

Advanced Practice Clinicians: A Model for Physician Support

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Mercy Medical Group™

A Service of Dignity Health Medical Foundation



Stuck ?



What we will talk about

- **Who we are**





What was our problem





Which solution did we find



How we implemented the solution



How that got us unstuck



What we learned

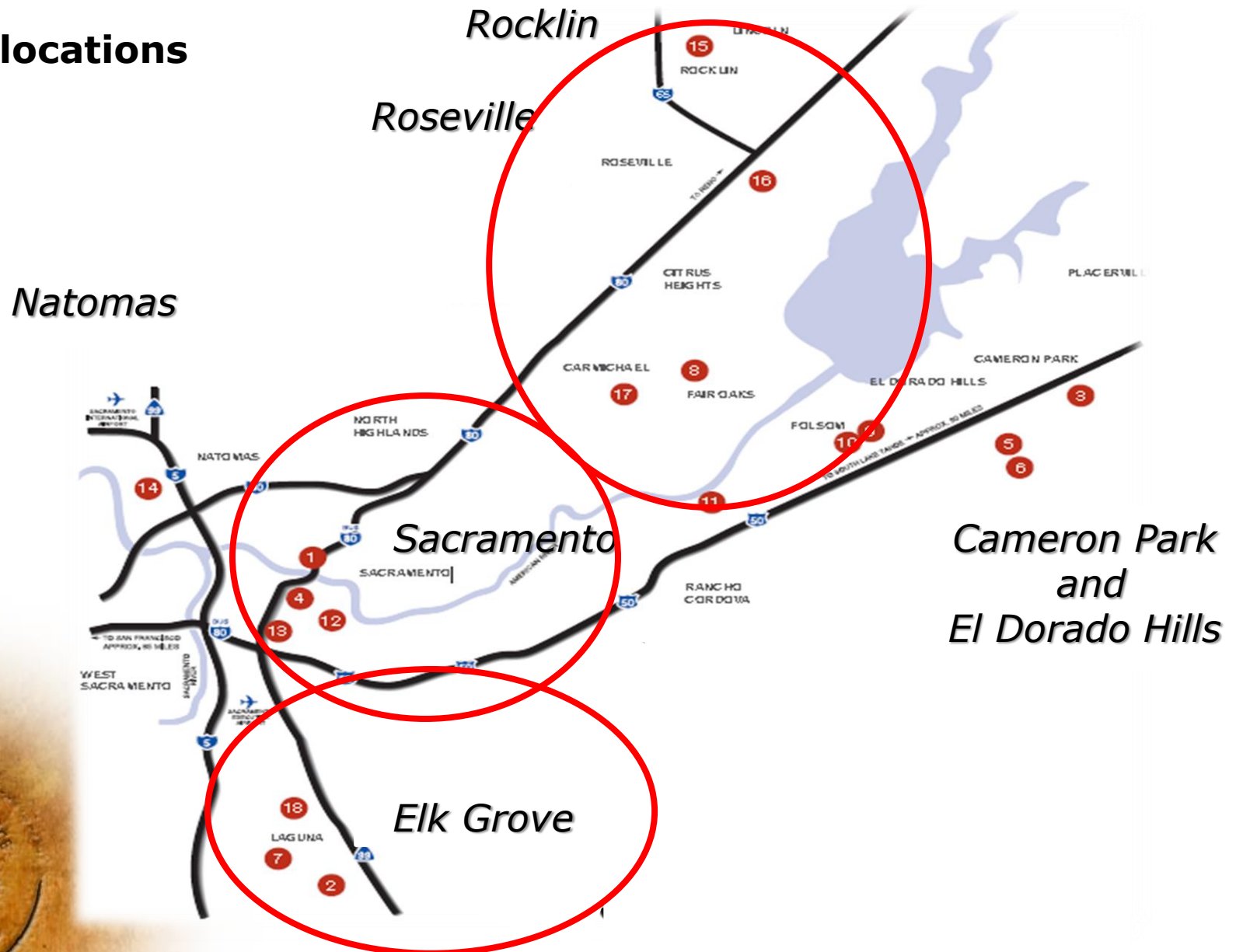


Mercy Medical Group, Inc.

- Physician owned private corporation
 - Foundation model
 - Dignity Health Medical Foundation
 - Physician autonomy is valued
 - *Private practice* feel
- ✓ Self motivated
 - ✓ Entrepreneurial



- **18 locations**



Mercy San Juan Medical Center
Caring for Families for More than 45 Years



Mercy General Hospital
Caring for Sacramento for More than 85 Years



Mercy Medical Group

Primary Care

- Family Medicine
- Internal Medicine
- Pediatrics
- Obstetrics & Gynecology
- Psychiatry

Specialty Care

- Neurology
- Ophthalmology
- ENT
- Allergy Immunology
- Rheumatology
- Pulmonology
- Cardiology
- General Surgery
- Cardiovascular Surgery
- Thoracic Surgery
- Plastic Surgery
- Gastrointestinal Medicine
- Dermatology
- Urology
- Oncology
- Hospital Medicine



Mercy Medical Group

- 343 Providers, including 287 physicians
- 65 primary care doctors
 - 32 Family Physicians
 - 14 Pediatricians
 - 23 Internists



What happened in 2010 ?

