Part 2: SMART Goals + PI Tools = Better Outcomes

Billie Delauder, DNP, MSN/RN, CPHQ, CPPS, HACP-CMS, CFPS
KHA Quality Team
January 2026

QUALITY KENTUCKY
Health Care Quality Improvement Continues

Kentucky Hospital Association

What Are S.M.A.R.T Goals?

QUALITY KENTUCKY
Health Care Quality Improvement Continues

- ✓Specific
- ✓Measurable
- ✓Achievable
- ✓Relevant
- ✓Time-bound

Kentucky Hospital Association

SMART Goals Provide the “Direction”

SMART Goals Provide the Direction

- They define **what success looks like** in measurable, time-bound terms.
  - Example: *“Reduce patient falls by 15% from CY 2025 within 6 months.”*
- This clarity ensures everyone knows the target and timeline.

PI Tools Provide the "How"

QUALITY KENTUCKY
Health Care Quality Improvement Continues

- Flowcharts
- Pareto Charts
- Control Charts
- Fishbone (Ishikawa)
- Dashboards

PI Tools Provide the "How"

QUALITY KENTUCKY
Health Care Quality Improvement Continues

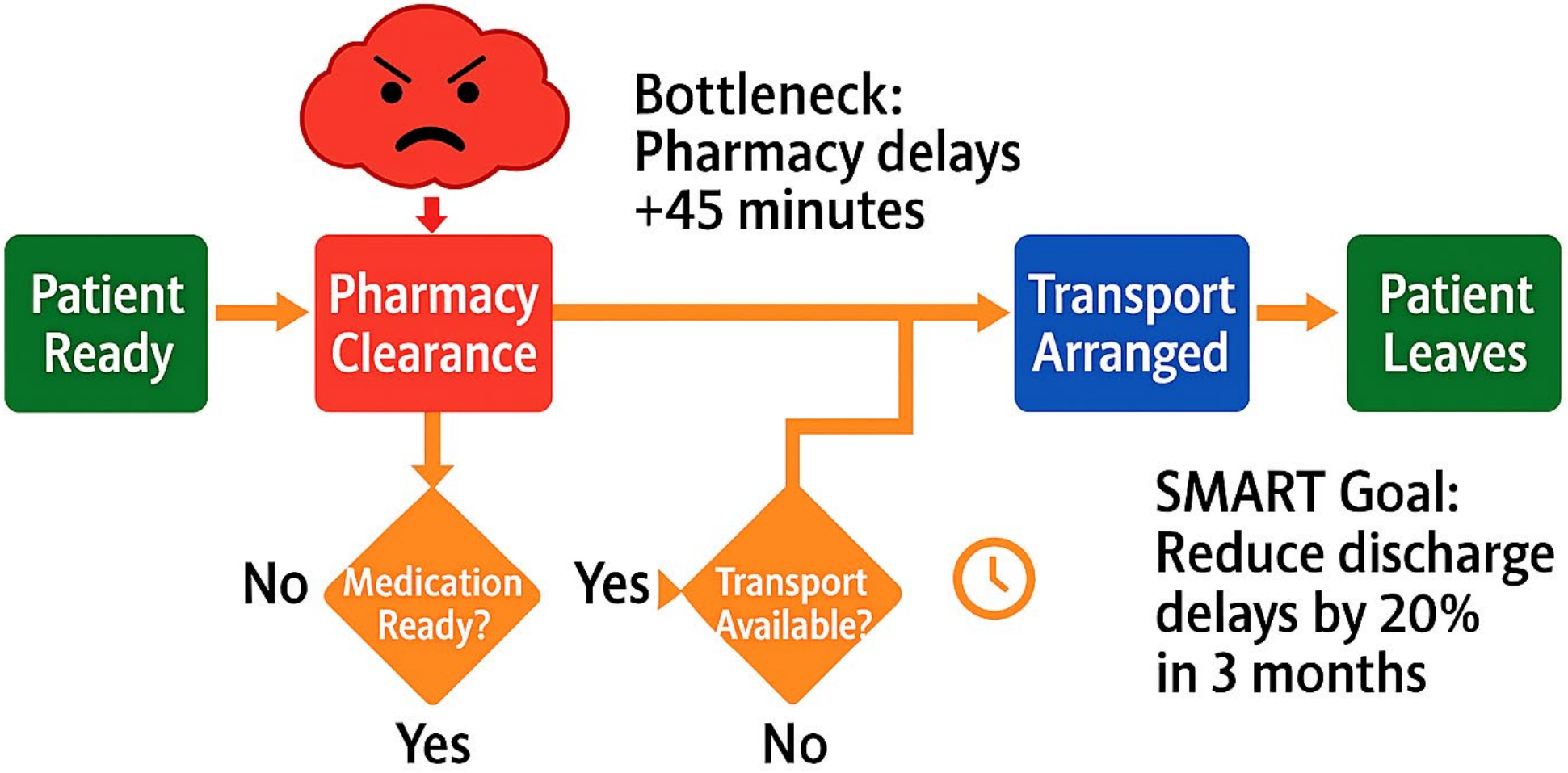
For Example:

