NG Free! Improving oral feed rates by discharge for infants with heart disease

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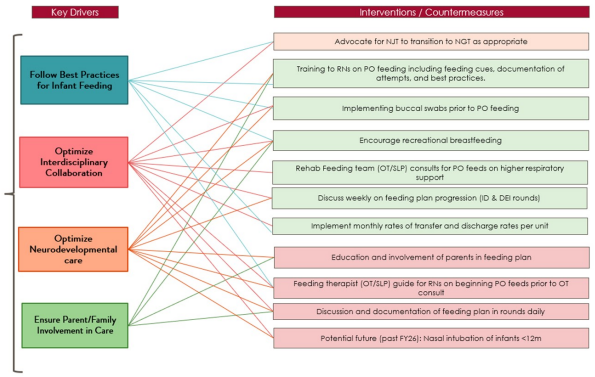
Background

- The Stanford Children's Heart Center (HC) was the second worst nationally in sending infants home on full oral feeds and 5th highest for transferring to ACCU on all tube feedings across Pediatric Acute Care Cardiology Collaborative, PAC^3, sites
- Discharging infants with tube feeds has developmental repercussions, complicates discharge teaching, and increases emotional stress on families.

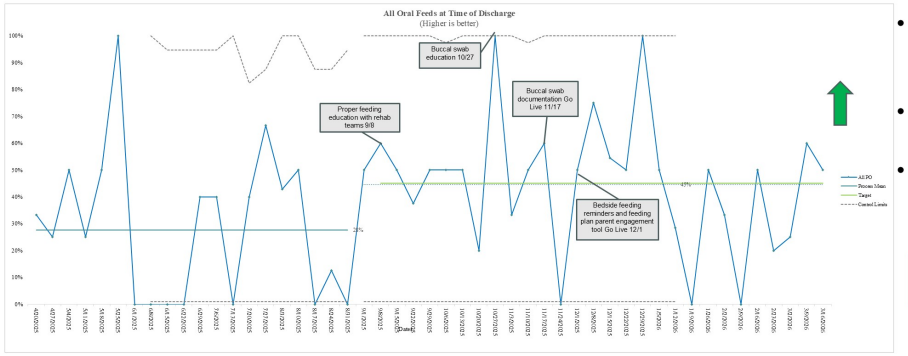
SMART Aims

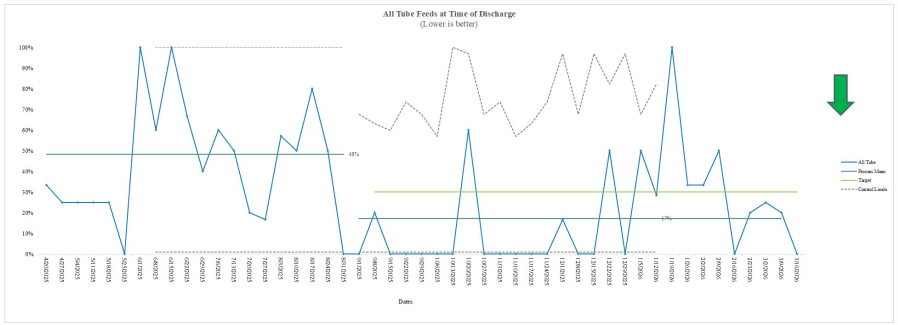
- Primary: Increase the percentage of infants (0-12 months) discharged on all oral feeds from 37% to 45%
- Secondary: Decrease the percentage of infants sent home only on tube feeds from 38% to <20% by August 2026
- Process Metric: Decrease % of infants transferred to ACCU with NJT from 25% to 15% & increase % offered PO from 60% to 65%.
- Balancing Metric: Stable percent of 7-day readmission rate

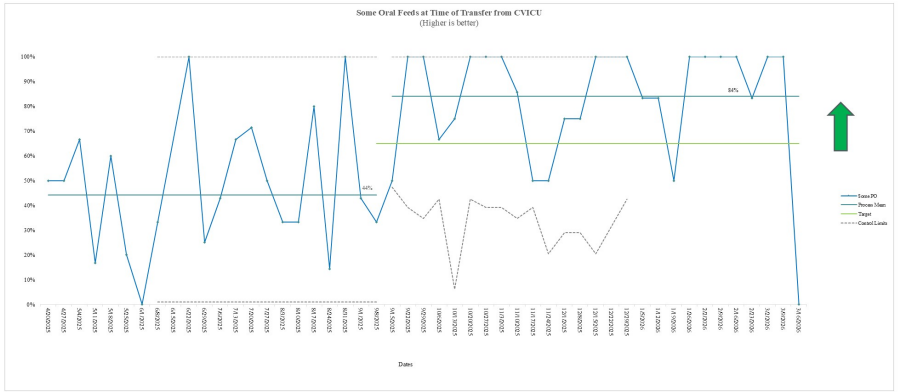
Methods



Results







- The average percentage of patients discharged home on full PO feeds increased from 28% (FY25) to 45% (FY26 to date).
- All tube feeds at discharge decreased from 48% (FY25) to 17% (FY26 to date).
- The percentage of patients transferred out of the ICU receiving some oral feeds increased from 44% (FY25) to 84% (FY26 to date).

Limitations/Barriers

- High percentage of vocal cord injury and Necrotizing Enterocolitis which delays the ability to safely PO feed
- Limited bandwidth for project time vs patient care for interdisciplinary team (i.e. Rehab Feeding Team, out-of-count nursing support, etc.)

Conclusions

- Work continues to be done to achieve and sustain the FY26 service goal. By leveraging the collaboration fostered by PAC^3 and working across inpatient units we have seen rapid improvement in our stated primary and secondary aims
- The extra lift from the Rehab Feeding Team and Nurses across both inpatient units has significantly helped us meet our goals

Future Directions

- We hope to sustain this improvement work and share with our PICU and Acute Care colleagues so they can replicate these efforts
- We have been chosen to participate with other PAC^3 sites in the Path 2 Feeding project launching this Spring

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