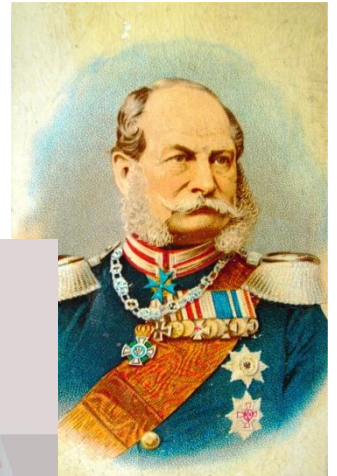
- **Crisis in Primary Care...**

- Within a 6 month period
- 10 of the 30 doctors left
- Family Medicine was decimated



Fall 2010

- Crisis in Primary Care...
 - Most went to salaried physician models (e.g. Kaiser)
 - Average age of departing MD's was mid-30's
 - Nearly all took a pay-cut

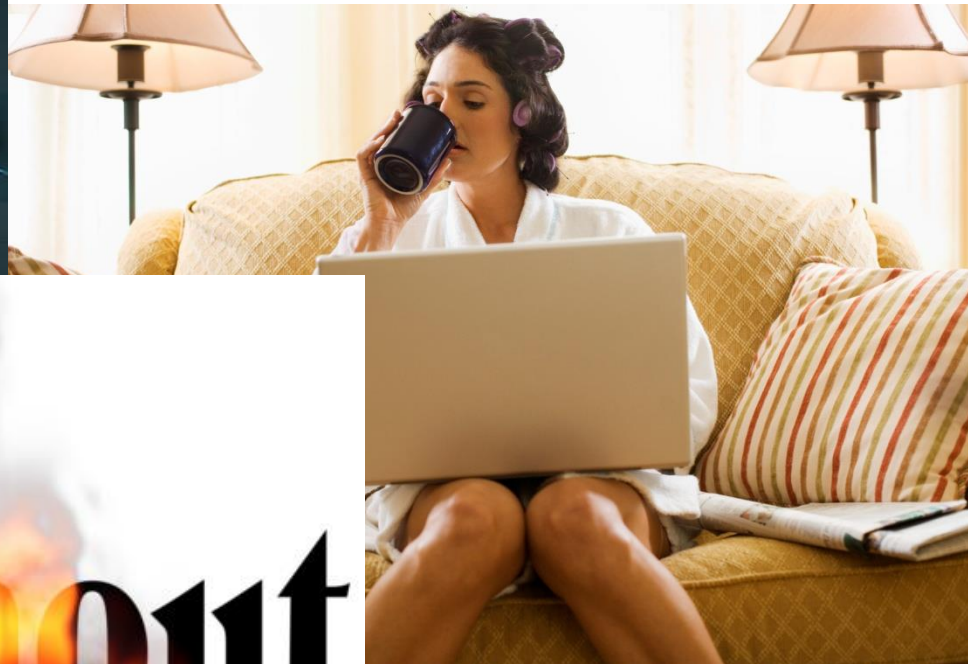
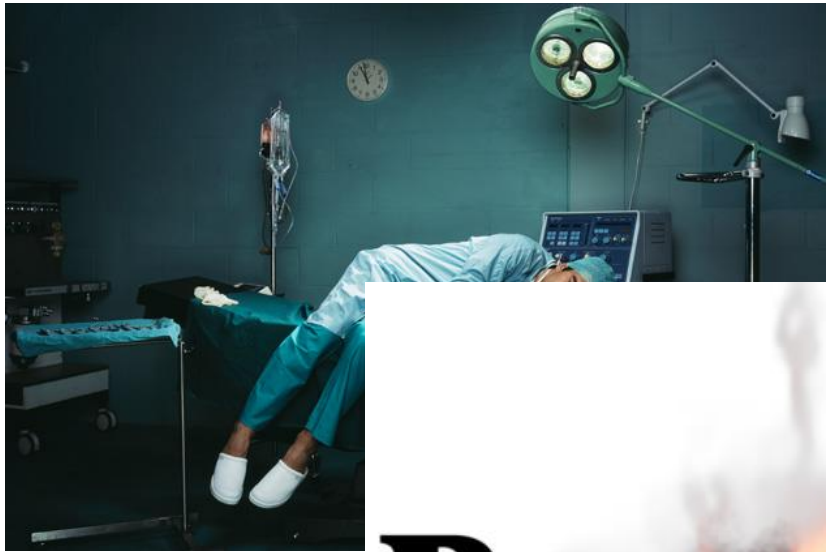


Crisis Management

Immediate/Short term:

- Closed panels
- Raised Compensation
- Dismissed patients...





Burnout



Verify Patient Results

K	GISLA,JOHN	GISLA,JOHN	C
J	GISLA,JOHN	GISLA,JOHN	C
	GISLA,JOHN	GISLA,JOHN	C
A	GISLA,JOHN	GISLA,JOHN	C
A	GISLA,JOHN	GISLA,JOHN	C
	GISLA,JOHN	GISLA,JOHN	C
	GISLA,JOHN	GISLA,JOHN	C
L	GISLA,JOHN	GISLA,JOHN	C
Z	GISLA,JOHN	GISLA,JOHN	C
	GISLA,JOHN	GISLA,JOHN	C
	GISLA,JOHN	GISLA,JOHN	C
J	GISLA,JOHN	GISLA,JOHN	C
T	GISLA,JOHN	GISLA,JOHN	C
	GISLA,JOHN	GISLA,JOHN	C