- **Flow Charts**: Map the current process (e.g., patient transfer steps) to identify where risks occur.
- **Pareto Charts**: Analyze data to find the biggest contributors (e.g., 80% of falls happen in bathrooms).

These tools turn raw data into actionable insights.

Kentucky Hospital Association

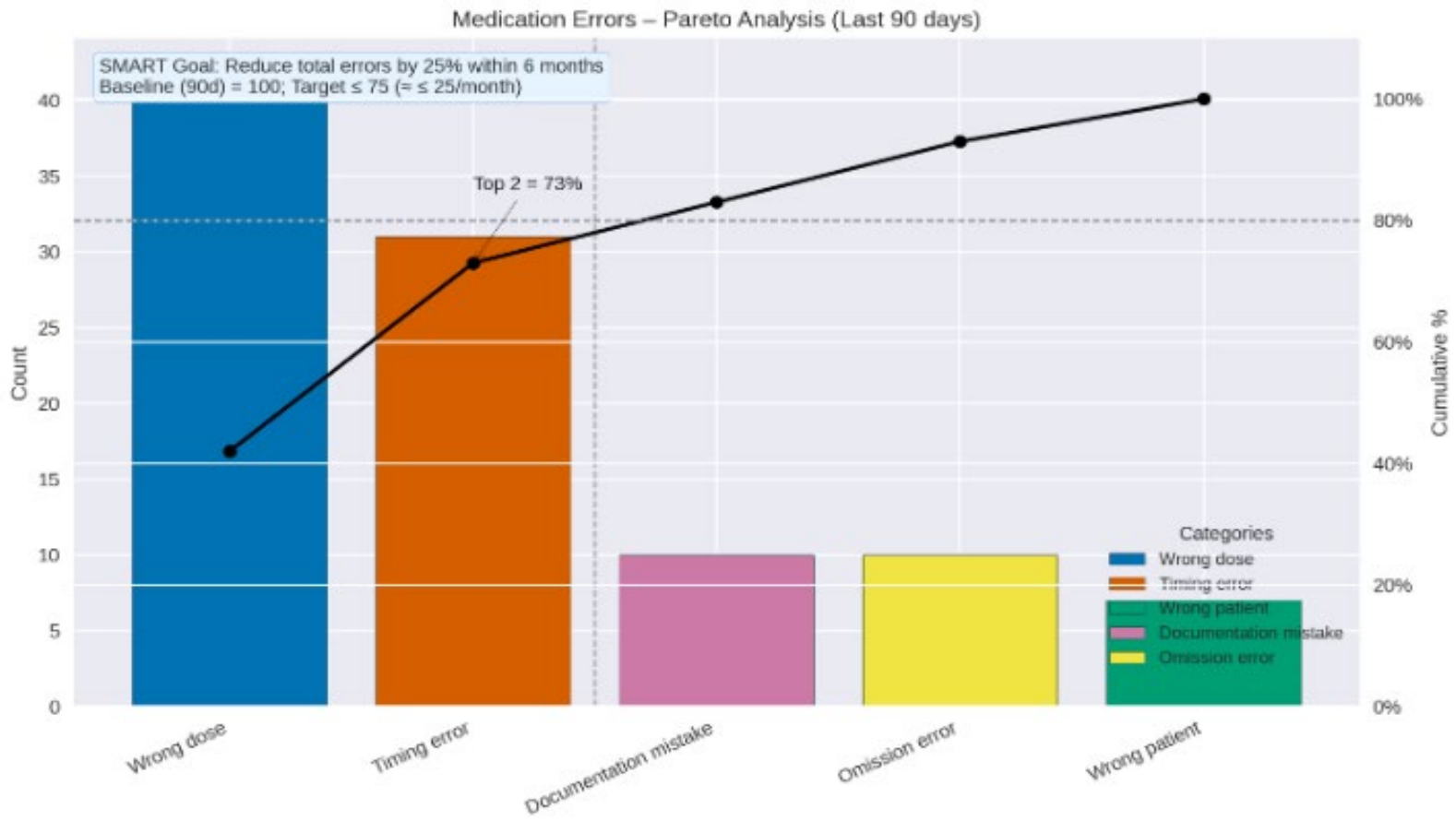
Reducing Patient Discharge Delays



Quick Recap…Flow Chart (Flow Map)

- **SMART Goal:** *Reduce patient discharge delays by 20% within 3 months.*
- **Scenario:** Current discharge process involves multiple handoffs: physician sign-off/patient ready → pharmacy → transport→ patient education/patient leaves.
