



DEFINE OPPORTUNITY

Background: "Discover the Pawsabilities!"

The UAH Pet Healing program is an organized and coordinated component of the UAH Volunteer Resources Department. A Canadian leader in hospital-based pet therapy and visitation, the program was established over 20 years ago and today features 23 dogs who serve over 60 hospital units. No other Canadian hospital-based program matches our size and scope. The program has two major service components, Pet Therapy and Pet Visitation. In Pet Therapy, patients are identified by healthcare professionals. Therapeutic and goal-directed interventions are then planned and carried out with one of our trained pet therapy dogs. Pet therapy dogs play an important role in the rehabilitation of many patients each year. Pet Visitation comprises the scheduled or unscheduled visits that the dogs have with patients. These visits brighten the day of patients, families, and staff members. The Pet Therapy and Pet Visitation services use a common pool of dogs. As such, all dogs in our Pet Healing program are referred to as therapy dogs. The overall goal of this program is to improve the physical, social, emotional well-being of patients during their hospital visit through interaction with our therapy dogs.

Problem Statements:

1. Anecdotally, the program provides tremendous value. However, the UAH Pet Healing program does not have a standard way to measure or track business metrics.
2. Program does not measure the clinical impact of its services. (Opportunity to be a leader)
3. Program does not have a communication strategy. This impacts program awareness and receives no formal funding support (is largely volunteer supported).
4. Program referral process is not standardized and is managed by one volunteer coordinator with no trained volunteer staff.

Goal Statements:

- By December, 2018:
- Program measures are collected, reviewed and reported quarterly
 - 80% of referrals are received via email; 50% reduction in telephone referrals and 50% increase in referrals
 - 100% of scheduled visits tracked
 - 2 volunteers are trained for this program
 - 100% of patients are asked to complete a survey post pet therapy
 - 1 grant funding application completed per year
 - 50% increase in annual donations

MANAGE CHANGE

Collaboration & Communication Strategies:

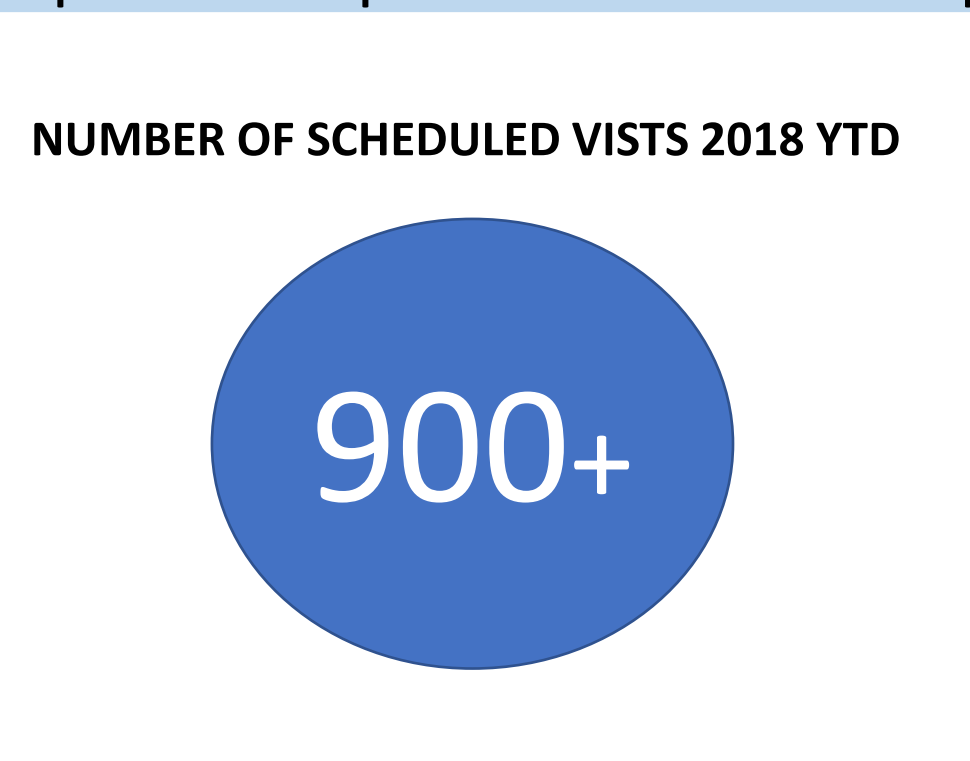
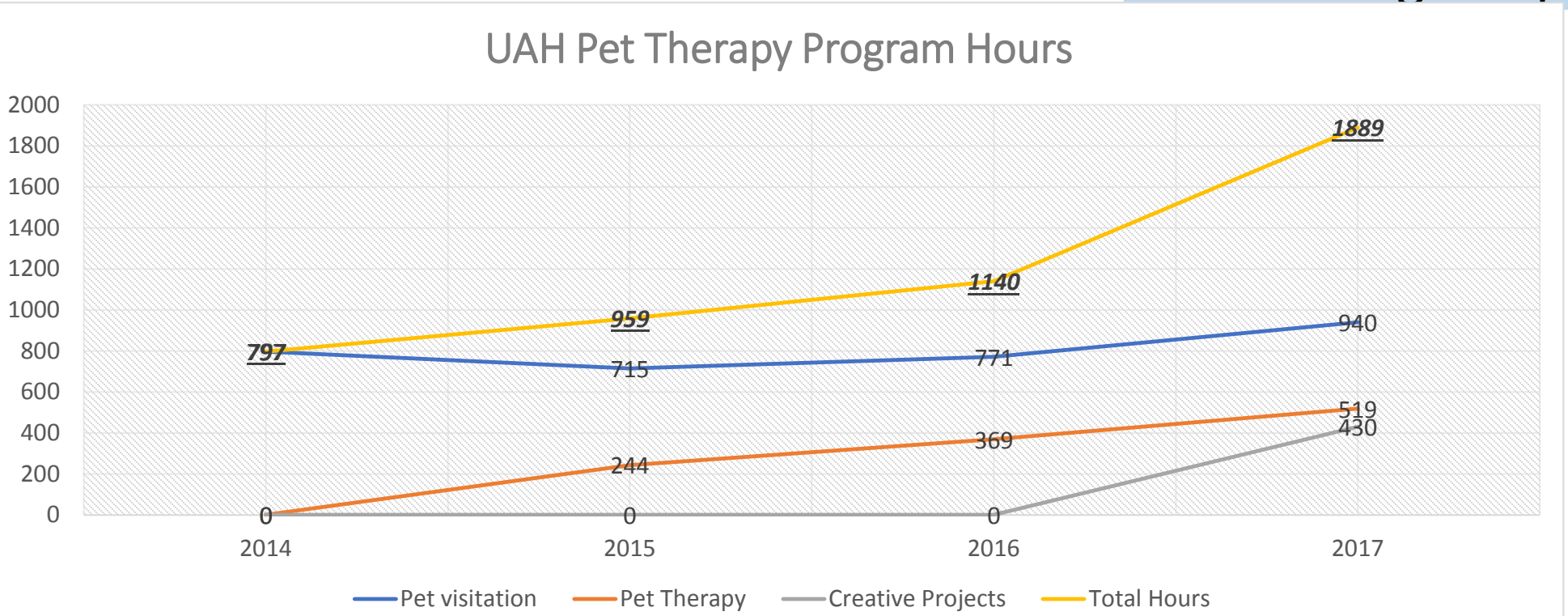
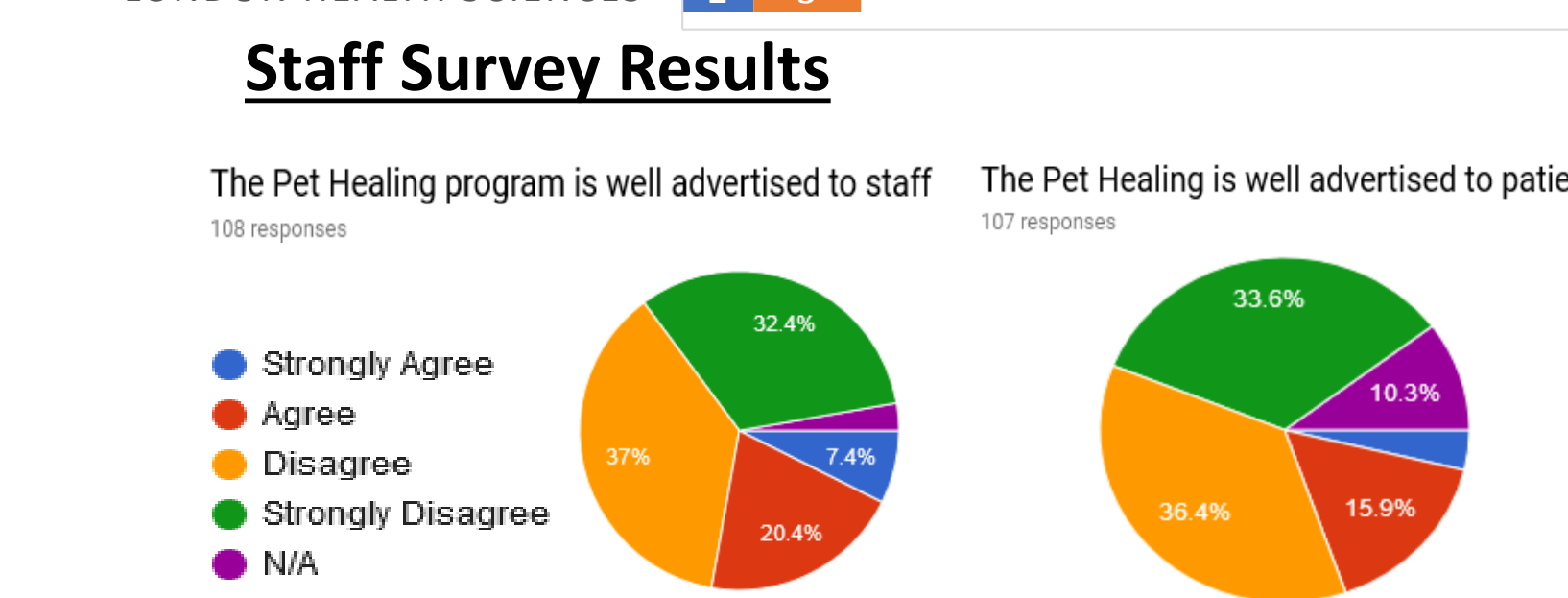
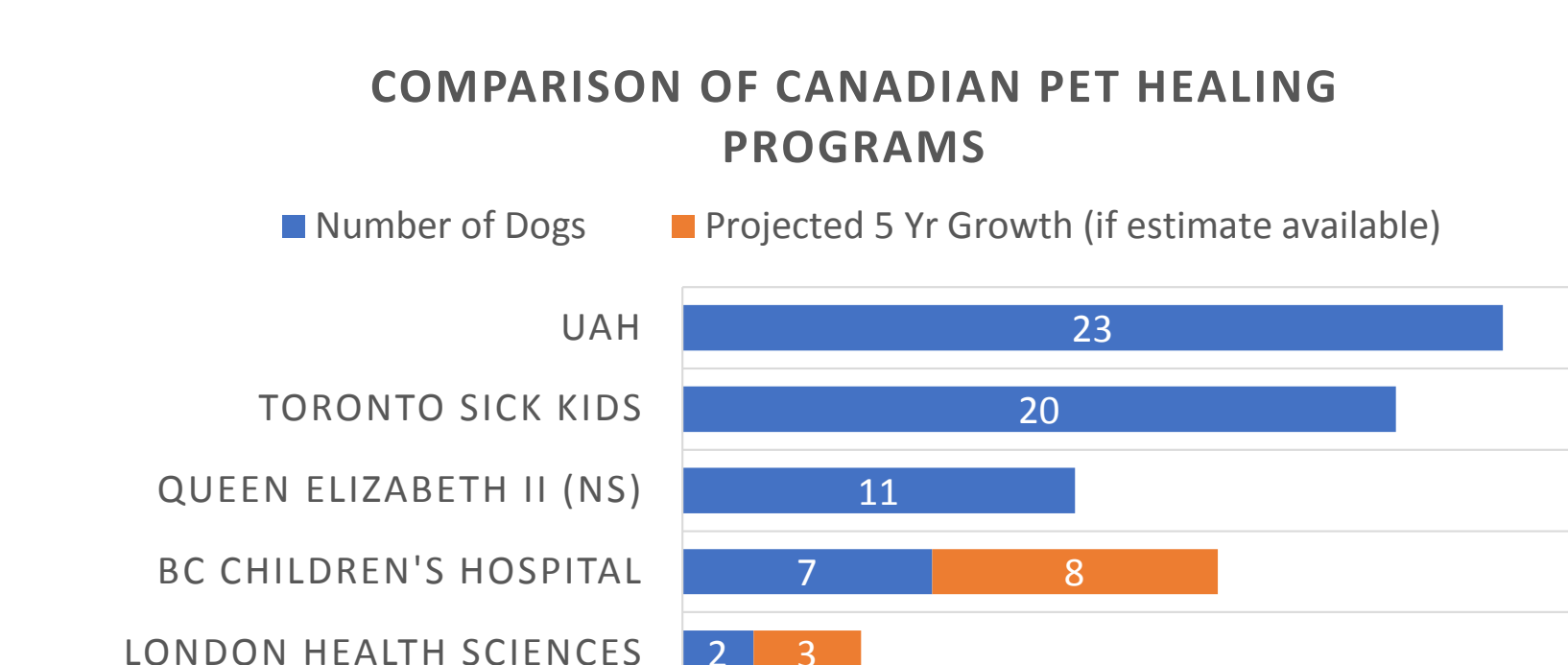
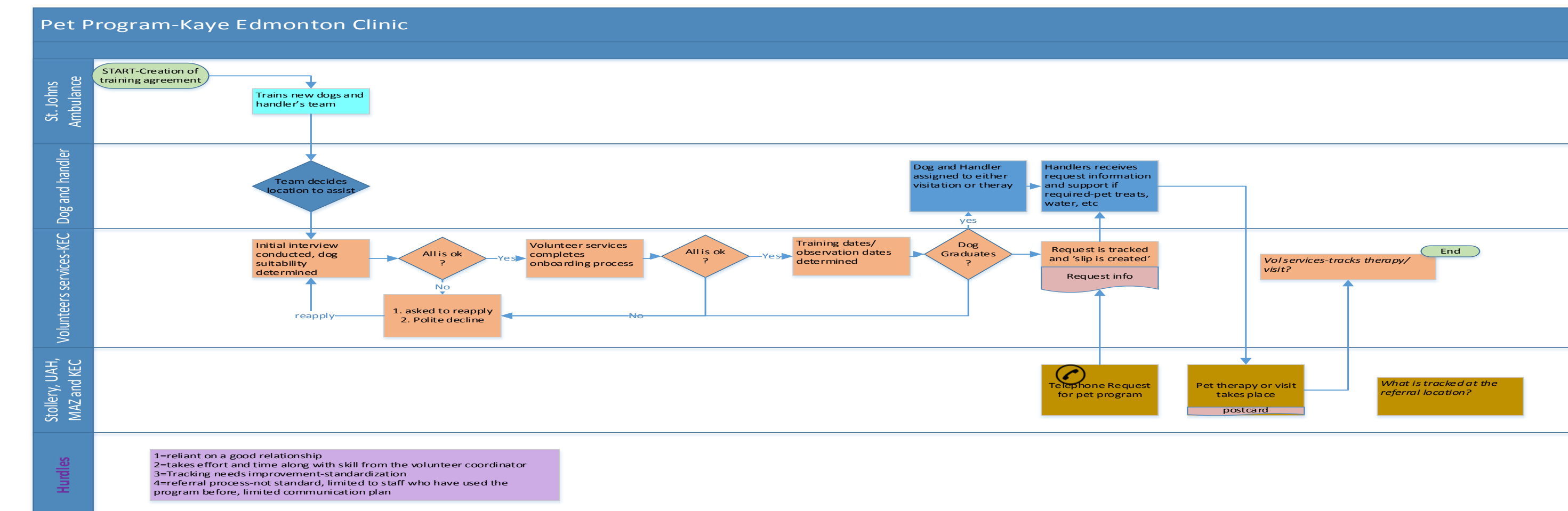
- Establish a multidisciplinary QI team including a volunteer coordinator, volunteer representatives, site operations manager, physicians & residents, UHF, and QI consultant
- Gather and listen to the opinions of stakeholders! Reach out to the super-users/champion users of the program
- Engage with AHS Communications team to determine feasible strategies for social media engagement
- Identify the program message and share it: *The overall goal of this program is to improve the physical, social, emotional well-being of patients during their hospital visit through interaction with our therapy dogs.*
- Develop a pamphlet for dissemination to support the referral process

