

Community-Clinical Linkages: Referral System between UT Health SA Physicians to Metro Health Programs

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Introduction

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) calls to action a movement towards further integrating primary care and public health.¹ One approach for achieving this is establishing and strengthening Community Clinical Linkages (CCL) between health care systems, community organizations and groups, and health departments.² CCL have been shown to improve patients' chronic-disease management and quality of life by increasing access to needed services and health-promoting resources.² In response to the AAFP and given the shown benefits to CCL, UT Health San Antonio (UTHSA) has partnered with the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (Metrohealth) to provide and increase patient access to health programs focused on tobacco cessation, diabetes management, and diabetes prevention.

Objective

To increase patients' access to community health programs through an efficient referral system by enhancing collaboration between Metrohealth & UTHSA.

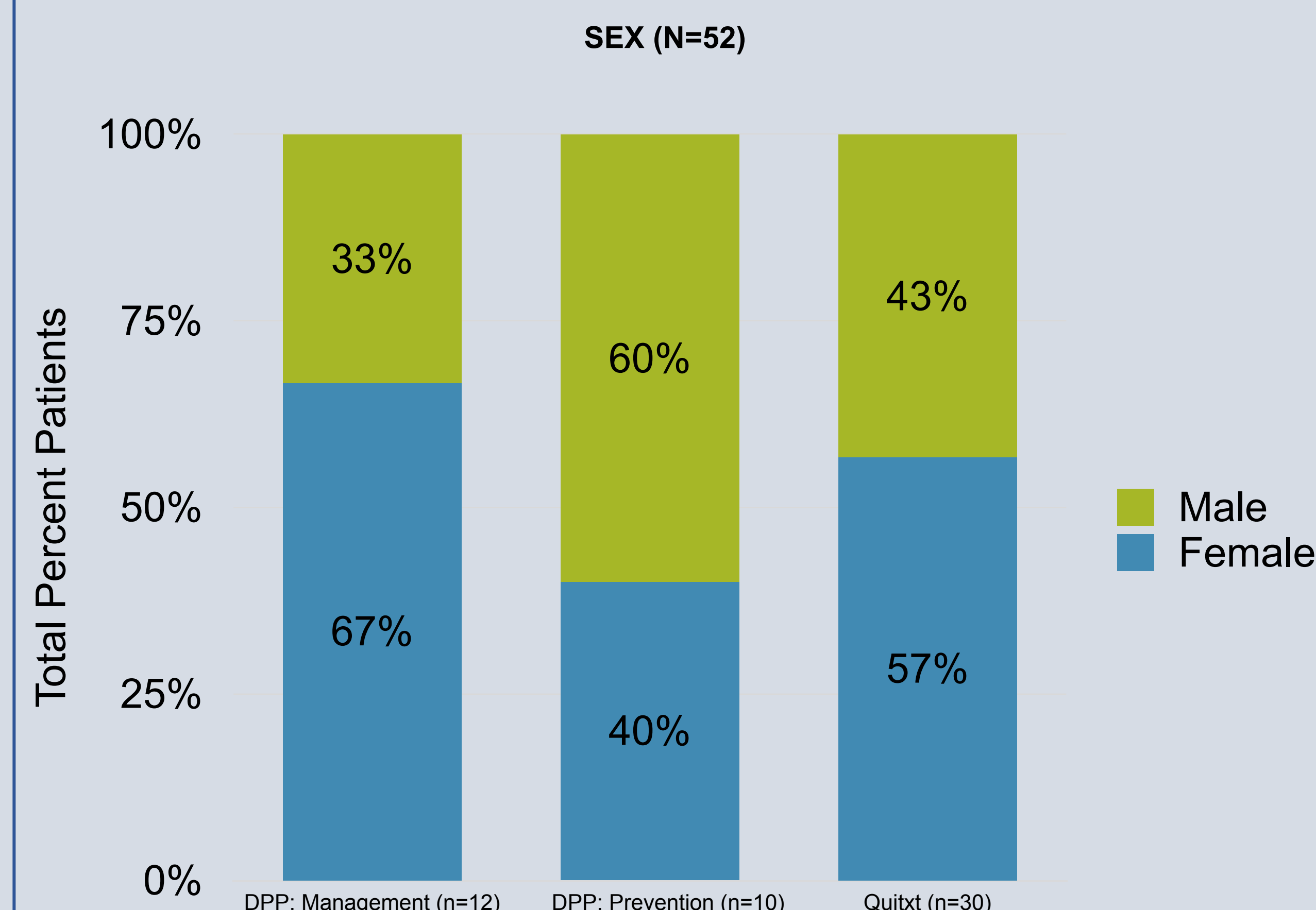
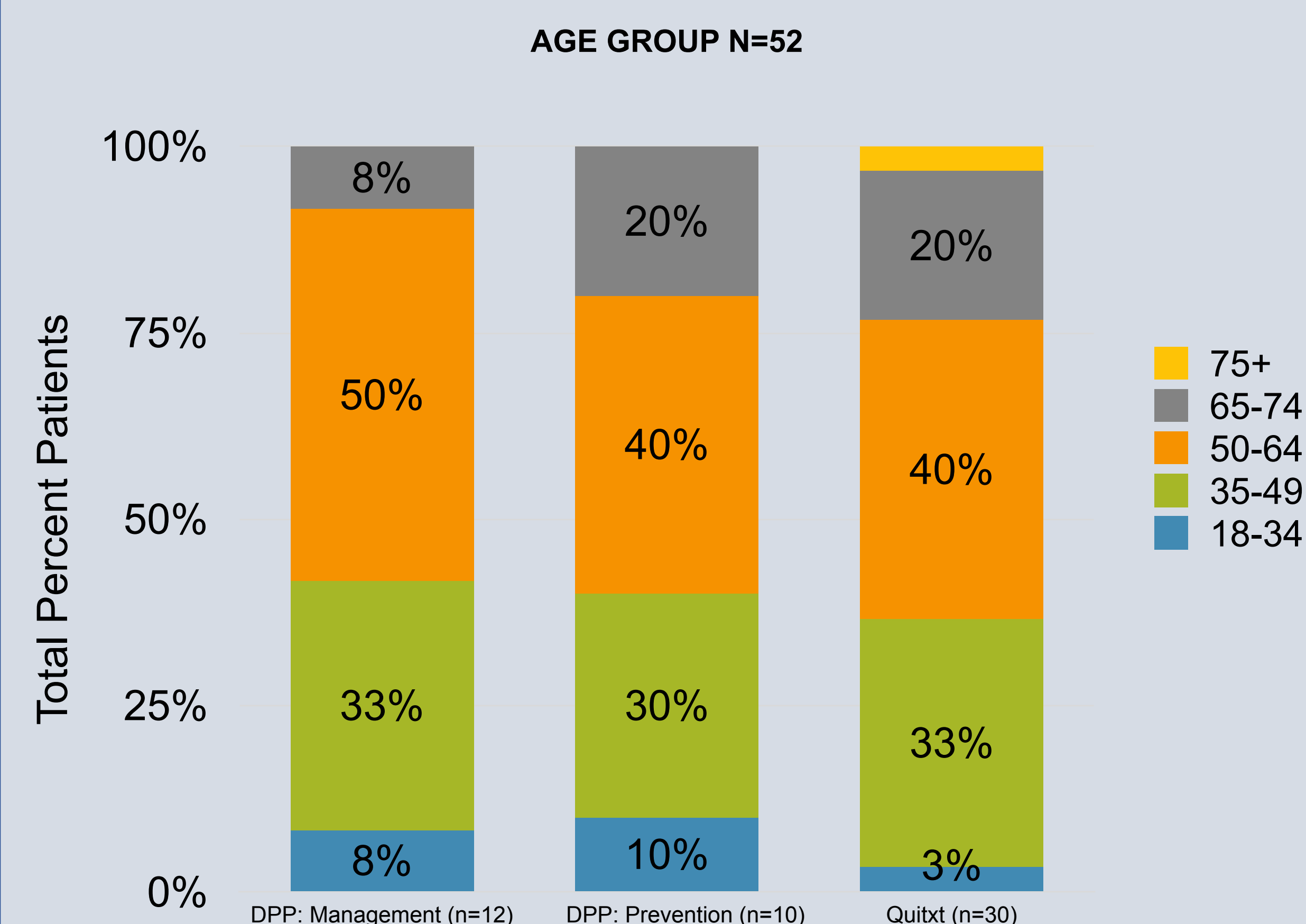
Design and Methods

