

Enhancing Patient Experience from Walter 3 PACU Post-Surgical Patients

Through Post-Operative In-Person Visits



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Background/Introduction

Walter 3 PACU at Houston Methodist serves approximately 13,000 patients annually across various surgical specialties. Currently, patient feedback is gathered through Press-Ganey surveys and reports from inpatient units, both of which have limitations—Press-Ganey data is delayed and too general, while inpatient feedback is inconsistent.

Research highlights the significance of timely, patient-centered feedback in improving care. Alibrandi et al. (2023) found that patient surveys empower quality improvements, while Krist et al. (2020) emphasized aligning care with patient priorities.

Informal complaints have identified recurring issues, including pain management, nausea/vomiting control, and communication. However, the lack of a consistent feedback system has hindered leadership in addressing these concerns effectively.

The Post-Operative Visits project was launched in response to patient satisfaction scores below the 90th percentile for Dunn OR's patients in March 2025. In alignment with Houston Methodist's commitment to world-class care, this initiative aims to improve nurse-patient interactions during post-op recovery, addressing issues such as pain, nausea/vomiting, communication, and overall satisfaction through in-person visits.

Purpose/Objectives/Hypothesis

Objectives:

- Improve the timeliness of PACU-specific patient feedback.
- Address recurring patient concerns in pain management, nausea/vomiting, communication, and nurse responsiveness.
- Enhance nurse-patient interactions to improve overall patient satisfaction.
- Implement sustainable quality improvement strategies based on real-time data.
- Achieve satisfaction scores above the 90th percentile.

Purpose:

This initiative aims to improve patient satisfaction and care quality in the Walter 3 PACU at Houston Methodist by creating a more efficient system for collecting PACU-specific feedback. The project addresses recurring patient concerns like pain management, nausea/vomiting control, nurse responsiveness, communication, and overall recovery. By enhancing nurse-patient interactions and implementing real-time feedback, the goal is to exceed the 90th percentile in patient satisfaction and maintain world-class care in post-surgical recovery.

Methods

Framework Used: Iowa Model of Evidence-Based Practice to guide post-operative follow-up.

Intervention: Conducted in-person Day 1 follow-up visits with post-surgical patients from Walter3 PACU.

Survey Tool:

Administered a paper-based survey covering communication, pain management, nausea, vomiting, and patient satisfaction (similar to EPIC phone survey).

Role of PACU Nurses:

- Conducted follow-up visits.
- Collected survey data.
- Escalated negative feedback to leadership for immediate resolution.

Data Collection:

