

Reducing Wait Times for Urgent Neurology Clinic Patients Using Quality Improvement Methodology.

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AIM Statement: To reduce wait times at the UNC to 3 business days by June 30, 2025, and sustain this improvement

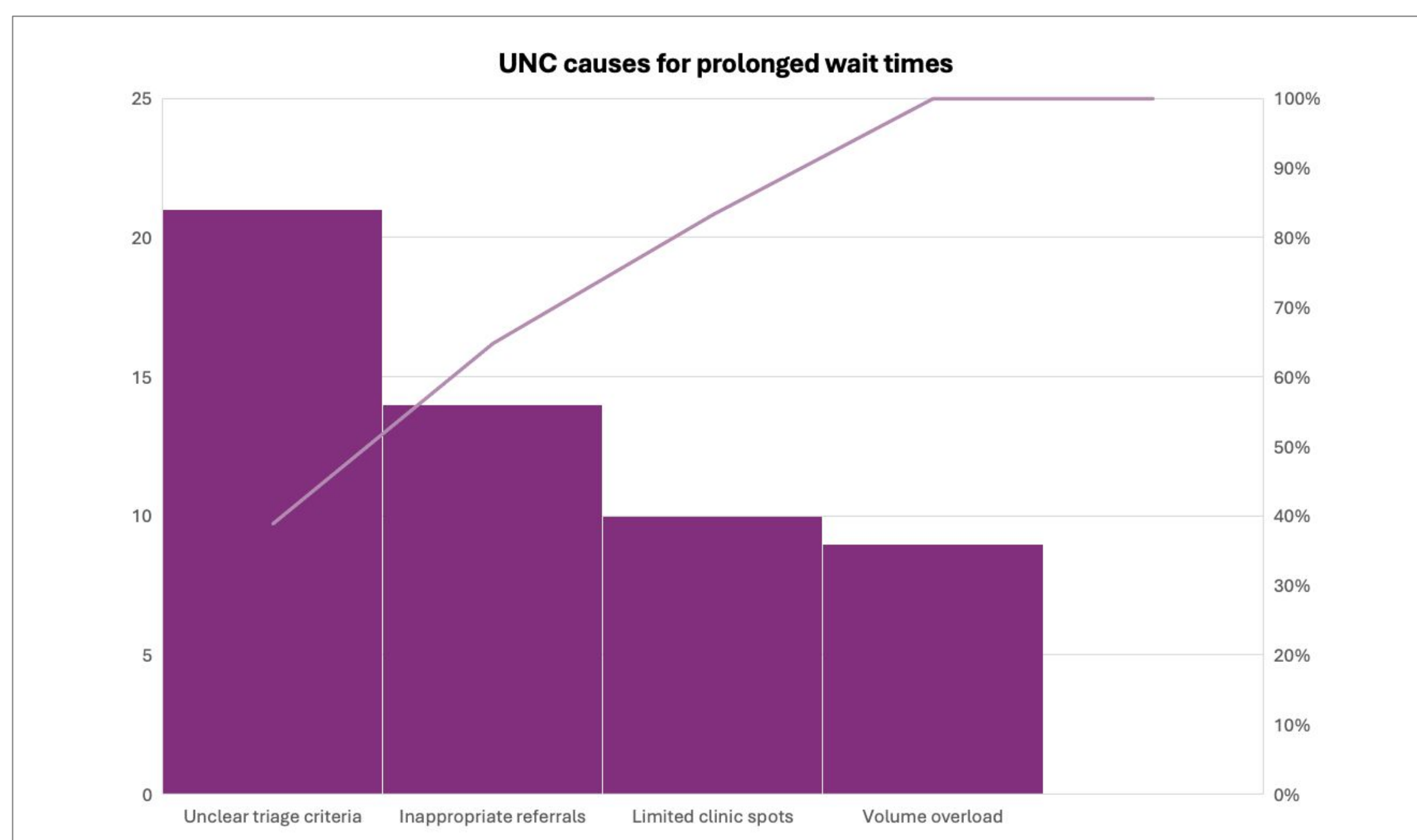
PROBLEM DEFINITION

Patients with urgent neurological issues, who do not require admission but need to be seen urgently by Neurology are not consistently seen in a timely manner at the Urgent Neurology Clinic (UNC) with wait times as long as 3 weeks.