- **Flowchart Use:**
  - Map the entire discharge workflow.
  - Identify redundant steps (e.g., waiting for transport after pharmacy clearance).
  - Reveal bottlenecks like delays in medication reconciliation.
- **Outcome:** Streamline steps, assign responsibilities, and implement electronic alerts to speed up discharge.

Pareto Charts



Quick Recap…Pareto Charts

QUALITY KENTUCKY
Health Care Quality Improvement Continues

SMART Goal: Decrease medication errors by 25% in 6 months.
Scenario: Collect data on error types: wrong dose, wrong patient, timing errors, documentation mistakes.

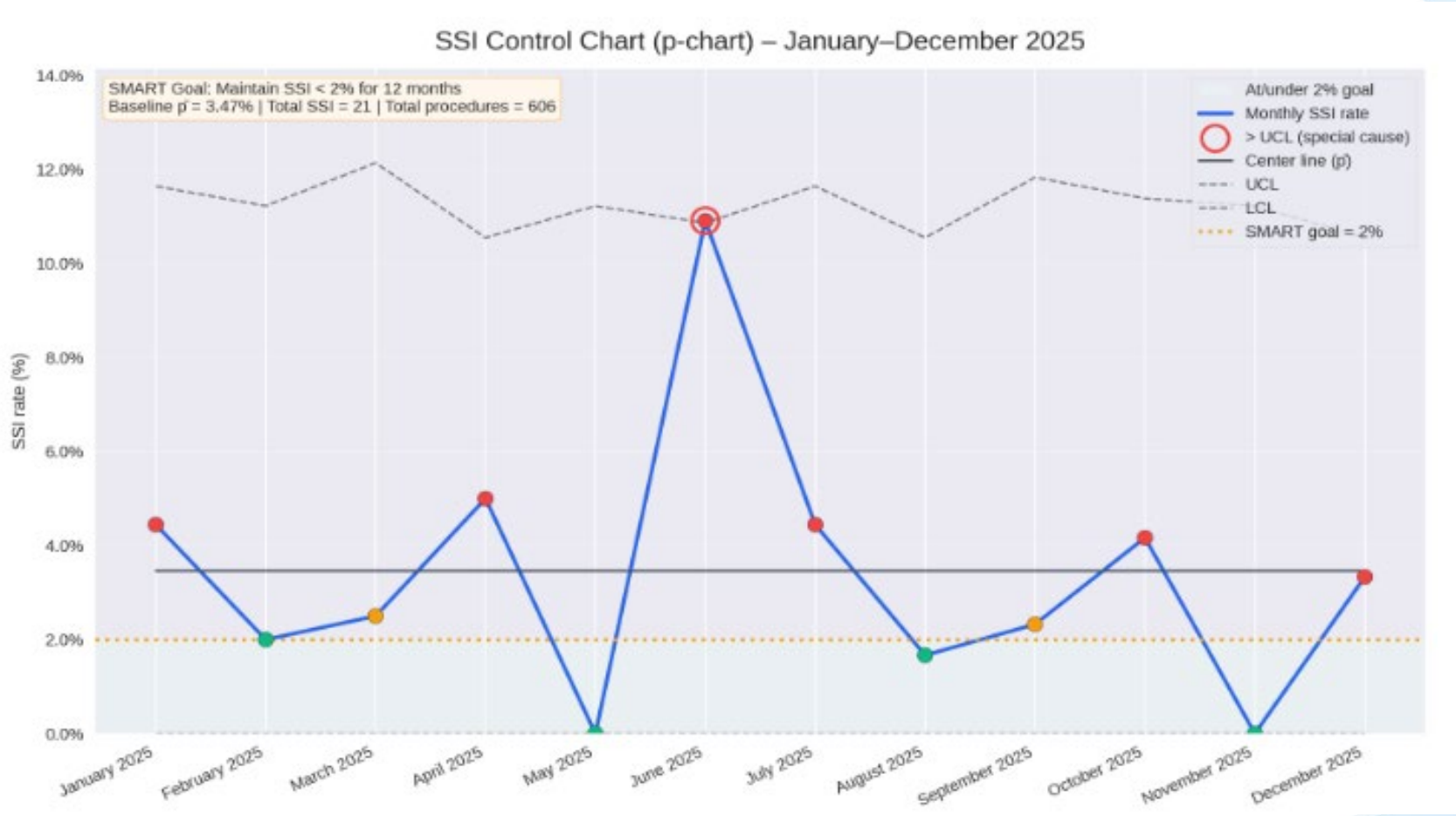
Pareto Chart Use:

