Elective Shoulder Surgery Patients Surpassing Expected Length of Stay

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AIM Statement: By April 2025 for elective shoulder surgery patients admitted to SJHC, we aim to reduce the rate of shoulder surgery patients surpassing the targeted length of stay of less than 3 days by 20% from a baseline of 20.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

Prolonged hospital stays for elective shoulder surgery patients increase costs, limit bed availability, and impact patient well-being.

Many exceed the **target stay of 3 days** due to inadequate discharge planning and post-surgical support. Addressing this issue improves efficiency, outcomes, and access to care.

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS
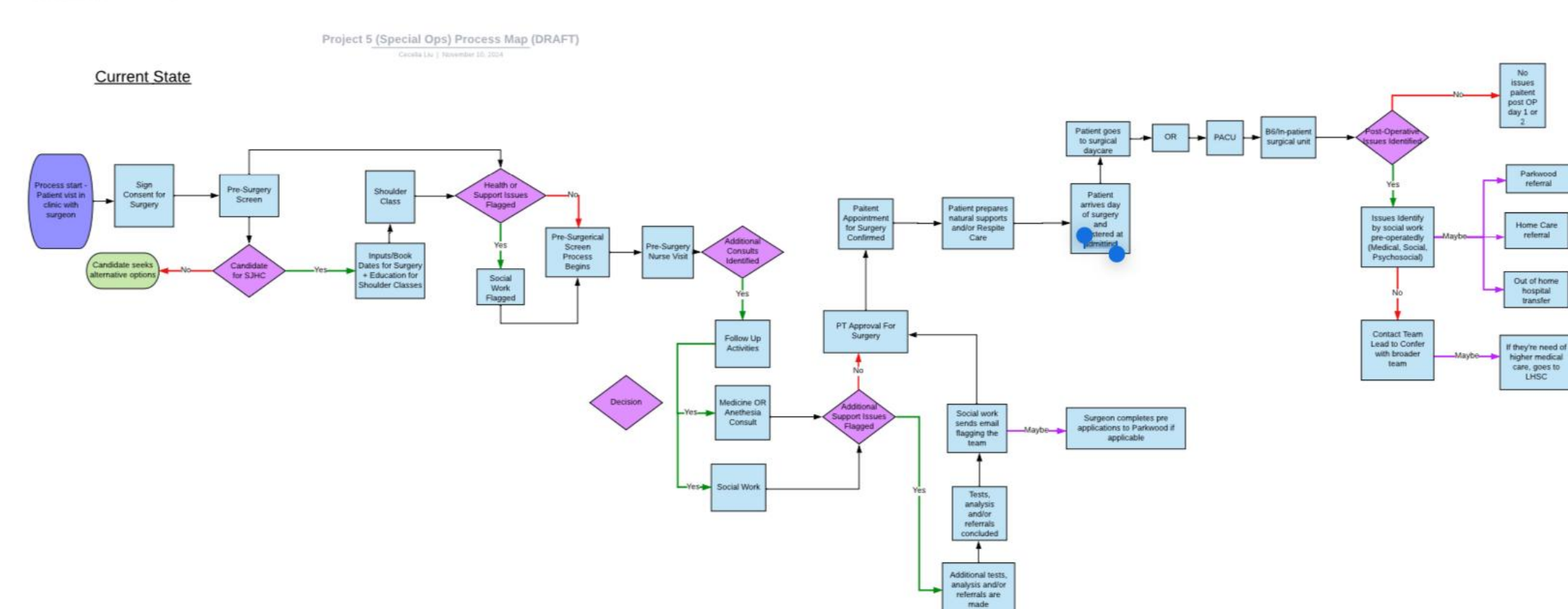
Process Map Stakeholders: Patients, surgeons rehabilitation, pre-admit PT/OT and booking clerk, pre-admit/inpatient team lead nurses, hospital administrators, homecare (Ontario Health@home)

Cause and Effect Stakeholders: Patients, family/caregivers, pre-admit PT/OT and booking clerk, pre-admit/inpatient team lead nurses, homecare services (Ontario Health@home), government administrators

Lessons:
1. Engaging with stakeholders improves understanding of **diverse perspectives** while **aligning project with organizational priorities.**
2. Financial, operational, and social insights lead to **holistic decision-making** and **resource allocation**.