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

Top contributors to increased wait times identified:

- Inappropriate patients seen in clinic due to misrepresented patient information on referral form
- Variable triaging by UNC physicians
- Variable numbers of patients seen daily



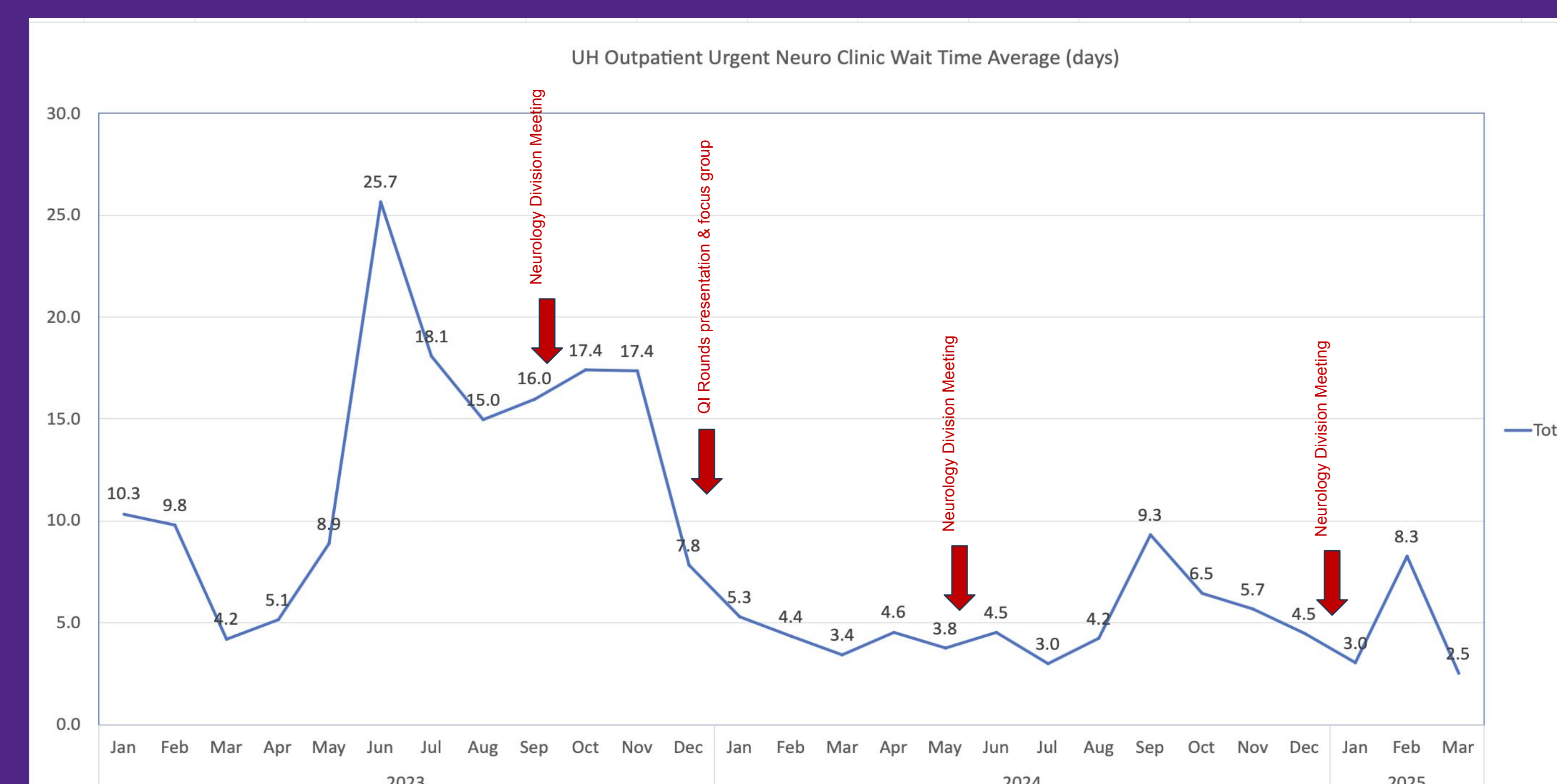
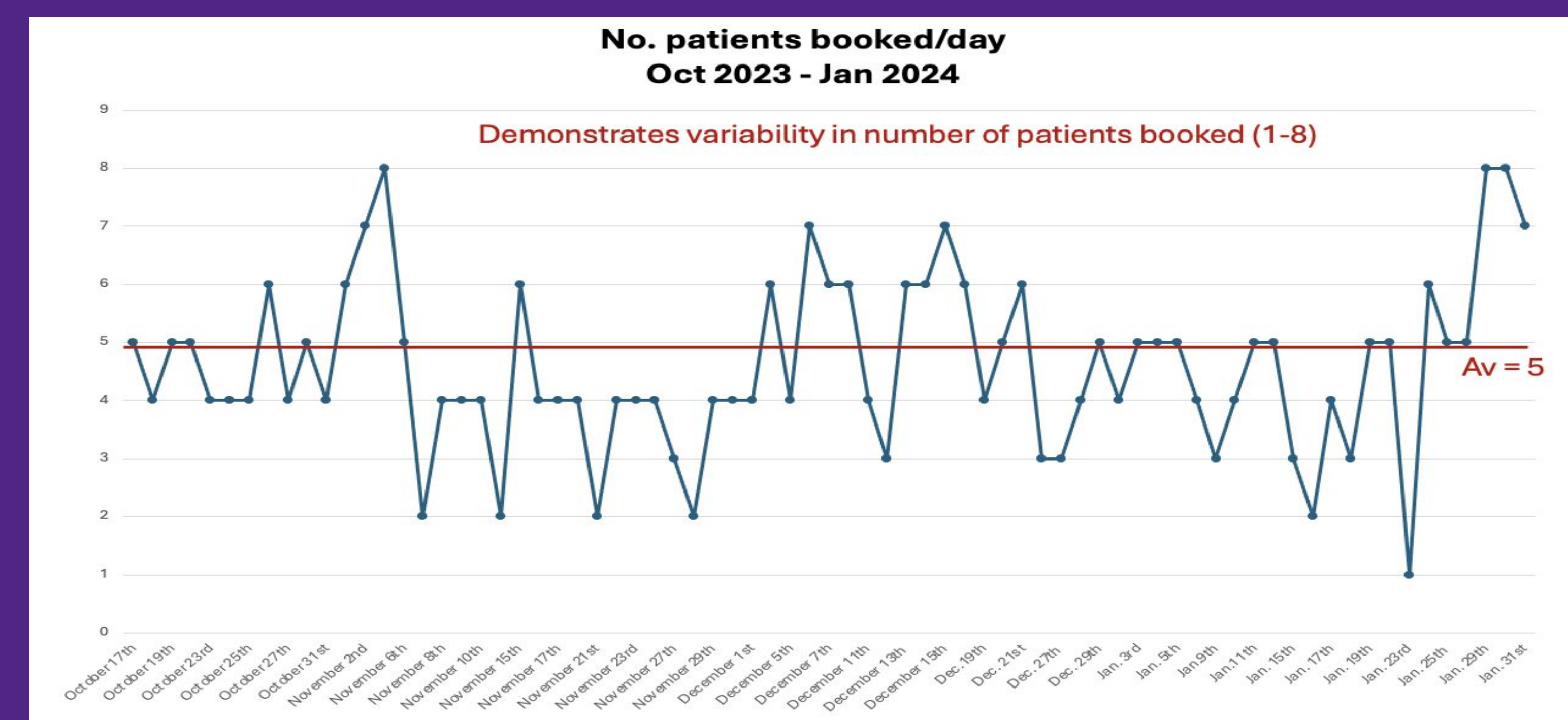
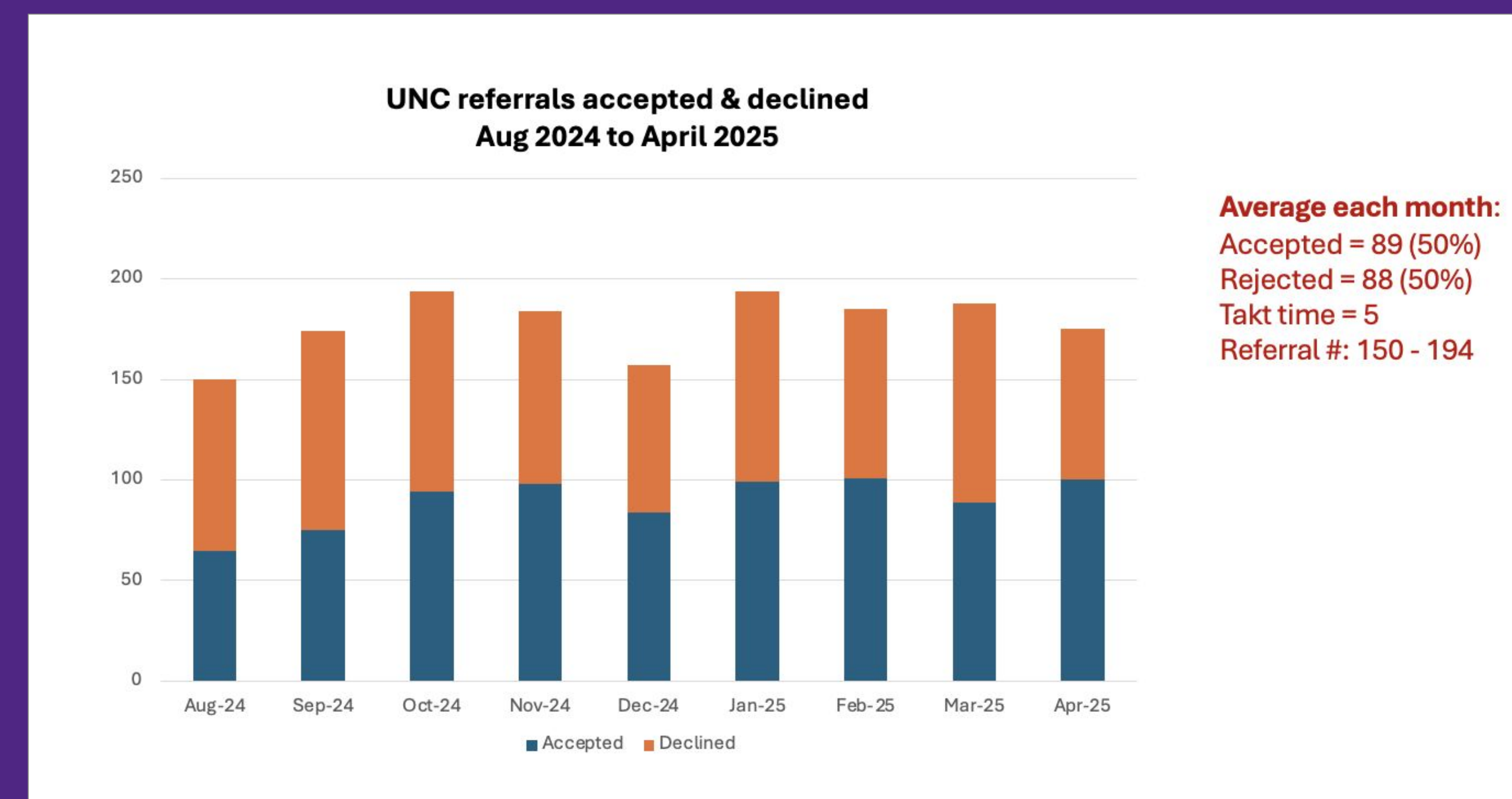
IMPLEMENTATION