Activities

- Establishment of CCL partnership between Metro Health & UTHSA
- Recruitment of 3 faculty physician champions and 12 resident physician champions to implement and promote referrals for Quitxt smoking cessation, Diabetes Prevention and Diabetes Management Programs
- Biannual stakeholder meetings between Metro health and UTHSA to discuss partnership, shared goals, and opportunities for improvement and scaling.
- Monthly, one-hour UTHSA team meetings to discuss CCL program facilitators, barriers, and solutions for improving CCL implementation.
- Ongoing Champion conversations to identify opportunities to educate and update colleagues on CCL programs during:
 - Clinical (TEAMS) monthly meetings
 - Didactic sessions
 - Morning huddles
 - Informal training sessions within the clinic
- Daily review and management of program referrals and patient outreach.

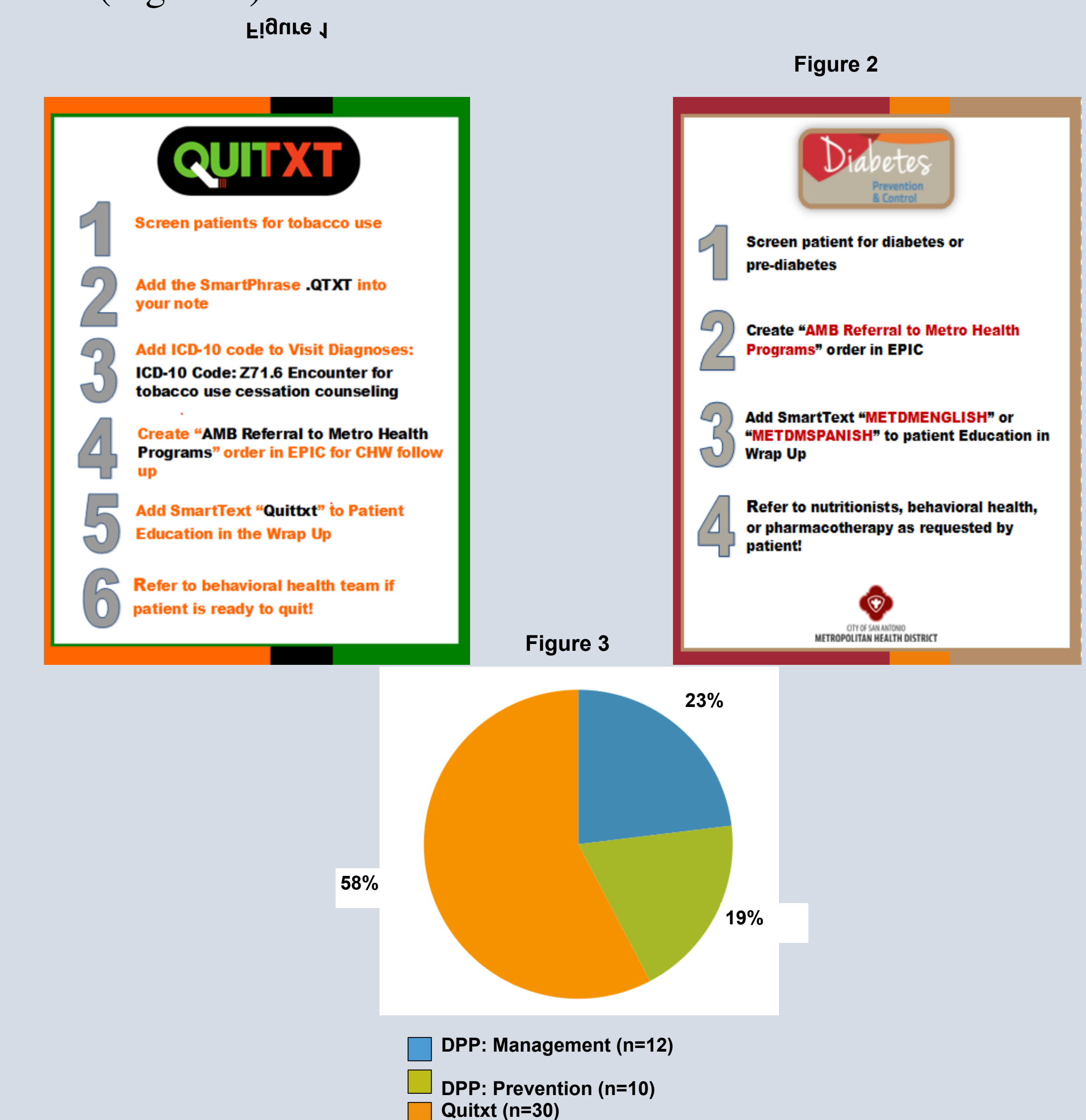
Participants

Patients age 18 & above that are established at the FHC



Results

- Creation of CCL referral protocols (Figure 1 and 2).
- Establishment of an EPIC referral order in EPIC electronically health system.
- Between January 2022 to June 2022, 52 CCL referrals have been created (Figure 3).



Conclusion

The findings from this study will help further expand the CCL efforts to include additional Metro Health programs accepting referrals and additional clinics offering programs to their patients, ensuring a strong and sustainable referral system. Additionally, the data collected will continue to be used for continued process improvement in clinic.

References

1. Integration of Primary Care and Public Health (position paper). AAFP Home. (2019, December 12). Retrieved June 20, 2022, from <https://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/integration-primary-care.html>
2. Community-clinical linkages. Minnesota Department of Health. (n.d.). Retrieved June 20, 2022, from <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/healthcarelinks/index.html>

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