

“Why Can’t We Do It All?” Creation of a Perioperative Flex Team

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Background

- In October 2020, two nurses with pre-operative and PACU experience wanted to create an opportunity for cross-training nurses across all phases of perioperative care rather than hiring RN’s solely to pre-operative or PACU units.

- They asked, “Why can’t we do it all?”

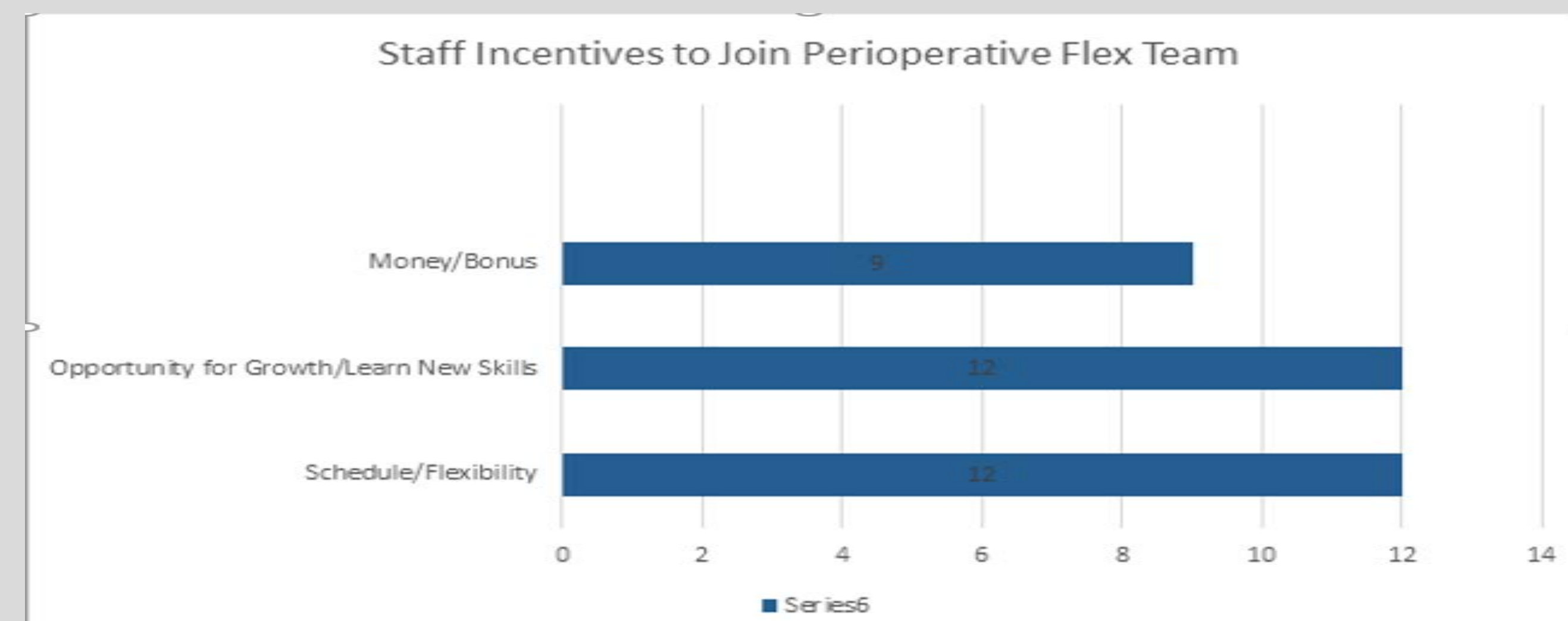


Objectives of Project

- Create a team of nurses trained to care for patients in all phases of perioperative except for the OR.
- These skilled nurses provide care in pre-anesthesia, phase 1, phase 2, and discharge home.
- The goal of cross-training was to increase staff satisfaction & provide a flexible work force to fill staffing holes across the perioperative service.