Lack of pre-surgery preparation and education for elective shoulder surgery patients rather than post-surgical medical complications was responsible for prolonged hospital stays.
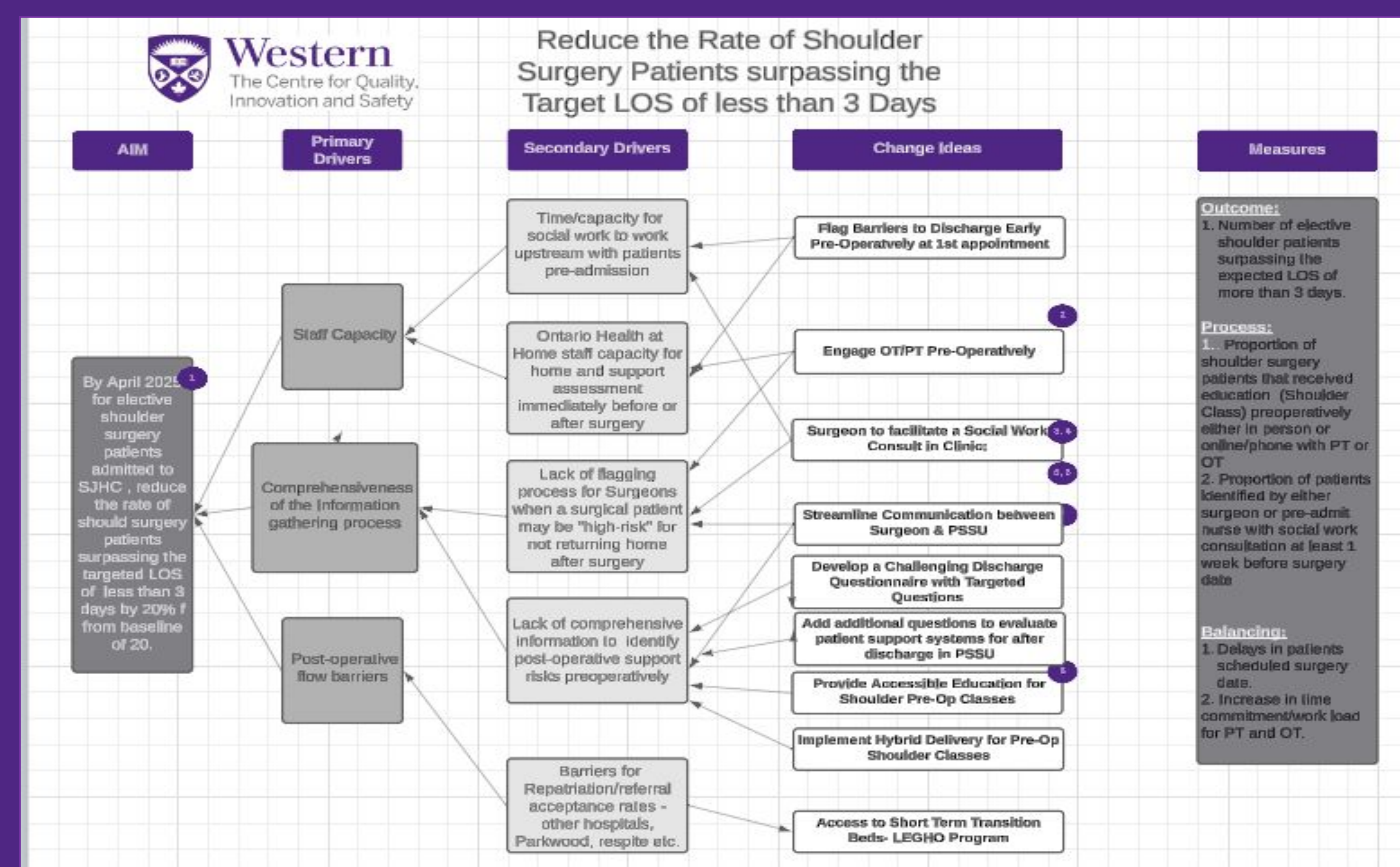
Figure 1: Driver diagram exploring the root causes identified during stakeholder interviews.

IMPLEMENTATION

Cycle 1: Mandatory Patient Education Pre-Surgery
Cycle 2: Pre-Surgical Screening & Same-Day Phone Assessments
Takeaway: Importance of proactive outreach, tailored education, and structured follow-up.

