Standardising Appointment Resource and Creating Clinic Appointment Guide for SHP Call Centre

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BACKGROUND

SingHealth Polyclinics (SHP) has planned to set up a Call Centre in 2015. In the past, clinics managed their own appointment calendar, appointment slots timing and determined business rules for clinics appointment bookings. There is no standardised appointment management across all nine Polyclinics. For the new Call Centre operations, appointment information management and appointment slots standardisation is crucial.

AIM

There is a need to standardise the appointment slots for consultation, nursing, dental and allied health services in SHP as we moved towards a Central Appointment System and Call Centre Operations. This will ease the appointment setup and make appointment search easy for the Call Centre agents to manage and book a patient appointment.

METHODOLOGY

A project team was formed to see through the planning, implementation and execution of the project.

The team met up with various department representatives and clinic operations management to discuss and determine the number of slots setup for various service appointments, the slots duration and exceptional rules for the appointment setup and bookings.

The team used the plan, do, study, act (PDSA) cycles to test and set up appointment slots by temporarily trialing a change to the appointment slot timing and assessing its impact.

Time motion study for the various service points were measured and time norms were determined for various appointment setup. The proposed time norms were agreed by the various department stakeholders and standardised across all nine polyclinics.

INTERVENTIONS

A planned new appointment setup with new time norms were created into various service functions for trial and implemented. The team gathered post implementation feedback and made minor adjustments to the time slot norms for various services.

For consultation, nursing, laboratory and dental slots, the team has
- Standardised the duration per slot
- Determined the current day slots and future appointment slots
- Standardised the number of slots and slots timing for different nursing services appointment
- Determined and standardised the booking criteria for nursing services
- Determined the complex appointment cases booking workflow between Call Centre and Dental Clinics
- Determined the appointment calendar and slots setup in Outpatient Administration System (OAS)

RESULTS

An appointment guide has been created for reference and used by Call Centre and Clinic staff. The guide includes all the clinics appointment booking guides and list of services. Call Centre staff used this guide as a reference for all appointment booking at the Call Centre.