More trouble on the horizon

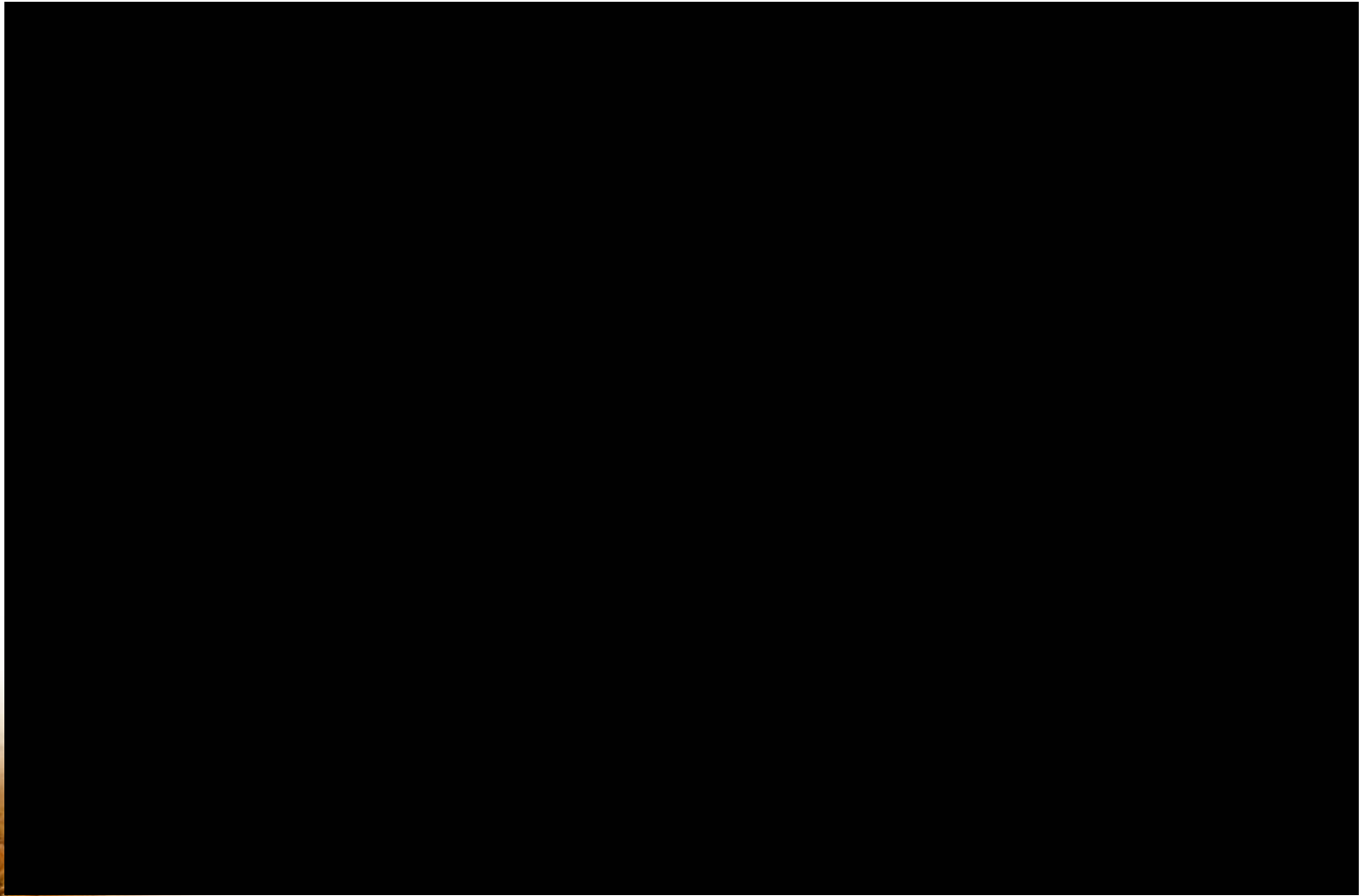


The Problems Pile Up

- Long work hours
 - EMR documentation overload
- High electronic 'task' volume
- Working from home
- Working on vacation
- Excessive ancillary level work



