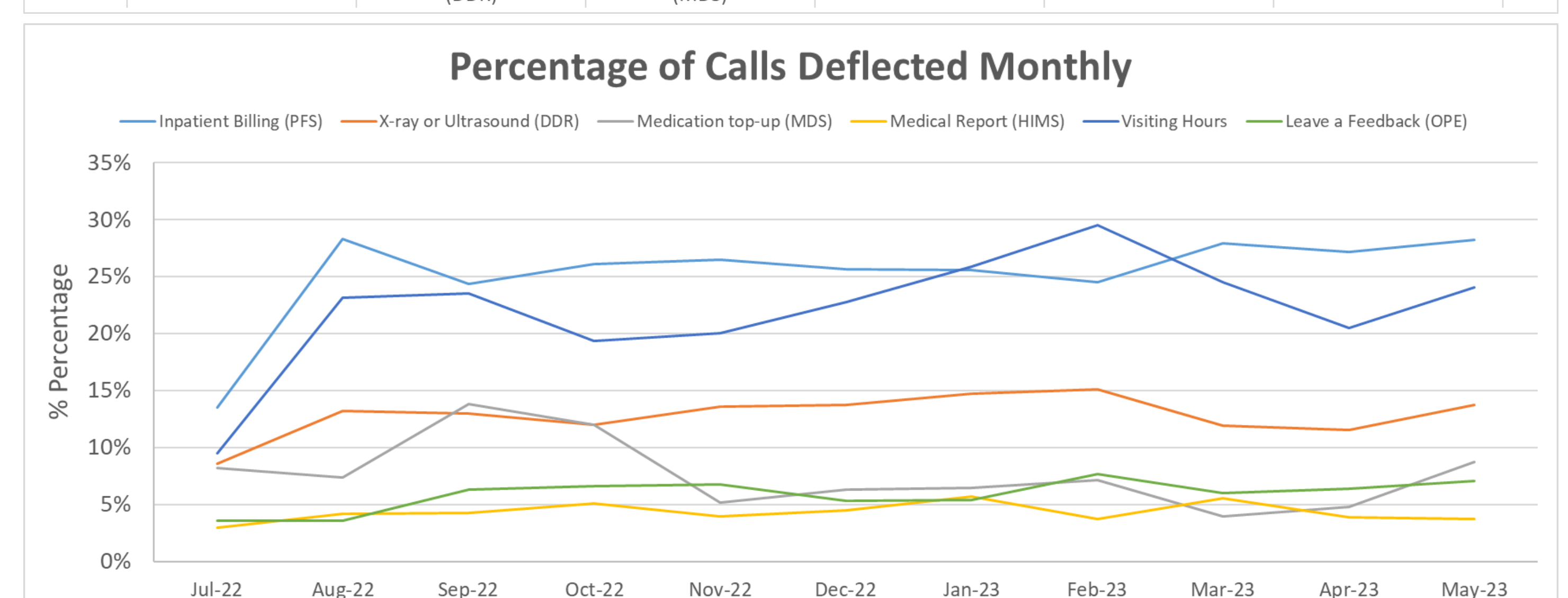
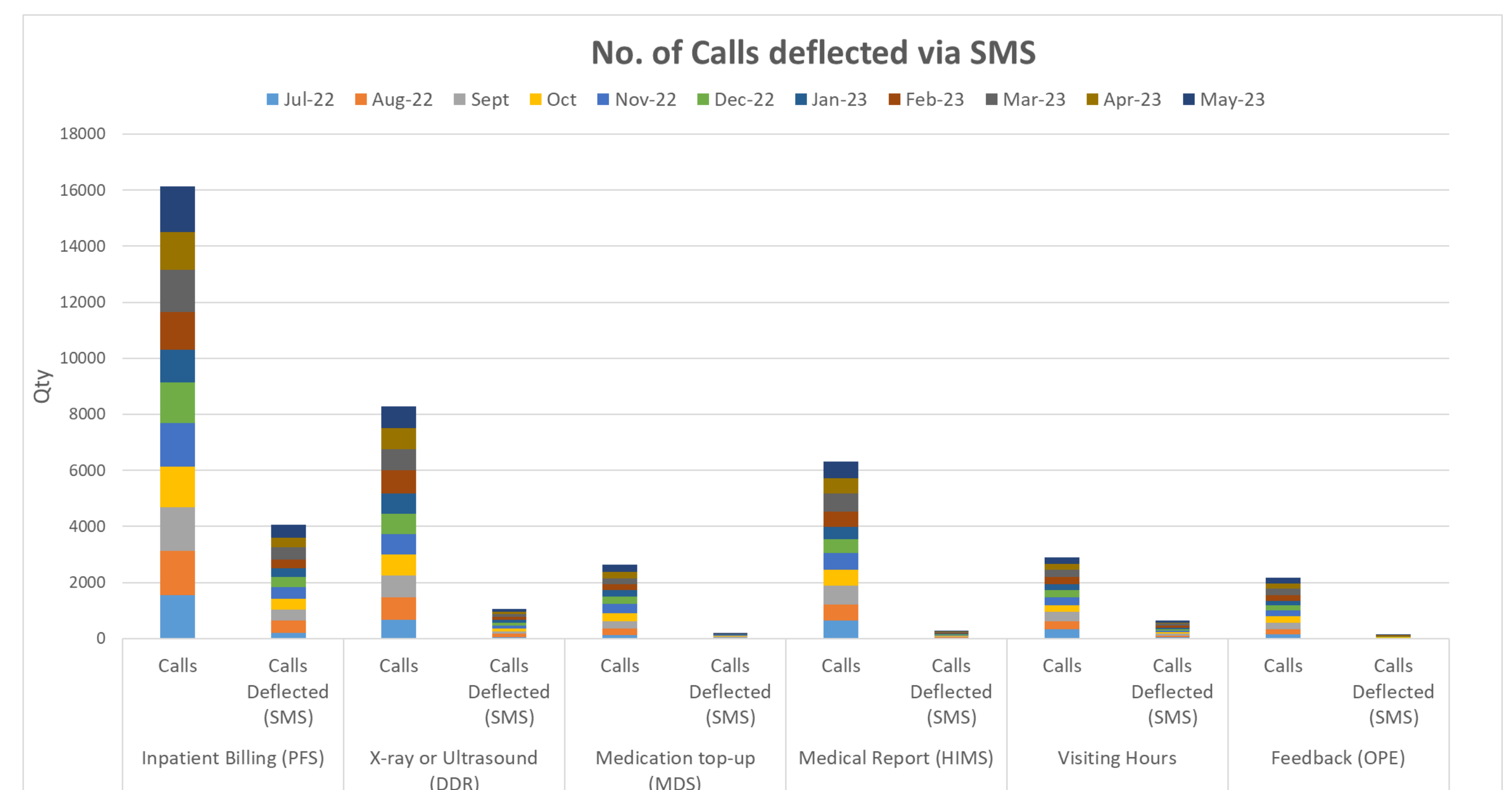
1. Gap analysis of call centre systems and processes (2 weeks)
2. Analyzed data from call routing system – sampled calls to GE (4 weeks)
3. Scoped out the types of calls suitable for deflection (2 weeks)
4. Implemented the project based on the findings (2 weeks)
5. Conducted project reviews and wrap-up activities



Results

- Total calls that can be deflected (average): 6401 calls/month
- Total calls deflected since inception: 14.2%
- Manhours¹ saved: 113.8 man-hours/month

¹Based on the average of 8 calls answered/hour



Conclusion

Since its inception, the project has achieved a stable state of 14.2% call deflection per month. The 14.2% take-uprate, even though its slightly lower than our initial target of 25%, proved that callers are receptive of other communication channels aside from verbal engagement with our agents.

This initiative not only allows our call centre agents to focus on critical tasks but also provides them with more time for patient management. Additionally, it highlights the potential to leverage our existing systems to augment agent capabilities, addressing the challenges of acquiring sufficient workforce to handle incoming calls effectively.