SHP has achieved,
- Standardised appointment slots setup and slots duration.
- Ease the Central call centre management appointment search function and rules.
- More efficient slots and resource management for clinic operations.
- Multiple bookings can be easily detected and eliminated.
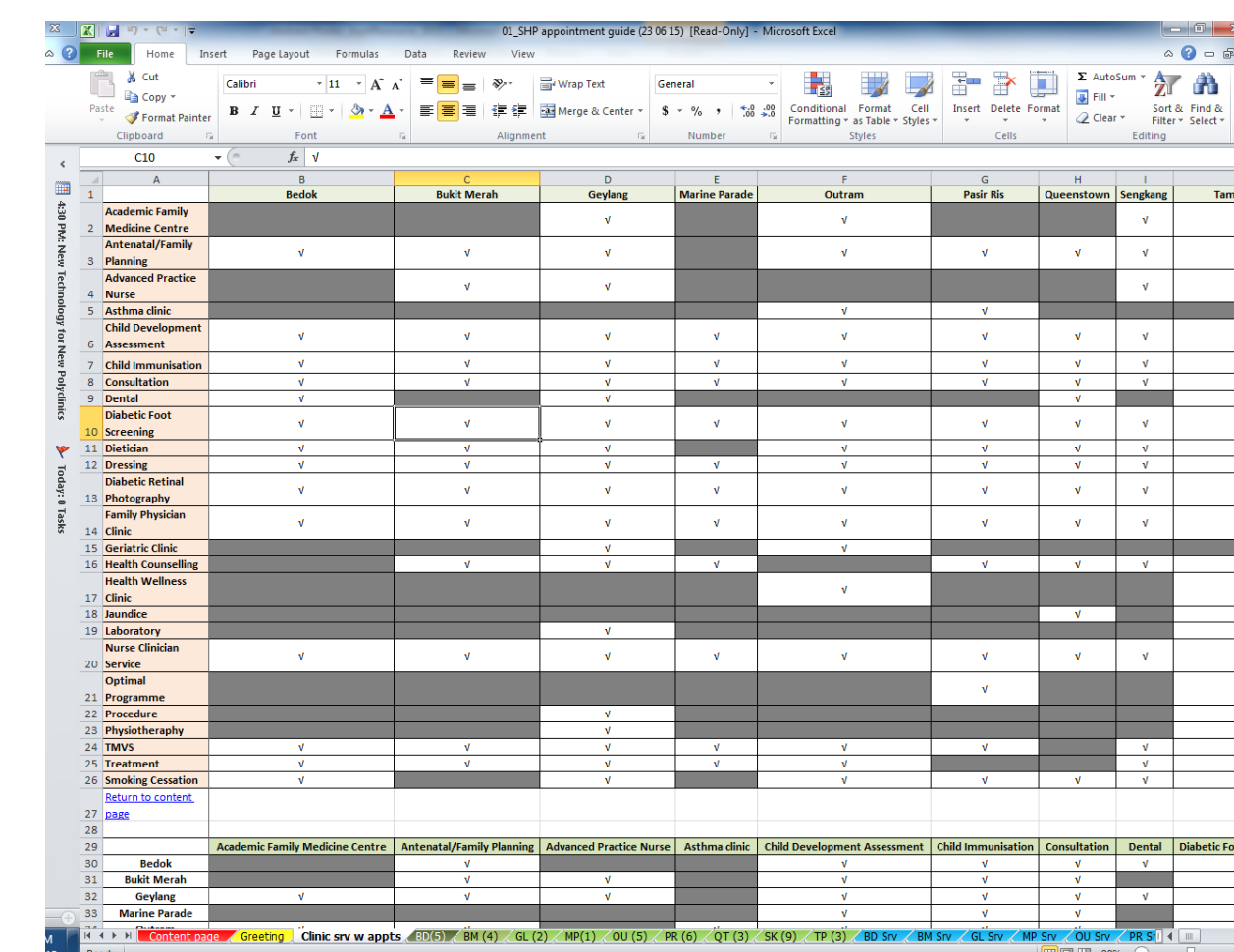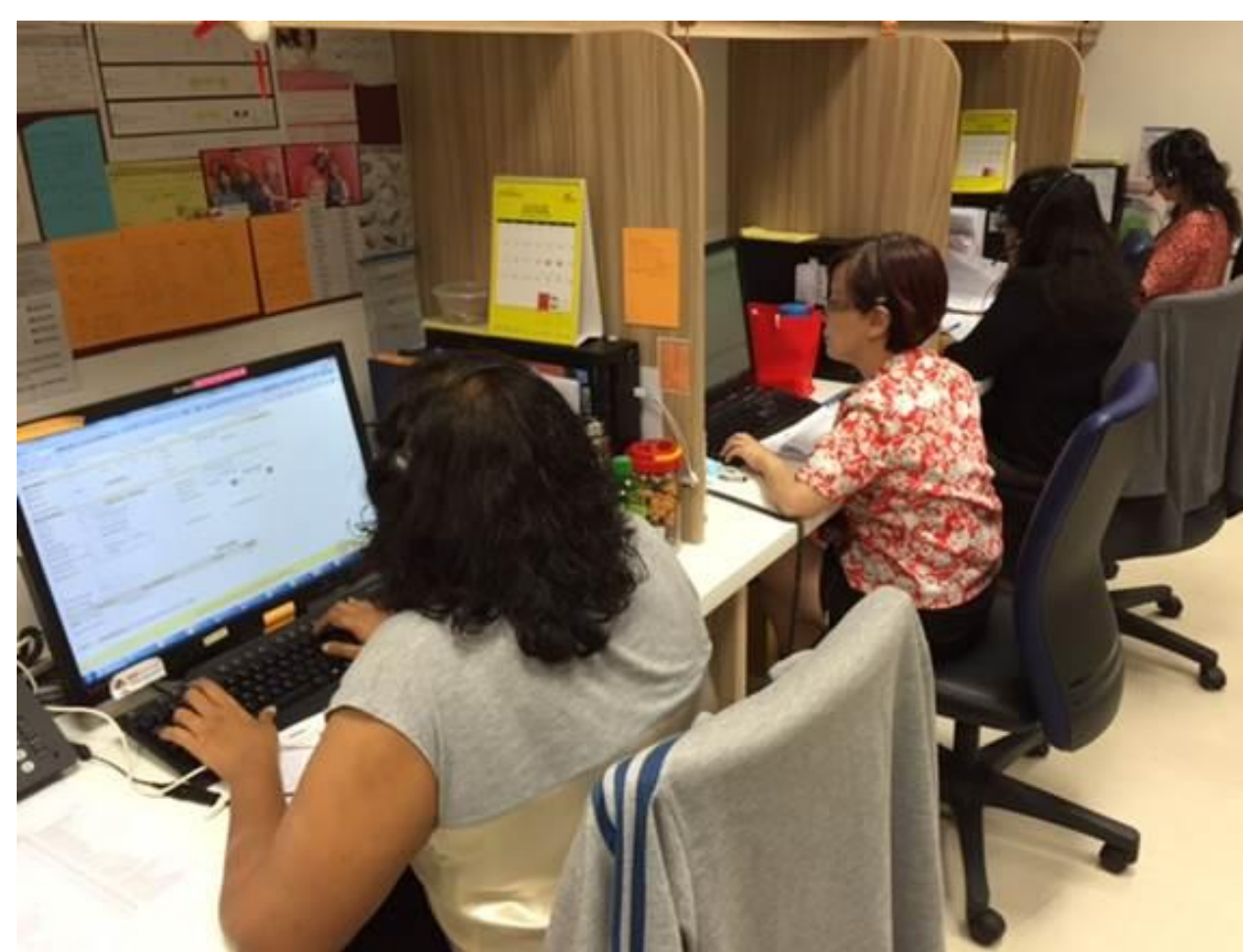
CONCLUSION

A standardised appointment resource setup has made appointment booking more efficient and effective and created a high level of patient and staff satisfaction.