BUILD UNDERSTANDING

Process Assessment:

Completed an in-depth current state analysis which included: Gathering statistics from past years, Identifying highest users (champions/super-users) organizing qualitative data, Gemba walk (direct observation), process mapping, SWOT analysis, stakeholder meetings, staff survey, review of available grants, a literature review of clinical studies involving pet therapy, studying other pet therapy programs to establish business indicators and benchmarks, and creation of 1) a Driver document and 2) 4 checklists/PDSA documents, for project progression.

Number of dogs in training	23
Number of Volunteers	3
Annual Volunteer Hours for pet healing program	26
Annual Time Commitment per Volunteer within Volunteer Resources	1889 hrs
Number of patient, care provider, hospital patrons interactions	Pet Therapy (Therapy) 90.22 hrs Pet Therapy (Visitation) 48.58 hrs
Number of patient impact stories and formal comments	Pet Therapy (Therapy) 90.22 hrs Pet Therapy (Visitation) 48.58 hrs
	~33,000 estimation
	10



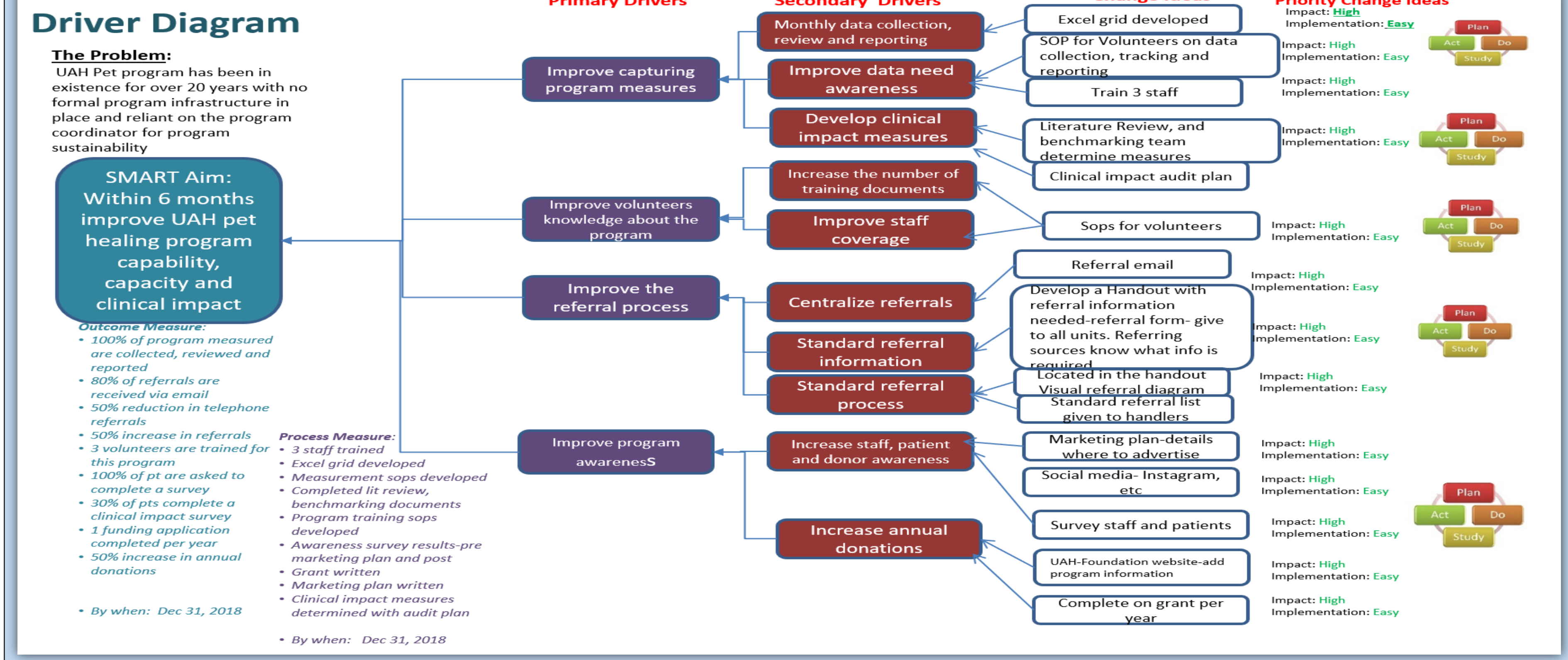
SHARE LEARNING

Lessons Learned:

- Gained valuable insight into how UAH staff view our program
- Pet program has "super-utilizers" or champions amongst the staff
- The dogs are their own best ambassadors
- Utilizing QI tools to evaluate the program determined the areas of opportunity and strength in our program.
- It is crucial that patient and staff experience be understood for the long-term success
- **Dog Handler:** "As Jasper lays on the palliative patient's chest; the patient sleeps. It was so sad to watch but the patient's heartbeat actually went down when Jasper was snuggling with her. The patients parents were very touched by this visit!"

ACT TO IMPROVE

Improvement Selection & Implementation Plan: Timeframe: Nov. 2017-Dec. 2018



Results

1. Current state analysis completed, creation of SOPs for the program 90% complete
2. Clinical impact project started, literature review & ethics completed
3. 2 new volunteers trained for program administration
4. Communication plan created and currently being implemented (focus on raising program awareness and referral process)
5. 3 Grant applications submitted in 2018 (winners of the 2018 Field Law Community Grant)
6. Internal fund raising target for 2018- 100% met
7. New email created for patient referral: pet.program@ahs.ca