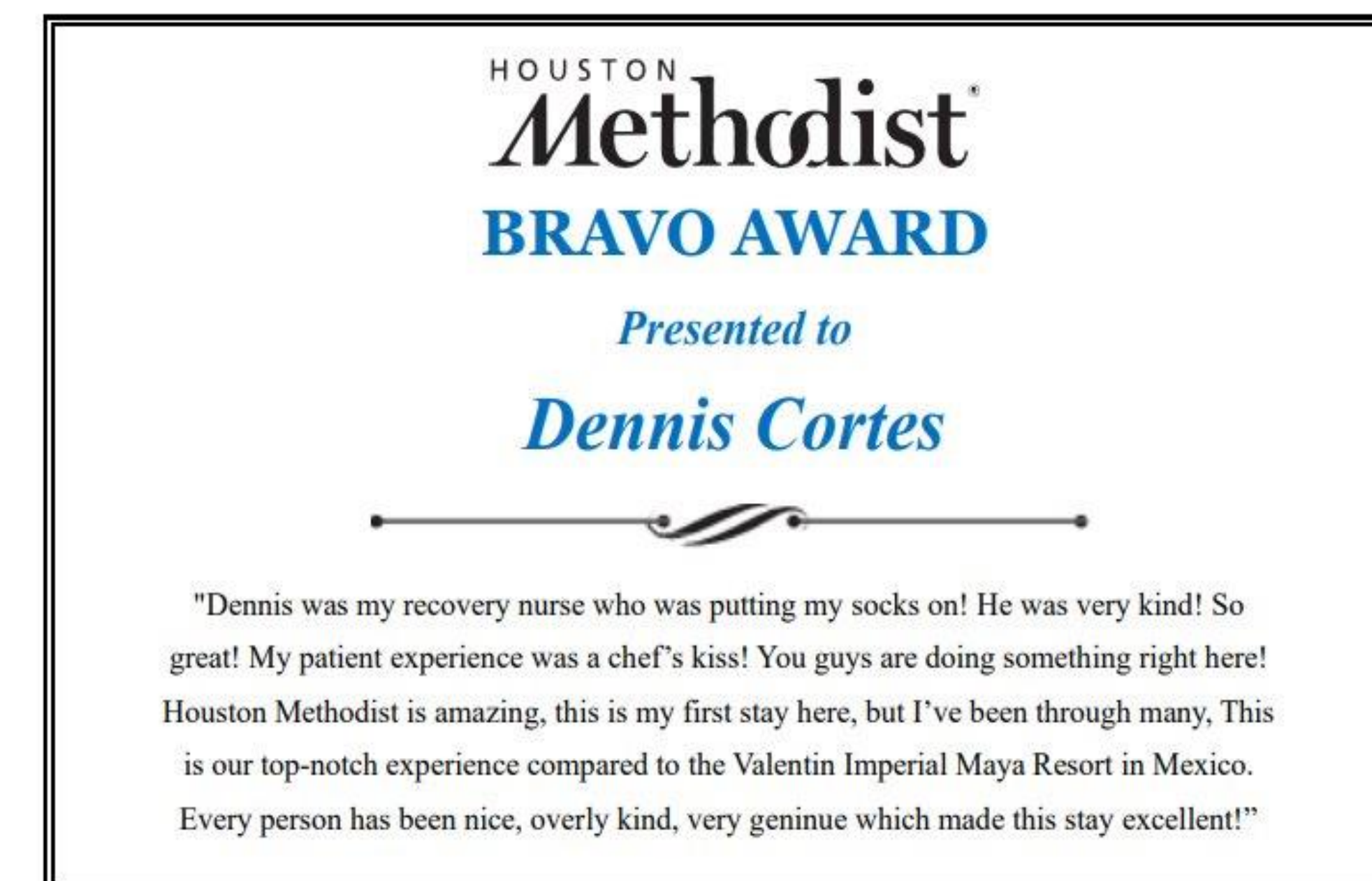
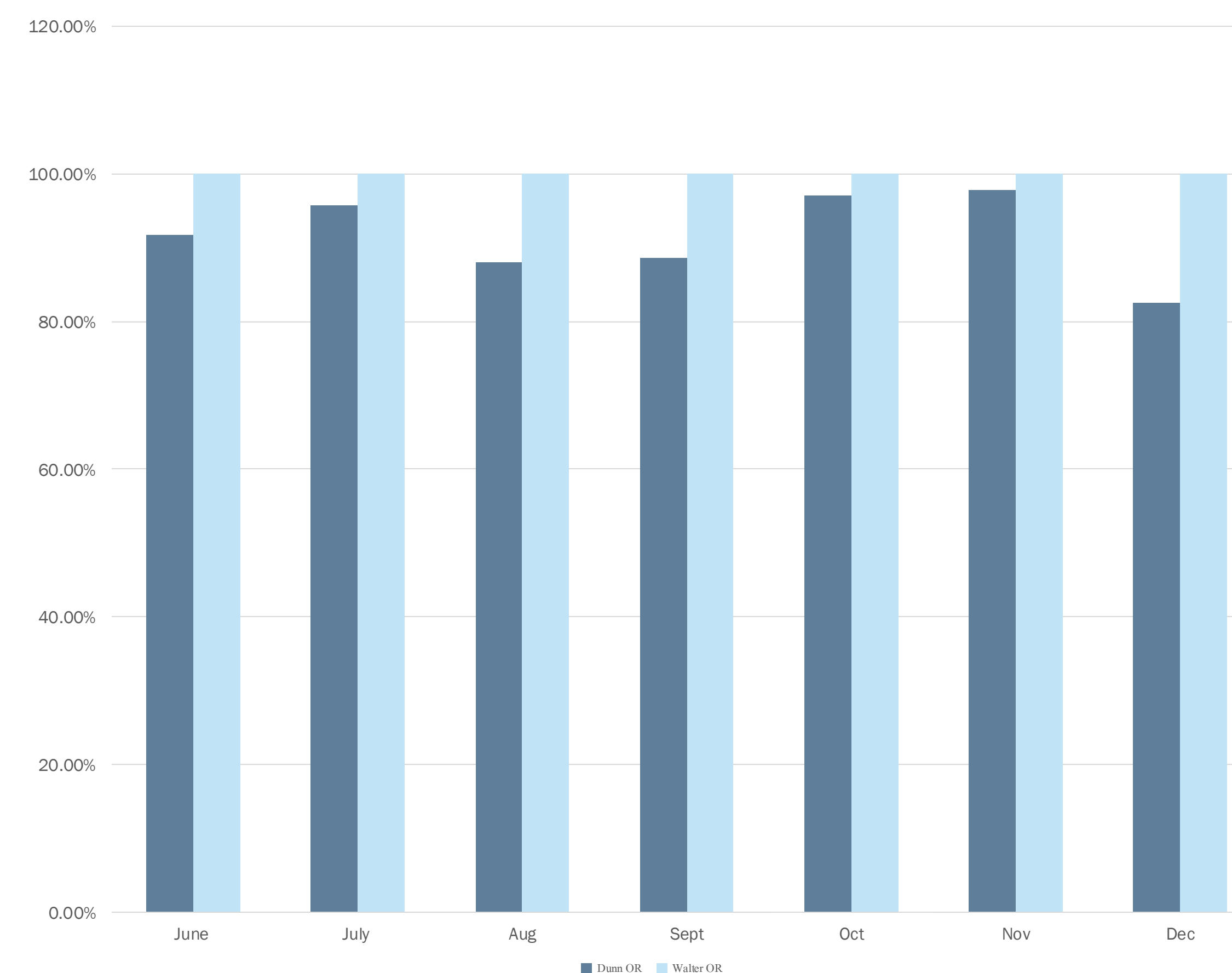
- Tracked number of patients seen in Excel.
- Recorded feedback in a Word document for nursing staff review.
- Positive patient feedback, including Bravo Card recognitions, was recorded to acknowledge nursing staff contributions.
- Staff resilience data were obtained from the Houston Methodist Employee Opinion Survey (EOS) and compared between 2024 and 2025 to evaluate changes in staff engagement and resilience.

