

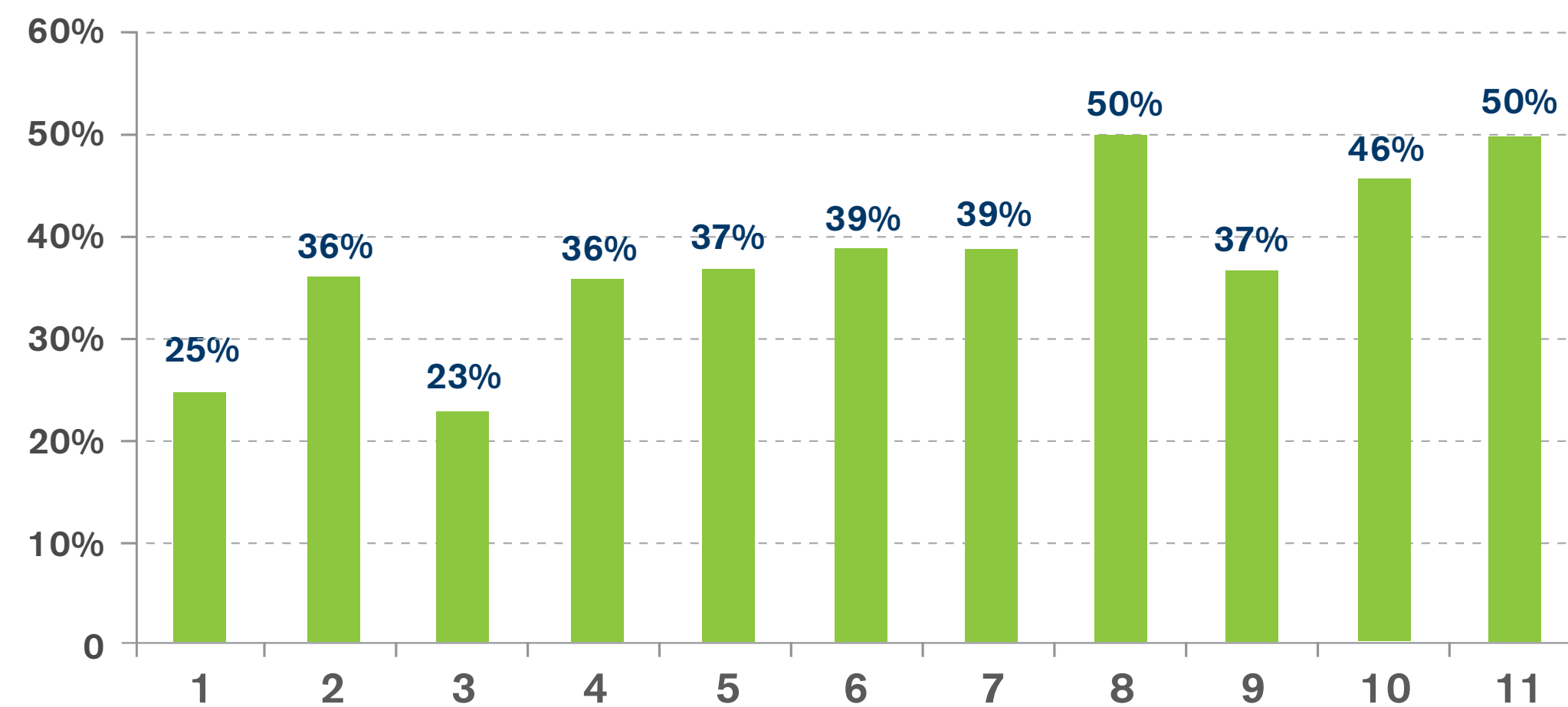
Improving Quality in Serious Illness Conversations and Advance Care Planning