A Discussion of the Problems





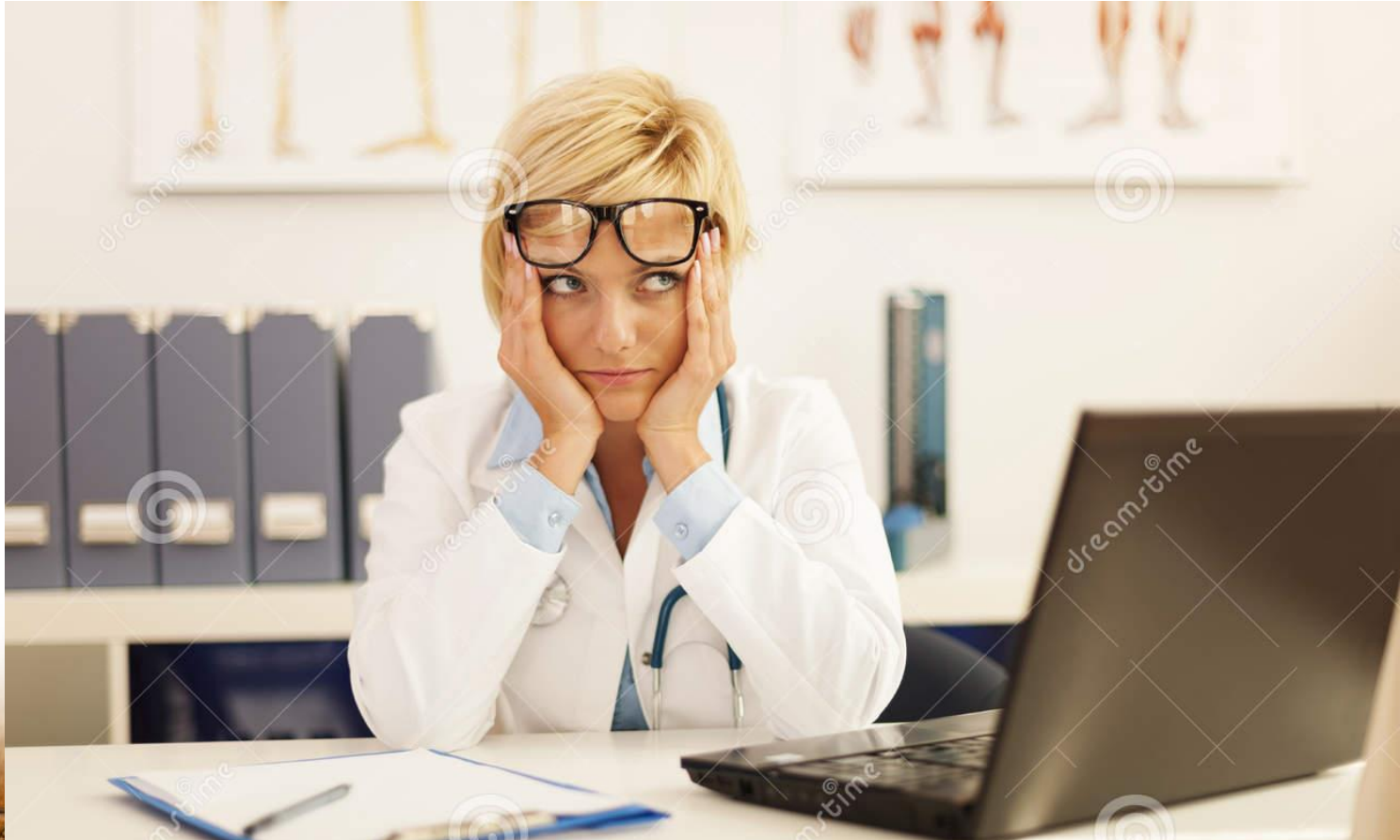
APC MD-Support: The Case Study

- In response to a practice in crisis in Elk Grove

The genesis of an idea...