- Collect error data by type and frequency.
- To identify which errors contribute most to the problem.

Outcome: Focus interventions on these 2 high-impact areas

Example: Control Chart

SMART GOAL: Maintain SSI Rates Below 2% for Next 12 Months.



Quick Recap…Control Chart

QUALITY KENTUCKY
Health Care Quality Improvement Continues

SMART Goal: *Maintain surgical site infection (SSI) rates below 2% for the next 12 months.*

Scenario: Monthly SSI rates fluctuate, and leadership needs to distinguish normal variation from concerning trends.

Control Chart Use:

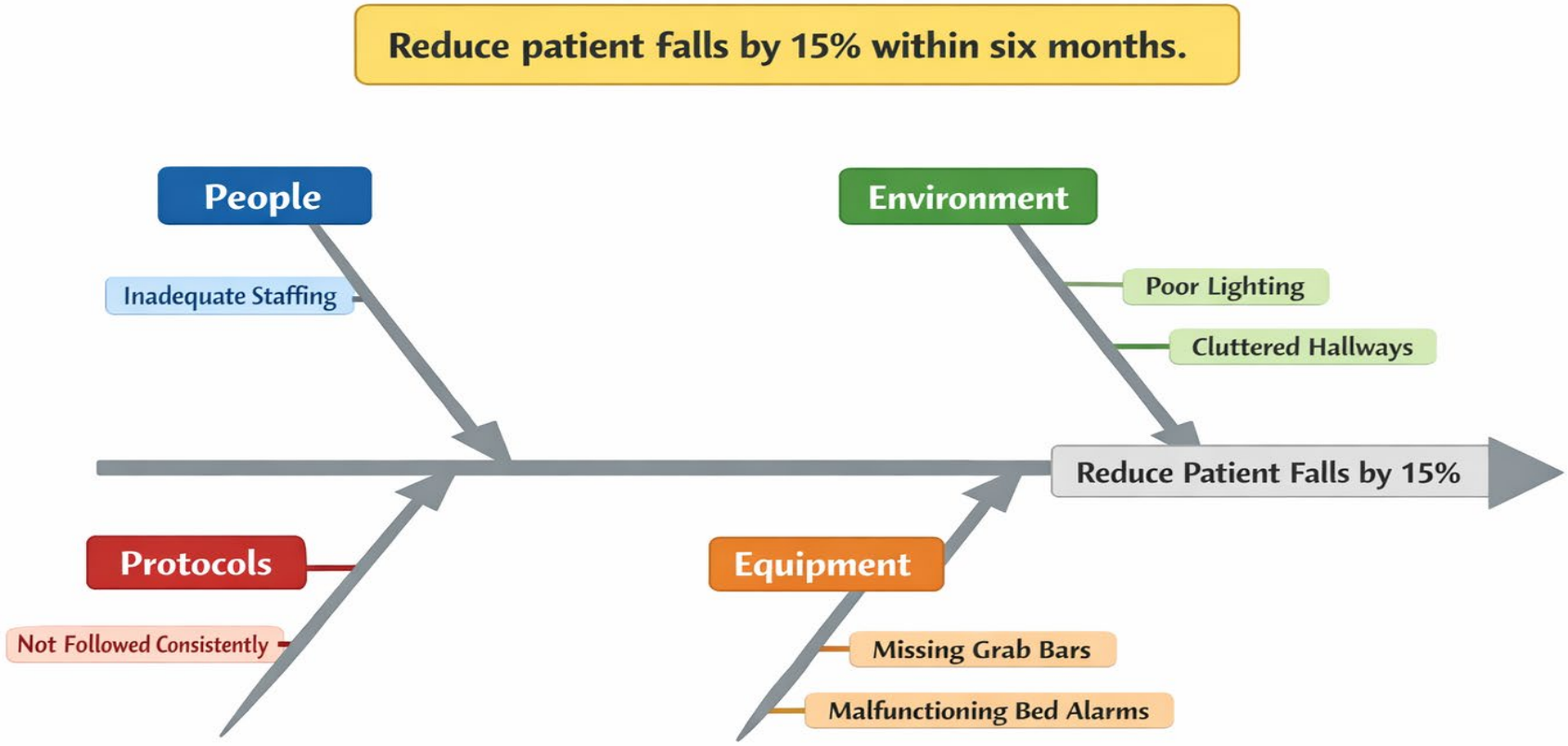
Plot SSI rates over time against upper and lower control limits.