WellMed Medical Management, San Antonio, TX

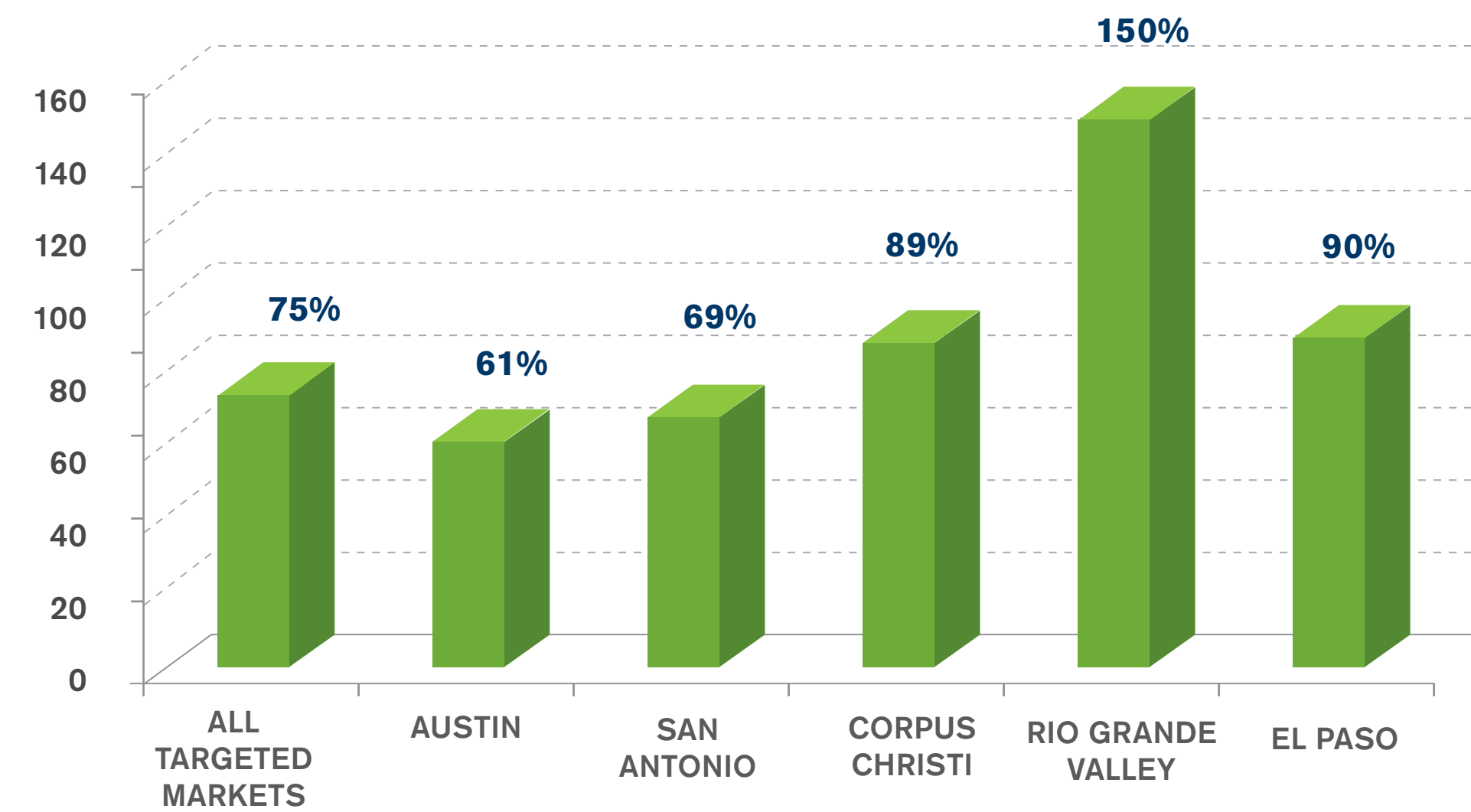
Introduction/Background

In early 2017, WellMed, a healthcare delivery network serving more than 310,000 patients in TX and FL, noted that only 16% of our most seriously ill patients had documented advance care planning. Anecdotally, providers expressed a desire to increase their confidence in eliciting goals of care with seriously ill patients. WellMed leadership identified this as an opportunity to improve goal concordant care and advance care planning completion. We initiated an organization-wide effort to train our providers and nursing staff on conducting effective serious illness and advance care planning conversations utilizing the Optum Goals of Care and Responding with Empathy methodology, which is based on the Serious Illness Conversation platform from Ariadne Labs, Inc. (Bernacki and Block, 2014). This methodology represents a systematic scalable program to improve conversations aimed at eliciting goals of patients with serious illness.

Self-reported Improvement after Training



6 Month Increase in Advance Care Planning



1. Discuss the patient's understanding of severity and trajectory of their serious illness
2. Elicit preferences related to how much patients want to know about their illness
3. Discuss concerns about the future/prognosis with the patient or family
4. Talk about the patient's values related to goals of care
5. Help patients consider the pros and cons or trade-offs related to treatments and serious illness
6. Include the patient's family's perspective and influence in healthcare decision making
7. Explore the patient's emotions related to serious illness
8. Respond to the patient's emotions related to serious illness
9. Engage patients in the process of advance care planning
10. Translate patient goals and preferences in to an actionable plan of care
11. Document a values-based (vs intervention-focused) goals of care conversation in the medical record