Outcome Measures:

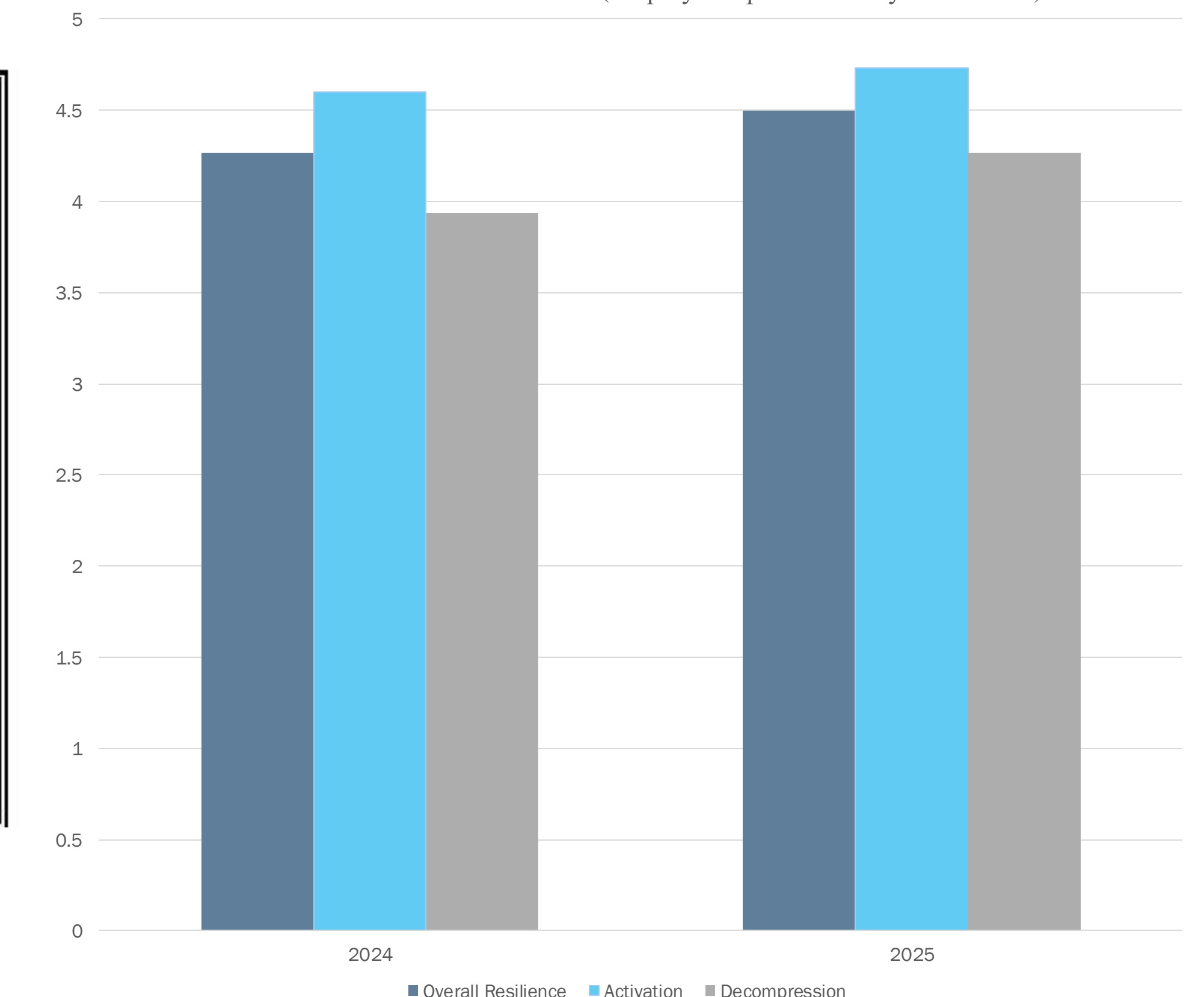
- Improved patient-reported experiences.
- Timely escalation of concerns.
- Alignment with Press Ganey benchmarks.

Result

Patient Satisfaction in Dunn OR and Walter OR (2025)



PACU Staff Resilience Scores (Employee Opinion Survey 2024–2025)



Result/Implications

Staff Resilience & Engagement

- The Employee Opinion Survey results showed an increase in overall staff resilience in Walter 3 PACU, with the resilience index rising from 4.27 in 2024 to 4.50 in 2025. Activation scores, reflecting meaning and purpose in nurses' work, improved from 4.60 to 4.73, while decompression scores, indicating the ability to disconnect from work-related stress, increased from 3.94 to 4.27. These improvements in staff well-being were reinforced by positive feedback and recognition through Bravo Cards during post-operative visits.

Impact on Practice

- The post-op visits enhanced patient-centered care by providing real-time feedback, allowing for immediate recognition and response to patient needs. This also led to greater nursing engagement, as staff were personally acknowledged by patients for their compassionate care. Communication and teamwork within the PACU were strengthened, fostering a culture of empathy and excellence.
- The initiative elevated professional practice standards, aligning with Houston Methodist's ICARE values and commitment to patient-centered excellence. The continuous cycle of quality care and recognition has driven sustainable improvements in both patient experience and staff satisfaction, contributing to better nursing resilience, increased motivation, and overall improvements in staff well-being.

Future Action

Improvement in Press-Ganey Scores & Patient Satisfaction

- Following in-person post-op visits, both Dunn OR and Walter OR saw significant increases in patient satisfaction scores. In June, Dunn OR had a patient satisfaction score of 91.67% (42 patients). This rose to 95.71% in July (68 patients), with Walter OR achieving 100% satisfaction. Positive patient feedback highlighted clear, compassionate communication and strong nurse-patient connections, which contributed to boosted staff morale through recognition.

Addressing Negative Feedback

- Any negative feedback received was promptly addressed by PACU leadership, ensuring that patient concerns were valued and resolved promptly.

Expand to More Units

- Implement the in-person follow-up process in other post-surgical units or across different types of surgeries to evaluate its impact on a broader patient population.

Digital Survey Option

- Transition the paper-based survey to a digital format (e.g., via tablet or mobile app) to streamline data collection and improve response rates

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