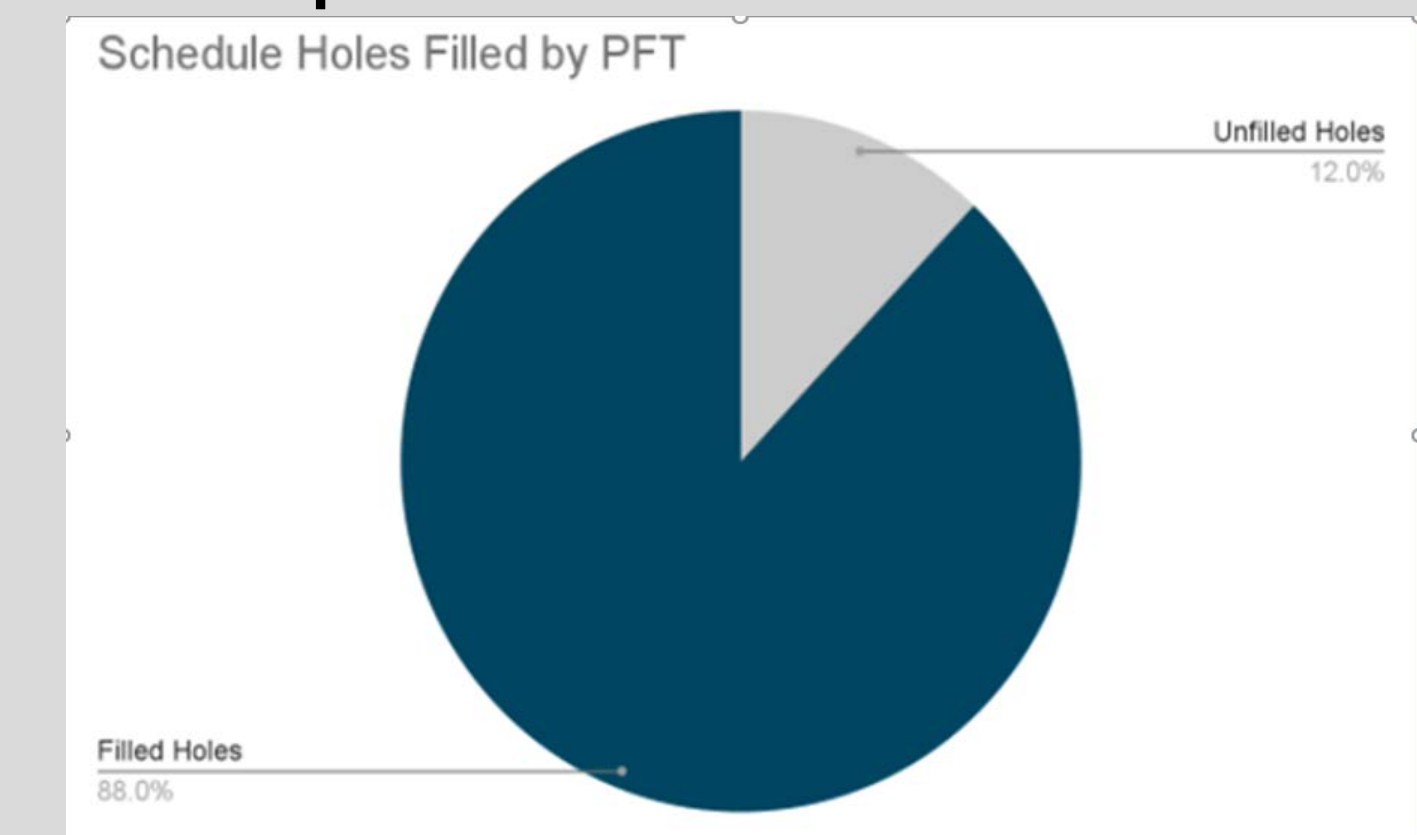
Process of Implementation

- A staff survey explored interest and nursing perceptions of the benefits and deterrents to flex team implementation.
- Survey results guided development of a proposal presented to perioperative nursing leadership team.
- Staff interviews were conducted, recruited nurses within the perioperative service, to take part in a six-month pilot program.
- Two PACU RNs were cross-trained to preop, and one preop RN was cross-trained to PACU. Two RNs leading the group were already cross-trained.
- RNs orienting to PACU completed a 12 week orientation, PACU RNs completed a 4-6 week orientation to pre op areas.
- The pilot team met with management biweekly to assess progress/satisfaction levels.



Statement of Successful Practice

- The pilot project was implemented in October 2020 through April 2021 with five RNs.
- Anonymous polling of management and flex team RNs provided positive feedback regarding increased nursing satisfaction.
- The flex team filled most (88%) of posted holes in the first time block it was initiated.
- RNs are pre-scheduled to shifts/units.



Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing

- Cross-training and creating a perioperative flex team is imperative to provide efficient care and safe staffing ratios, and to increase nursing satisfaction.