

Expanding Patient Care Services to Solid Organ Transplant Patients by Establishing an Accredited Health System

Specialty Pharmacy

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Background

For the third straight year, in 2022, the Solid Organ Transplant (SOT) program at UT Southwestern (UTSW) completed more transplants than any program in North Texas.

Ensuring consistent patient access to immunosuppressive medications, maintaining adherence to their prescribed regimens, and monitoring for adverse effects and complications are essential components of life-long pharmacy care for SOT recipients.

With a health-system specialty pharmacy, UTSW can add to the portfolio of services offered to its patients. Specialty pharmacies are best suited to provide care to patients with complex disease states. UTSW Specialty Pharmacy has implemented a patient management program with individualized clinical services for SOT patients.



Figure 1 UTSW Specialty Pharmacy Patient Management Program Components

The Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC) is a nationally-recognized accreditation organization with coveted deeming authority designation from Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). It provides comprehensive patient care standards for Specialty Pharmacy Services.

Aim

To expand patient care services for UT Southwestern solid organ transplant patients beyond hospital discharge through an accredited health system specialty pharmacy

Intervention

Implement a patient management program for SOT patients at UTSW Specialty Pharmacy that meets Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC) Patient Care standards.

Analysis of Results

New Patient Services	Retained Patient Services	Expansion of Services
Initial Care Plan	Monthly Refill Calls Follow-Up Care Plan	Growth in Number of Employees

Figure 2 Outcomes Measured for Success of Patient Management Program

New patient care services include formulation of an initial care plan. The care plan addresses patient counseling, drug education, medication adherence, management of adverse effects, goal setting and recognition of post-transplant complications. The number of patients enrolled in New Patient services averaged 72 new referrals per Quarter, with a 20 % decline between Q4 2021 and Q4 2022*. See Figure 3.

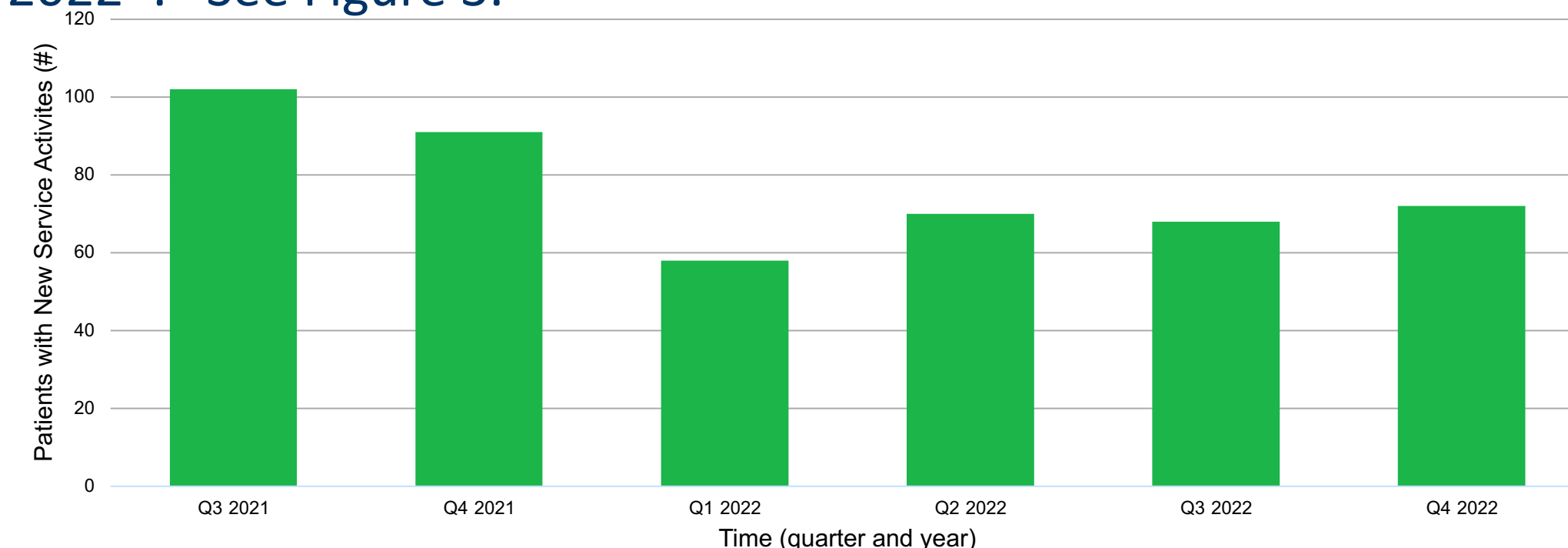


Figure 3 New patient care services: Number of Patients with Initial Care Plans by quarter*