Results & Implications

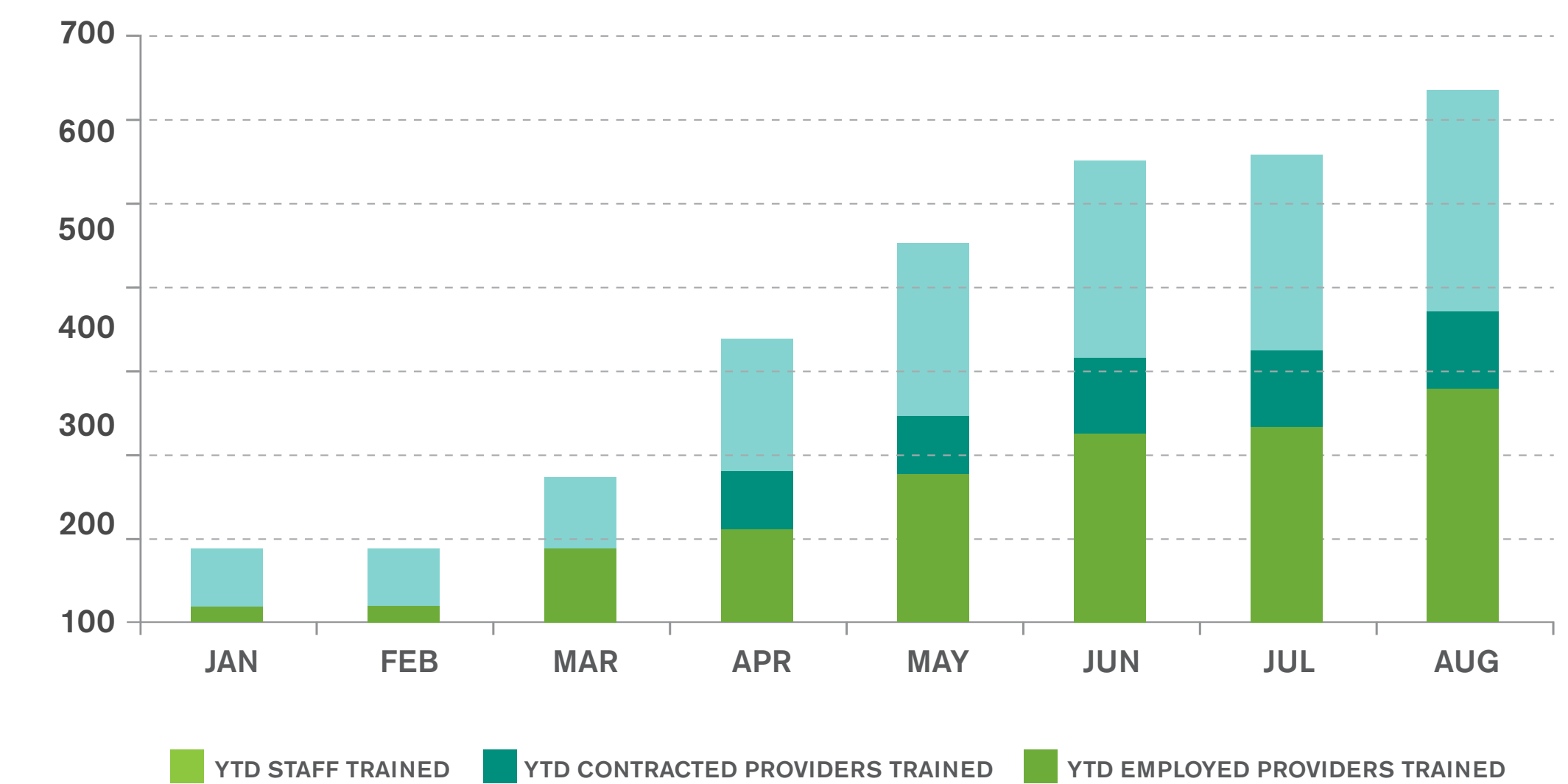
Results: Attendees reported improved knowledge and confidence in responding to their patient's emotions related to serious illness by as much as 50% and their ability to document a values based (vs intervention-focused) goals of care conversation by as much as 50%. With 95% of clinicians trained in the targeted markets, advance care planning documentation for the most seriously ill patients has increased by as much as 150% over baseline since January 2017. An unanticipated benefit we have found is that by using local market Palliative providers and staff to assist the core facilitators to provide the training in each market, the relationship between providers and staff across the continuum of care has been strengthened, potentially further benefitting our patients.

Implications: WellMed will continue to refine and implement this educational program to improve the skills of clinicians related to serious illness conversations with our most seriously ill patients. Additionally we are building an advance care planning program, including the recent hiring of an advance care planning coordinator, to develop an organizational culture of quality and compassionate advance care planning for all patients, regardless of health status. We believe that our work will ensure all patients have the opportunity to express their desires regarding their goals of care at the end of life and that our efforts will result in increased goal concordant care.

Project Description

In partnership with Denise Stahl, MSN, FPCN of Optum, Inc., an educational program was designed to improve the quality and timeliness of serious illness conversations and advance care planning documentation. Our team was provided leadership support to schedule every primary care provider into a 4 hour training session which includes didactic training in empathetic communication to elicit goals of care, advance care planning documentation, demonstration of a serious illness conversation using the Serious Illness Conversation Guide, and experiential learning in small group role play using the guide with trained facilitators. Additionally providers were given clinic-level data showing their rate of hospice usage and the LOS of their patients on hospice, to hopefully improve hospice usage and LOS.

2017 Serious Illness Training at WellMed



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