APC MD-Support: The Case Study

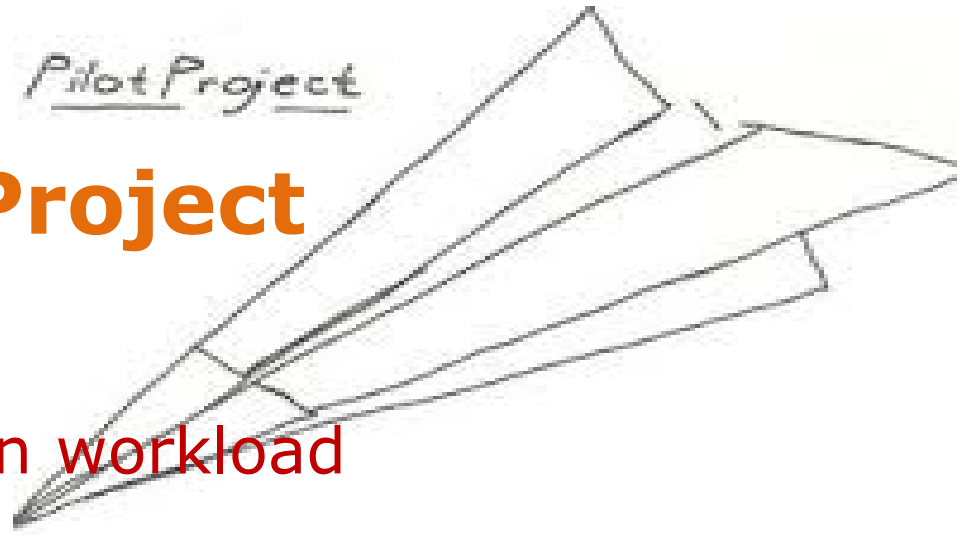


PA Physician-Support

-----*The Change*-----



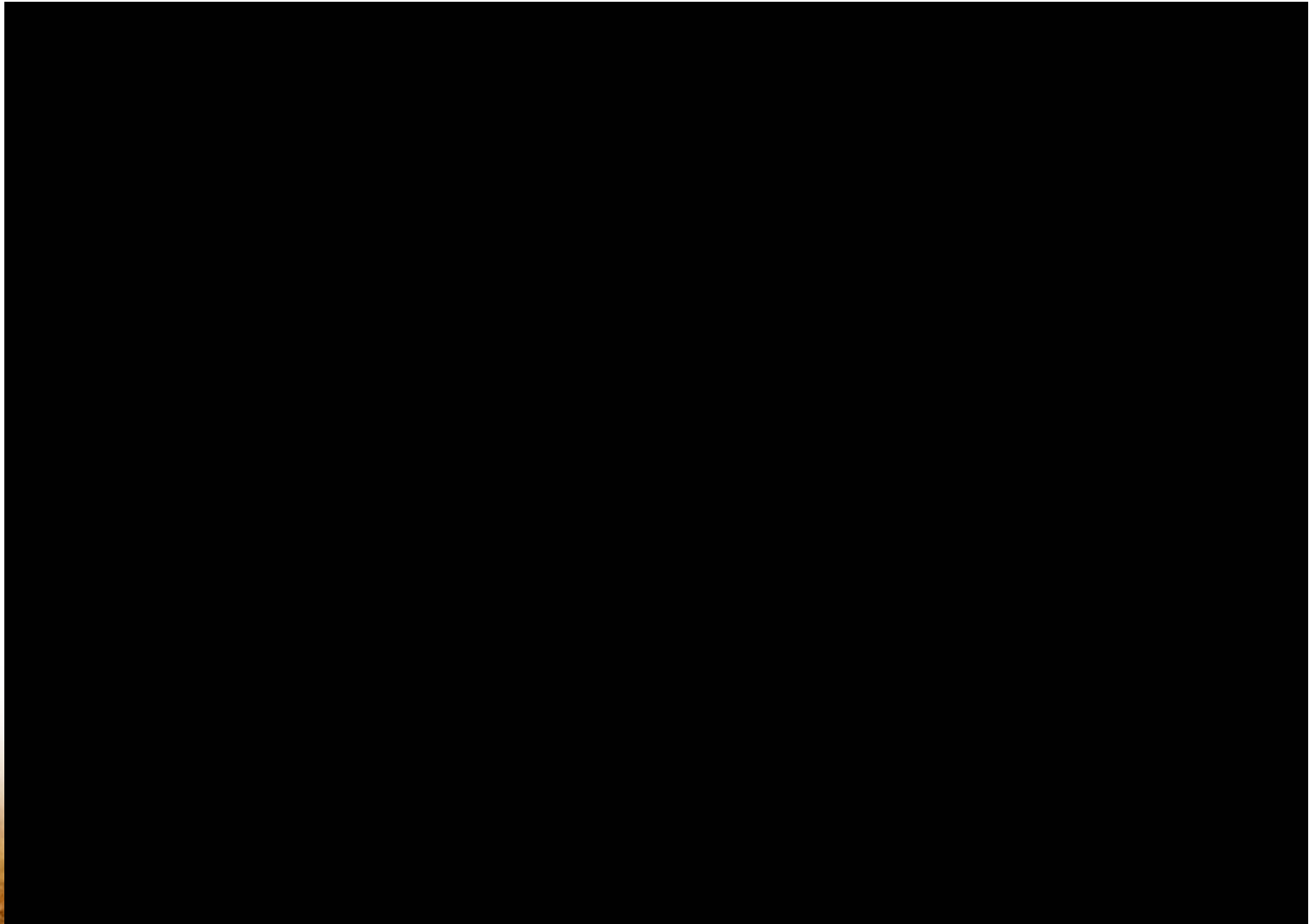
Evolution of a Project



- Aim: Decrease physician workload
- Need: Help with tasks
- Physician concern: Supervision of the PA
- Compromise: Worked out
- Protect: PA 'task time'
- Hire A PA: Who could tackle tasks
- Physician: Mentored PA in task dispensation



Discussion of the Pilot



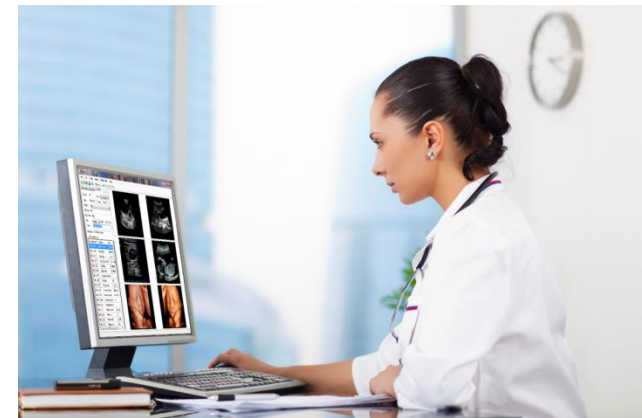
Novel Work For APC's

- At the time
 - APC's functioned as providers
 - They had patient panels
 - Serviced physician overflow visits
- Novel Work
 - Deploy APC's to help with electronic tasks
 - Triage, phone calls
 - Patient care 50% of the time
 - No longer carried a panel
- Pilot Project Implemented



APC MD-Support; What they did ?

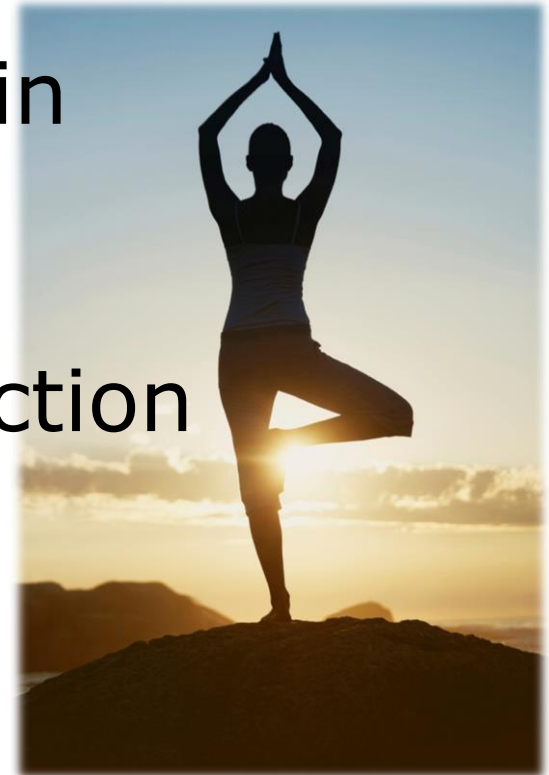
- **Practice Support:**
 - **Manage Task box**
 - **Review/Disposition labs**
 - **Complex medical Forms**
 - **Address patient phone calls**
 - **Practice coverage when MD on vacation**
 - **Sees overflow patients**
 - **(50% of schedule for patient visits)**



APC MD-Support: The Results I

(by Doctor self-report)

- Doctor getting out of the office sooner
- Vacations without logging in
- Less home-based tasking
- Increased work life satisfaction



APC MD-Support: The Results II

Comparison July 2009 to July 2010

- Physician saw more patients
 - Visits increased 9%
- Productivity increased
 - RVU's increased 10%
 - From 107% of AMGA mean to 134%