Retained patient services are measured by number of patients with monthly refill reminders and follow-up care plan assessments. During refill calls, patients complete pill counts of their immunosuppressants, confirm current dosing directions to ensure sufficient supply, and review all other post-transplant medications for medication synchronization. As part of follow-up care plans, pharmacists address quality of life scores, patient satisfaction, and progression toward therapy goals. While new enrollments declined, our patient retention numbers increased. Refill calls scheduled and completed increased by 24% and follow-up care plans increased by 36% between Q4 2021 and Q4 2022*. See Figure 4.

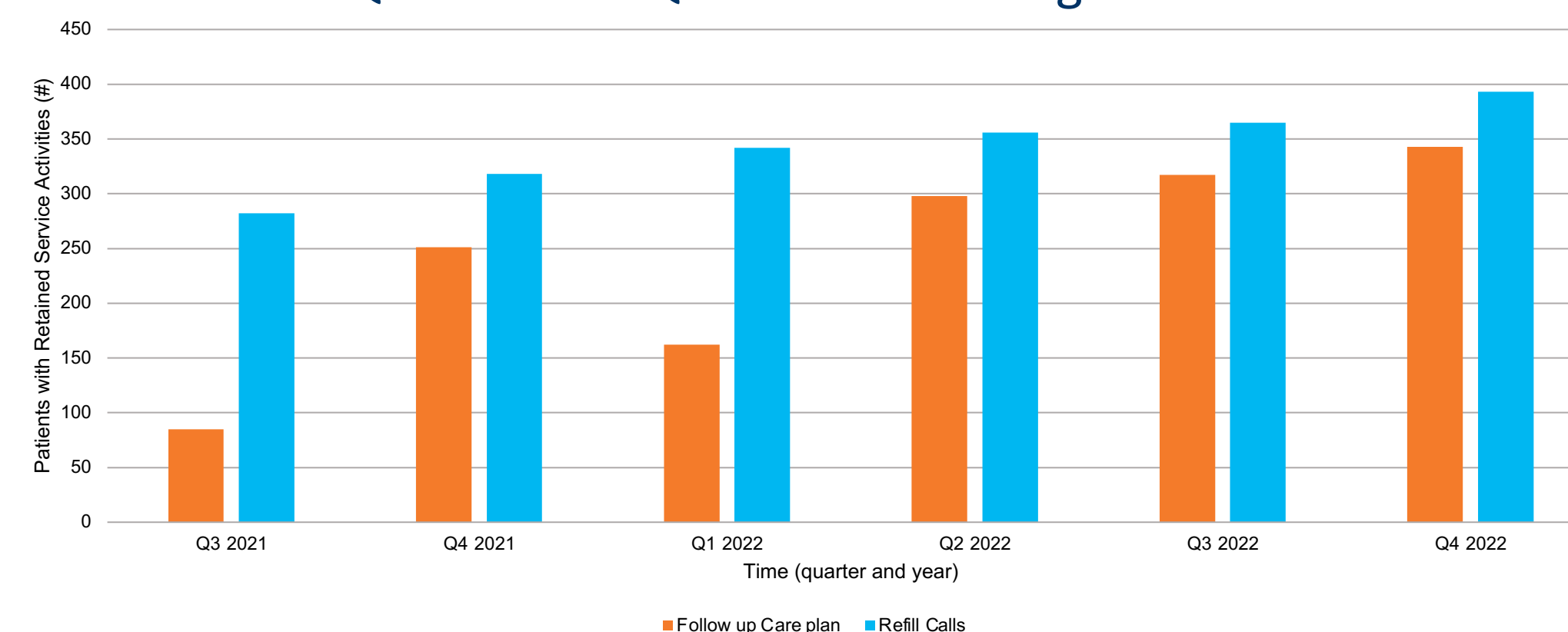


Figure 4 Retained patient services: Number of Patients with Follow-up Care Plans by quarter*

Analysis of Results, continued

Expansion of services: Implementing patient management programs and providing clinical services enhances quality of care to patients beyond hospital discharge and requires growth in pharmacist and pharmacy technician staff. To accommodate the increase in the transplant patient population served at UTSW Specialty pharmacy we increased our pharmacy staff from 10 employees to 16 employees between 2021 and 2022. See Figure 5