Identify special cause variations (e.g., spike after staffing changes).

Use early warning signals to trigger investigations before rates exceed acceptable limits.

Outcome: Proactive monitoring prevents outbreaks, maintains compliance, and ensures patient safety.

Example of Fishbone



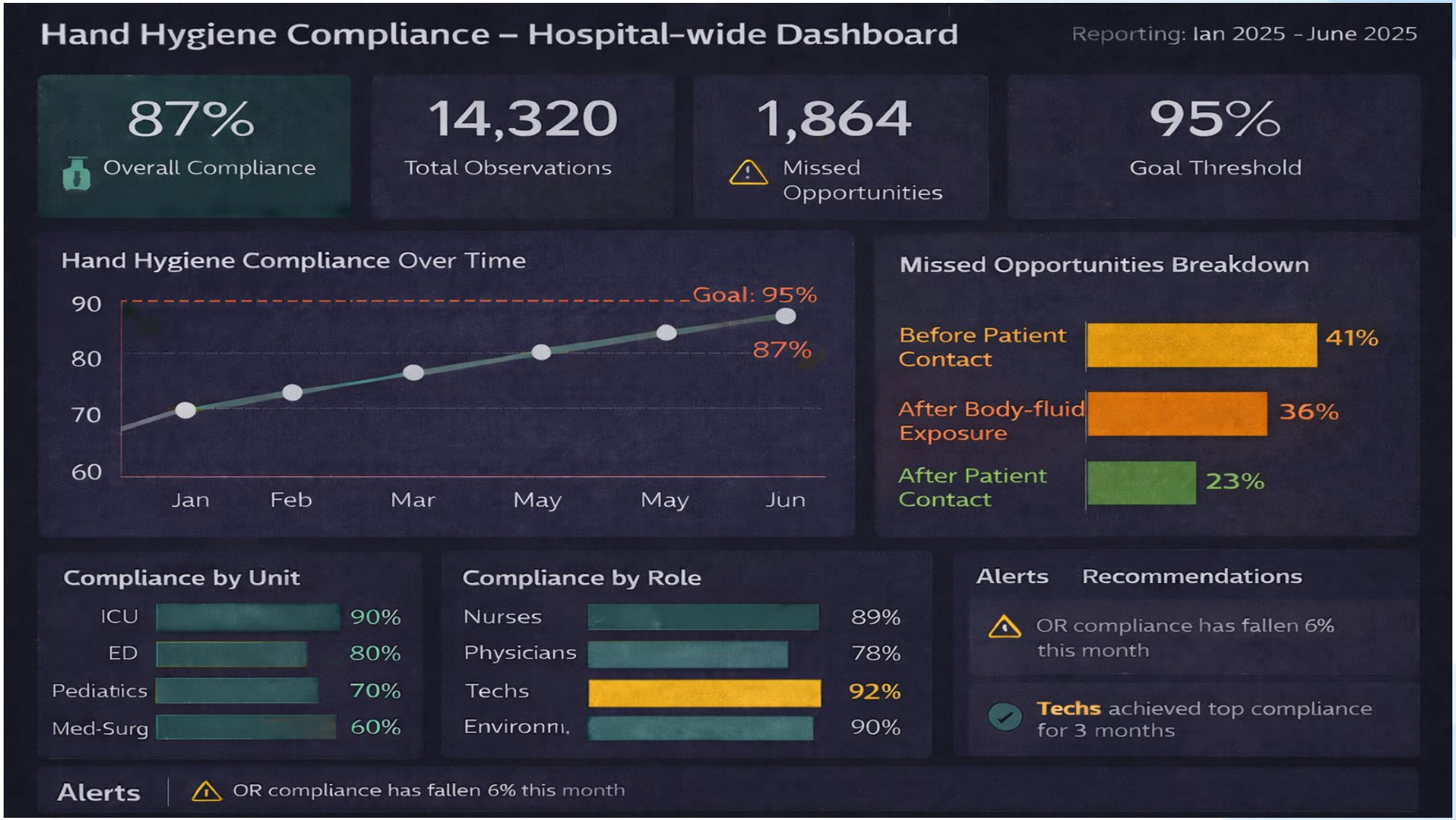
Recap…Fishbone (Ishikawa) Diagram

QUALITY KENTUCKY
Health Care Quality Improvement Continues

SMART Goal: *Reduce patient falls by 15% within 6 months.*
Scenario: Falls occur in various situations, but root causes are unclear.
Fishbone Diagram Use:
Categorize potential causes under People, Process, Equipment, and Environment.
Identify issues like inadequate staff training, poor lighting, and missing grab bars.
Engage multidisciplinary teams to validate findings.
Outcome: Implement targeted interventions—staff education, environmental improvements, and equipment upgrades—resulting in fewer falls and improved safety.

Example of a Dashboard

SMART Goal: **Improve hand hygiene compliance to 95% within the next 3 months.**



Let's Recap…Dashboards

QUALITY KENTUCKY
Health Care Quality Improvement Continues

SMART Goal: *Improve hand hygiene compliance to 95% within 3 months.*

Scenario: Compliance data is collected but not easily accessible or actionable for staff.

Dashboard Use:

Display real-time compliance rates by unit in a visual dashboard.
Highlight trends and outliers for leadership and frontline staff.
Foster accountability and healthy competition between units.

Outcome: Immediate feedback drives behavior change, leading to sustained compliance and reduced infection risk.