MEASUREMENT & RESULTS

- **Measurement:** The monthly **average length of stay (in days)** was monitored
- **Results:** Following the two PDSA cycles, the average length of stay reached 1.17 representing a **23.5% improvement** in comparison to the median
- **Limitation**: Most significant constraint was small sample size
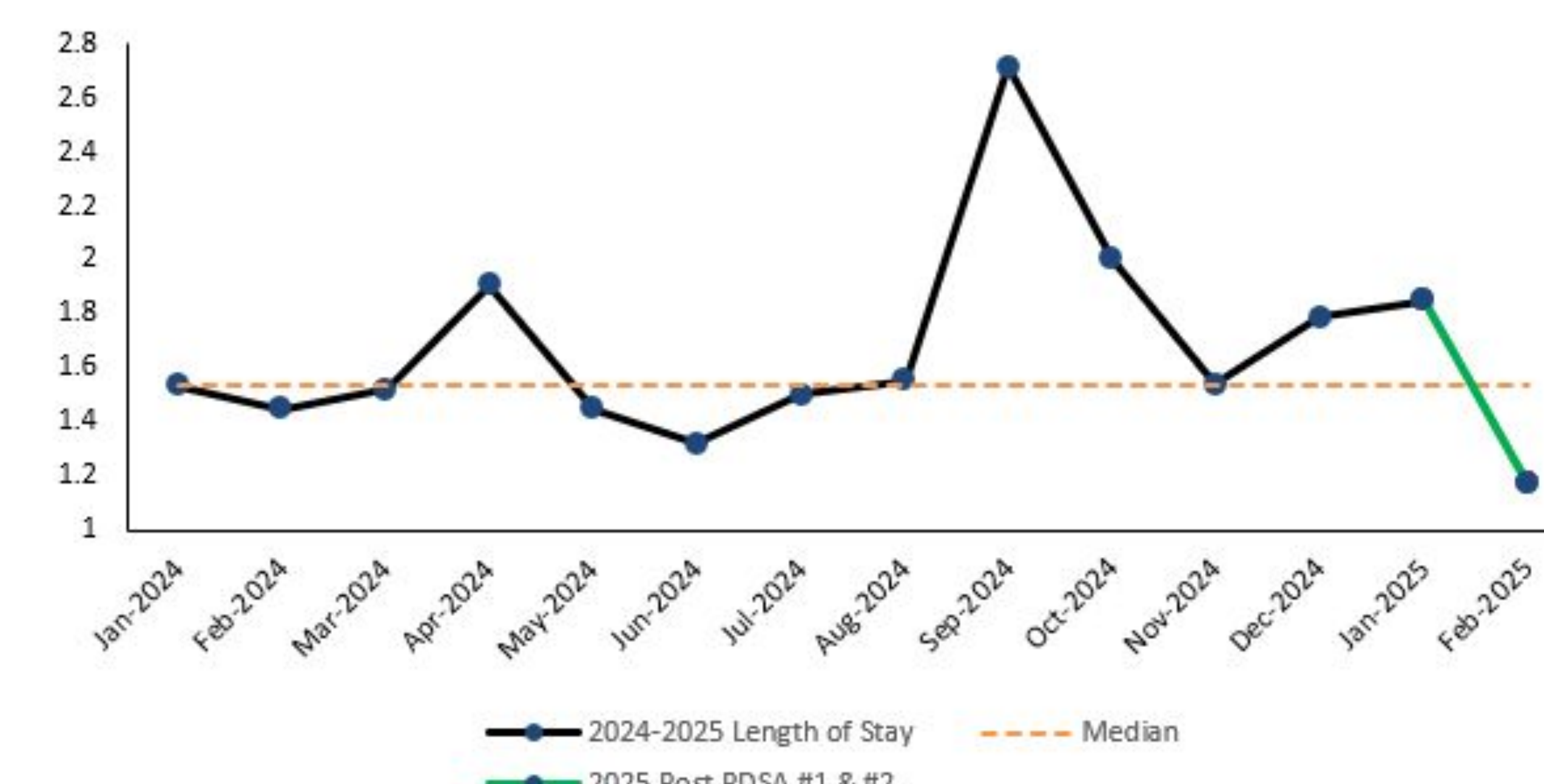
SUSTAINABILITY

1. **SOP:** Pre-admission Booking Clerk notifies RN Team Lead if patient does not attend class.

2. **SOP:** RN Team Lead calls these patients to assess need for PT/OT referral pre-op.

3. **Routine Quarterly Reports for LOS** for patients to monitor variances.