PDSA1:

- **Surveys, QI rounds, and focus groups & raised awareness at Division meetings**
- **Improved data tracking & engaged decision support services**

PDSA2:

- **Triage criteria standardized** & improved to the referral form developed
- Alternate care pathways established (e.g., ABI Clinic for concussion)
 - Criteria disseminated to referring physicians, & triaging neurologists



MEASUREMENT & RESULTS

- **Key contributors** to prolonged wait times confirmed:
 - High volume of inappropriate referrals (50%)
 - Variability in triaging
 - Variability in number of patients booked
- **Outcome measures:** run chart tracking wait times has shown some improvement
- **Process measures:** will continue to monitor declined referrals, and the number of patients seen daily.
- **Balancing measures:** include physician satisfaction, administrative burden, and triaging time.
- **Surprises:** CNS has started a common referral pathway project & we hope to combine resources
- The workflow at the Urgent Neurology Clinic (UNC) was not straightforward.
- Critical data was not systematically recorded.
- There is limited consensus on how to define specific neurological symptoms to guide urgent referrals.

SUSTAINABILITY

- The clinic clerk will regularly track wait times for urgent neurology referrals.
- If the wait time >3 business days, the clerk will notify both the triaging physician & the Division Head of Neurology.
- This will prompt a timely review of the referral, including identification of any system-level barriers (e.g., triage delays, capacity issues, misclassification), and allow for corrective action to be taken as needed.