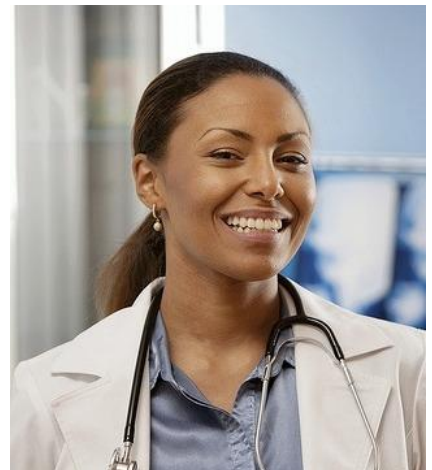


APC MD-Support

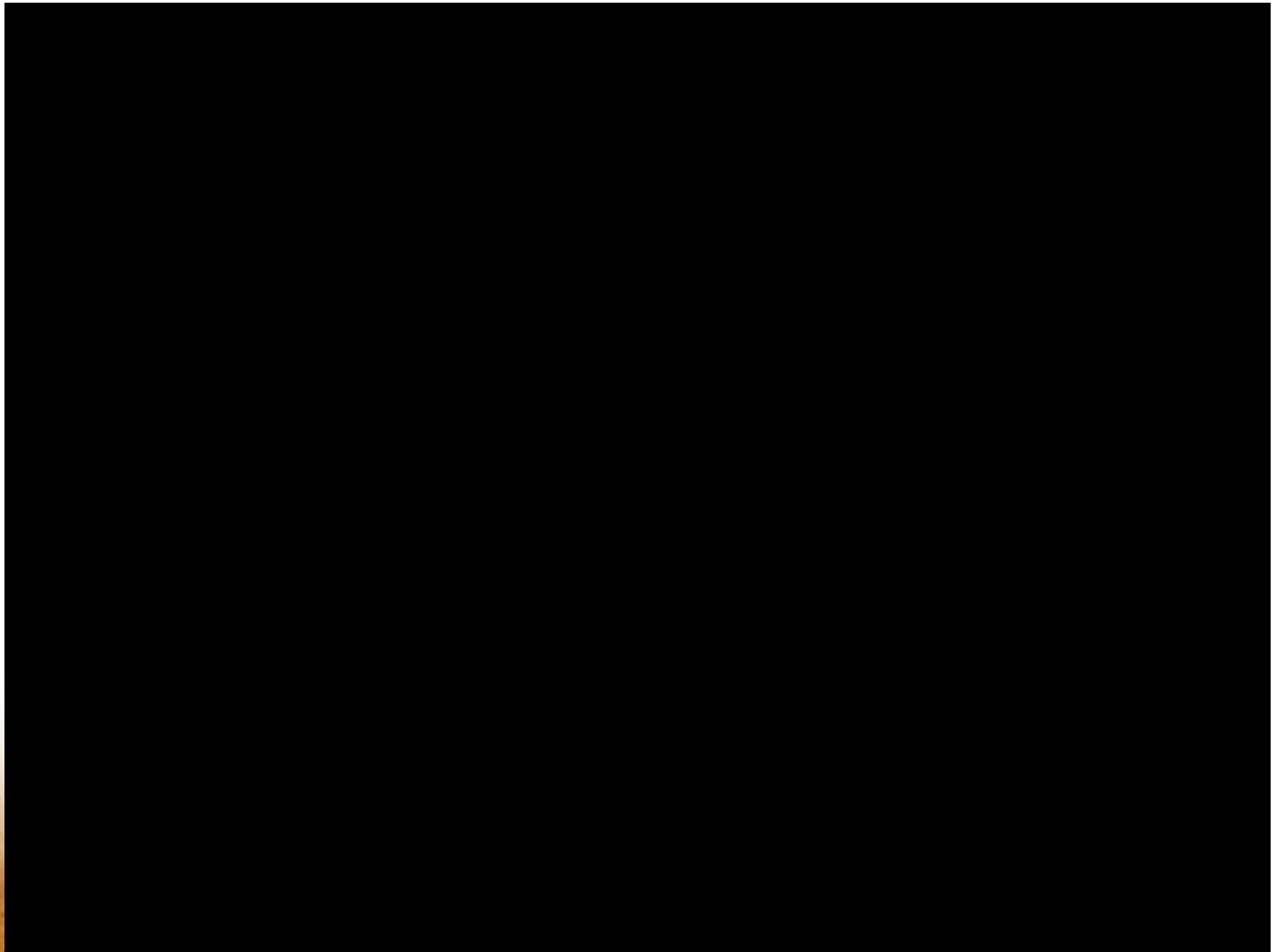
•Case Study:

-----Summary-----

- Doctor getting home sooner
- Doctor happier (burn-out averted!)
- Doctor more productive
- Patients happier



The Daily Flow and Physician Satisfaction



APC MD-Support

- PA **satisfaction** is good
- **Not** seeing '**overflow**' patients all day
- PA feel **integral** to primary care **team**
- Tasks and patient visits produce **variety**



APC MD-Support

- Increased Physician satisfaction
 - Increased productivity
- Increased patient satisfaction



- Better Physician retention
- Enhanced Physician recruitment
- Increased patient demand



APC MD-Support

- Pilot was successful
- Potential solution to the crisis
- Wider implementation followed



Implementation I

- Current APC's offered an option
- Continue in current pattern
- Or opt into APC support role.

Ultimately, all chose to move to the APC MD-Support Model



Implementation II

- Recruitment of APC's.
 - Department chair and group leadership interviewed all candidates
 - **Experienced**
 - **Interested in the model**
 - **Collaborative personality**
 - **Ability to multi-task**
 - **Adaptable to different practice styles**



Implementation III

- Schedule built with 50% patient-visit slots
- Very few pre-booked appointments
- Visits with APC booked at MD's discretion
- APC MD-Support time *protected* ...
- New APC shadows each physician
 - Open, regular feedback/communication



Implementation IV

- **Duties:**
 - **Task Support**
 - Patient calls
 - Vacation coverage
 - Patient visits
 - (1st priority=MD's out of office)
 - Screen labs, incoming paperwork
 - Care Management items
 - Med refill evaluation



APC Satisfaction

- Survey Conducted among FM and IM PA's and NP's May 2013
 - 16 APC's
- Survey repeated Feb 2014
 - Family Med APC's Only
 - 11 APC's

- 5-Completely agree
- 4-Mostly agree
- 3-Neutral
- 2-Somewhat disagree
- 1-Completely disagree



APC Satisfaction II

- I have the correct balance of patient care, task support, and other duties to be fulfilled.