Why This Improves Outcomes

QUALITY KENTUCKY
Health Care Quality Improvement Continues

- Combines **clear objectives (SMART)** with **data-driven decisions (PI tools)**.
- Avoids random fixes—focuses on high-impact changes.
- Creates accountability and continuous monitoring.

OK…How Do They Work Together?

QUALITY KENTUCKY
Health Care Quality Improvement Continues

- **SMART Goal** **sets the focus** → "Reduce falls by 15% in next 6 months."

- **Flow Chart** **reveals process gaps** → Shows lack of grab bars during transfers.

- **Pareto Chart** **prioritizes interventions** → Bathroom-related falls are the top cause.

- **Dashboard** **promotes transparency, real-time data, and motivation** → Compliance rates for roles, units, overall compliance , etc.

Kentucky Hospital Association

Key Takeaways

- SMART Goals = **Direction**
- PI Tools = **Execution**
- Together = **Better Outcomes, Safer Patients, Lower Costs**

Next Up…

QUALITY KENTUCKY
Health Care Quality Improvement Continues

Part 3: From SMART Goals to Success: Implementing and Sustaining Quality Improvement

Resources

smart-goals-for-quality-improvement

Strategies to Help Care Settings Face Barriers to SDOH Screenings

Based Approaches for Infection Prevention

https://www.ihi.org/resources/tools/quality-improvement-essentials-toolkit

Questions

Billie Delauder,

DNP, MSN/RN, CPHQ, CPPS, HACP-CMS, CFPS

KHA Quality Process Improvement Specialist

bdelauder@kyha.com

606-434-6564

QUALITY KENTUCKY
Health Care Quality Improvement Continues

Kentucky Hospital Association