8. 100% of referrals now captured in Excel document (available for data analysis)
9. Referral form developed
10. Pet Program pamphlet and poster with referral process developed and provided to hospital units

SUSTAIN RESULTS: "Dogs that Heal"

Reinforce Ownership, Measurement, & Continuous Improvement:

The volunteer team will keep checklists for each problem during PDSA 1 and assign a responsible party for completion (see checklist for problem 1 on the right). Checklists will be revisited at QI quarterly meetings. New checklists will be created for subsequent PDSAs. In regards to fundraising, we are now working with the UHF.

WHAT	WHO	IN PROGRESS	DONE
Determine the key business metrics the UAH Pet Therapy program should track	Stephan, Pam	🐾	🐾
Organize Stollery therapy dog, therapy dog (massage assistance), and visitation dog visits for QI consultation (review process and potential challenges for physician partners)	Stephan, Pam	🐾	🐾
DEEMBA WALK	Stephan, Pam	🐾	🐾
Create an Excel tool to measure business metrics	Stephan, Pam	🐾	🐾
*Task on day of Gemba Walk, but ready to deploy	Stephan, Pam	🐾	🐾
Create patient, staff, and volunteer surveys. (Online and paper formats)	Karen-Stephan, Pam	🐾	🐾
Assign volunteers to data entry of survey information	Stephan, Pam	🐾	🐾
Create job aid for teaching volunteers about the surveys	Stephan, Pam	🐾	🐾
Track business metrics over the course of 2018	Stephan, Pam	🐾	🐾
Review other major Pet Therapy Programs	Stephan, Pam	🐾	🐾
Make a quality board area to post results and project details for the staff	Stephan, Pam	🐾	🐾



Why this Research Matters

To Patients
Patients and family members have anecdotally reported the importance of this program in reducing stress and anxiety during their hospital stay. This QI project will help to officially capture the clinical benefits of pet therapy and the program's impact on patients' hospital experience.

To Albertans
The Pet Healing program has tremendous potential to improve the hospital experience of Albertans. Each year our therapy teams interact with over 30,000 patients at the UAH hospitals and provide approximately 900 in-room visits.

To the Healthcare System
The Pet Healing program represents a low-cost, high yield therapeutic intervention for clinicians and administrators. In addition to its impact on patients, staff have reported the program's impact on improving their well-being.