- 13 of 16 “Completely” or “Mostly” agree
- Average score 3.94

- 8 of 11 “Completely” or “Mostly” agree
- Average score 3.82



APC Satisfaction III

- My load of patients allows me to provide strong task support to the physicians.
 - 16 of 16 “Completely” or “Mostly” agree
 - Average score 4.63
- 11 of 11 “Completely” or “Mostly” agree
- Average score 4.82



APC Satisfaction IV

- My load of patients provides me with professional satisfaction as a clinician.
 - 12 of 16 "Completely" or "Mostly" agree
 - Average score 3.75
- 6 of 11 "Completely" or "Mostly" agree
- Average score 3.36



APC Satisfaction V

- The physicians support me and assist me with consultation when I need it.
- 12 of 16 "Completely" or "Mostly" agree
- Average score 3.75
- 6 of 11 "Completely" or "Mostly" agree
- Average score 3.36



APC Satisfaction VI

- The physicians provide clear direction on how I can best assist them.
 - 16 of 16 “Completely” or “Mostly” agree
 - Average score 4.94
- 10 of 11 “Completely” or “Mostly” agree
- Average score 4.64



APC Satisfaction VII

- I find the current MD support model to be satisfying and fulfilling.
 - 11 of 16 “Completely” or “Mostly” agree
 - Average score 4.13
- 7 of 11 “Completely” or “Mostly” agree
- Average score 3.64



APC Satisfaction VIII

- I am an important and valuable member of the clinical team.
 - 15 of 16 “Completely” or “Mostly” agree
 - Average score 4.50
- 11 of 11 “Completely” or “Mostly” agree
- Average score 4.64



APC Satisfaction

- COMMENTS: “Best Aspects of Model”
- Supporting physicians is the best aspect
- I believe patient care happens in a more timely manner due to my support of the physicians
- Patients have better access to their physicians so they avoid UC or ER visits
- Creates a very collaborative environment between MD’s and APC’s
- Working closely w/ a team of great physicians
- I work with MD’s who are always available to consult, teach, and share their knowledge w/ me. I could not ask for better physicians



APC Satisfaction

- COMMENTS: “Needs improvement”
 - I feel APC’s are underutilized in regard to patient care
 - My patient load has reduced over the last several months, thus I have not been able to use my skills to the best of my ability
 - Continue to educate staff regarding their role and ours
 - There needs to be a better balance between direct patient care and task support
 - Ensure schedules are kept full/busy



APC Satisfaction

- Feb 2014 Survey: Included extra Q's
- The medical care provided by the physicians at my site is excellent.
(on 1 through 5 scale)

➤ 5.00



APC Satisfaction

- I am well-compensated for the work I do. ➤ 4.73

- I am fairly treated by Mercy Medical Group.

➤ 4.64



APC Satisfaction

- I have a good balance between work and personal life.

➤ 4.18

- I am very satisfied with my job at MMG.

➤ 4.09



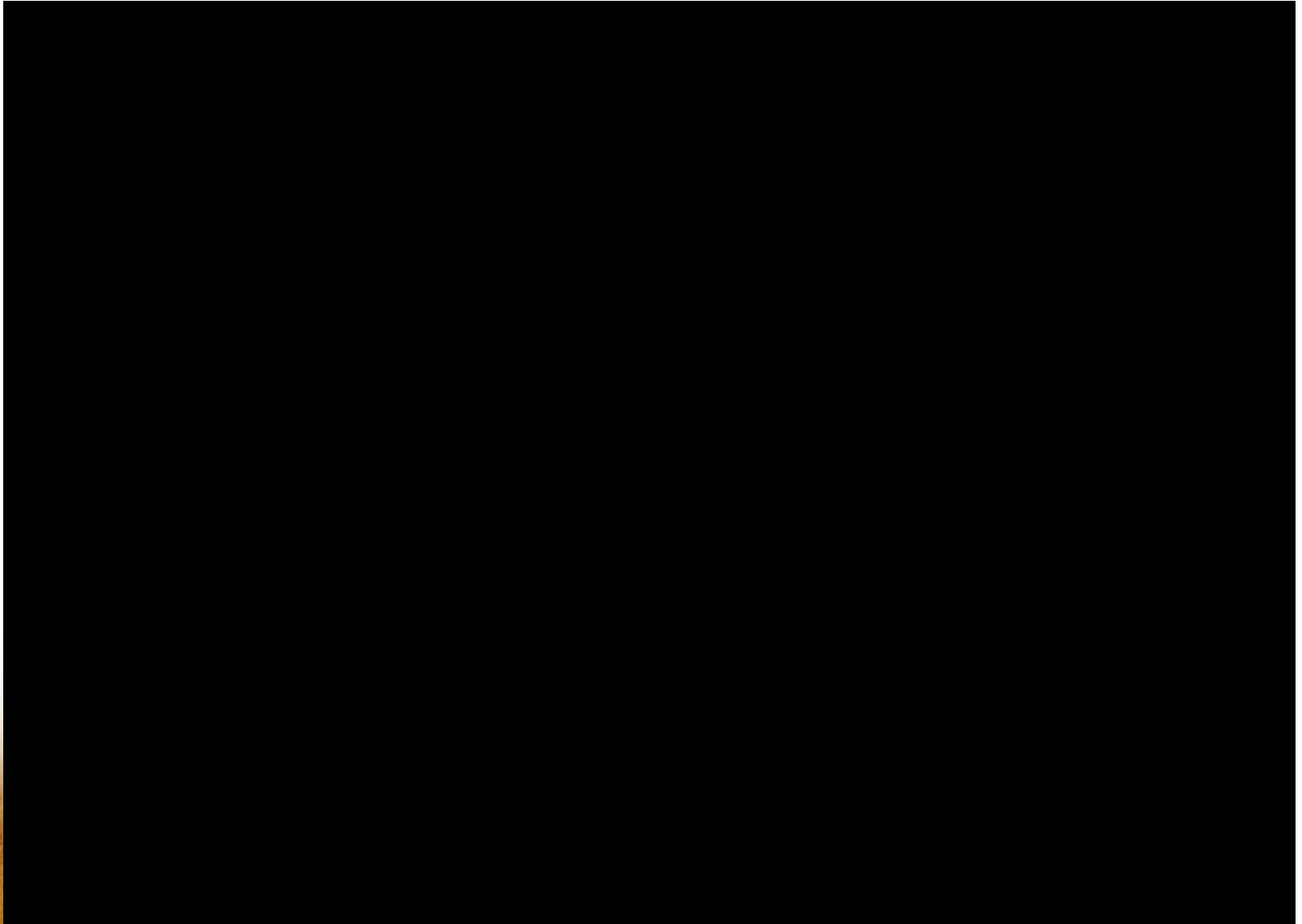
APC Satisfaction

- I trust the leadership of Mercy Medical Group.