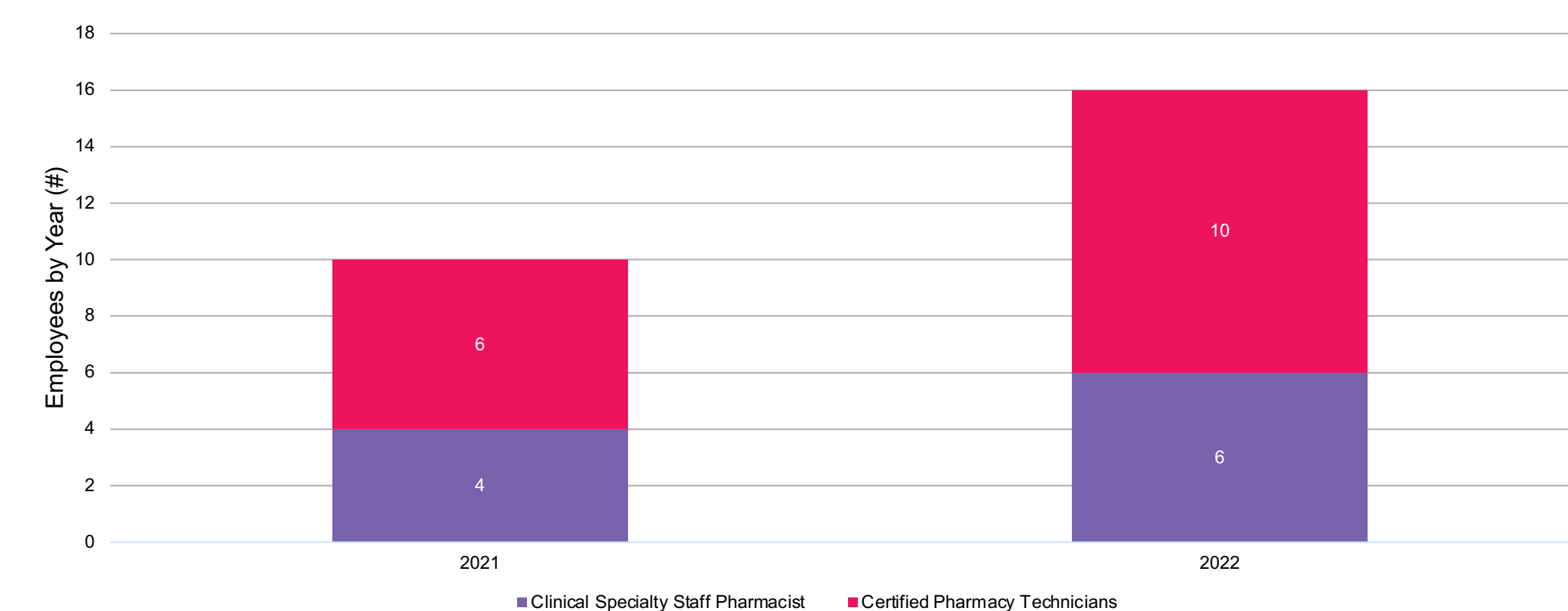


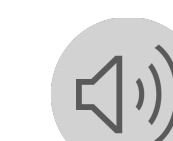
Figure 5 Expansion of services UT Southwestern Specialty Staff by role by year

Accreditation as a health-system specialty pharmacy: UTSW Specialty Pharmacy obtained ACHC accreditation in 2019. Through demonstrating high-quality patient care in transplant and other specialty conditions, successful re-accreditation was granted in 2022.



Conclusions and Future Directions

The UTSW Specialty Pharmacy has successfully expanded patient care services for SOT patients with demonstrated growth over time. ACHC accreditation has allowed us to have a robust patient care program to ensure patients received the follow up required for post-transplant care within the health system. The vision for the future is to be able to provide specialty pharmacy services to all patients who receive a solid organ transplant at UTSW. With this goal in mind, UTSW Specialty Pharmacy is looking to expand the geographic scope and patient access through obtaining licensure beyond currently-licensed states (TX, NM) and by increasing the number of pharmacy payer relationships. Implementation and expansion of high-quality patient care services will be instrumental in realizing this vision.



*Q3 2021 numbers were excluded from analysis: In June 2021, the specialty pharmacy transitioned to a new patient management software system, requiring new initial care plans to be created for existing patients and a reduction in refill calls and follow up care plans for existing patients.