➤ 4.45



The Nurse Practitioner Perspective



APC Performance Evaluation

Survey given to Physicians to evaluate their APC's

- APC provides a **high level of task support** to their physician colleagues
- APC **seeks appropriate consultation** with their physician colleagues when indicated by the medical complexity of the case.



APC Performance Evaluation

- The APC addresses labs.
- The APC practices to the highest degree of their license.
- The APC is open to MD direction and constructive criticism.
- The APC performs thorough workups, including ordering appropriate labs and imaging.



APC Performance Evaluation

- The APC refers to specialists appropriately, and at the appropriate time.
- You would feel comfortable in having this APC care for a family member.
- The APC is able to see and manage the appropriate number of patients when their role calls for the service.



APC Performance Evaluation

- The APC is a **strong team player** and takes **personal responsibility** for ensuring **excellent medical care** is provided to patients.



APC Performance Evaluation

- Please **provide feedback** on areas where this Advanced Practice Clinician **may need to improve**.
- Please **provide feedback** on what this Advanced Practice Clinician does well or how they **go above and beyond** for the practice and their patients.



APC Performance Evaluation

SUMMARY:

- Physician Satisfaction with the performance of their APC's
- RVU's generated
 - (half of the AMGA mean)
- Patient satisfaction
- Tasks closed
- Charges submitted, notes completed



Physician Satisfaction

- ***Survey Conducted in Feb 2014 of physicians to determine their satisfaction with the model.***



☒ **Excellent**
☐ **Good**
☐ **Averag**



Physician Satisfaction

- I feel the APC Physician-support Model helps me to deliver more efficient care to my patients.

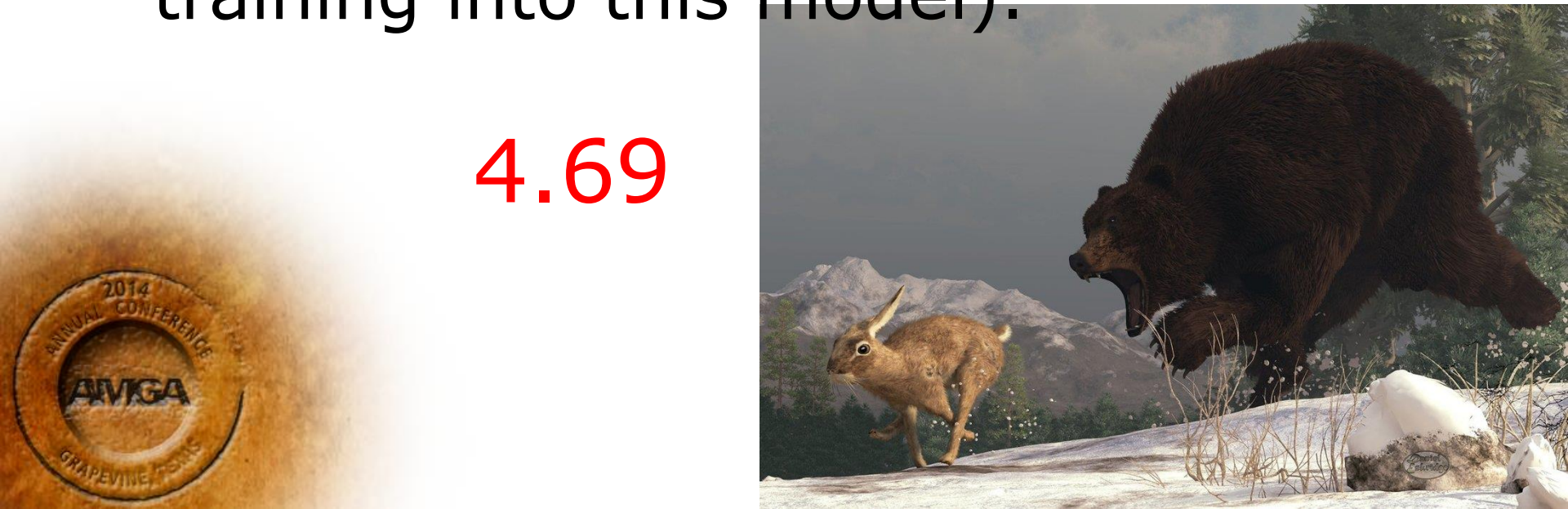
4.70



Physician Satisfaction

- I would NOT want to go back to the old model of practice without the APC Physician-support Model (please choose N/A if you came out of training into this model).

4.69



Physician Satisfaction

- I feel the APCs who support my practice in this model seek appropriate physician input regarding patient care from me or my colleagues.

4.67



Physician Satisfaction

- I consider the APCs in my practice under this model to be important and integral members of our practice team.

4.67



Physician Satisfaction

- I feel the APCs who support my practice in this model when I am out of the office provide good care to my patients.

4.57



Physician Satisfaction

- I feel the APC Physician-support Model has significantly improved my satisfaction with the practice of medicine (please choose N/A if you came out of training into this model).

4.54



Physician Satisfaction

- I feel the APC Physician-support Model helps me to deliver higher quality-of-care to my patients.

4.53



Physician Satisfaction

- I am satisfied with the APC Physician support Model which is utilized in my practice.

4.50



Physician Satisfaction

- I feel that the APC Physician-support Model helps to prevent me from suffering physician burnout.

4.37



Physician Satisfaction

- *Our NP is fantastic and I couldn't imagine practicing without her.*
- *Our NP is integral to our practice.*
- *This was a very large part of my decision to join this group.*
- *The APC support model is great in this clinic.*



Physician Satisfaction

- *I'd have less access, less productivity, and definitely higher burnout risk without this model.*
- *Allows me to focus more on patient care in the exam room.*
- *I love that I am not burned out all the time like I was in my previous practice.*

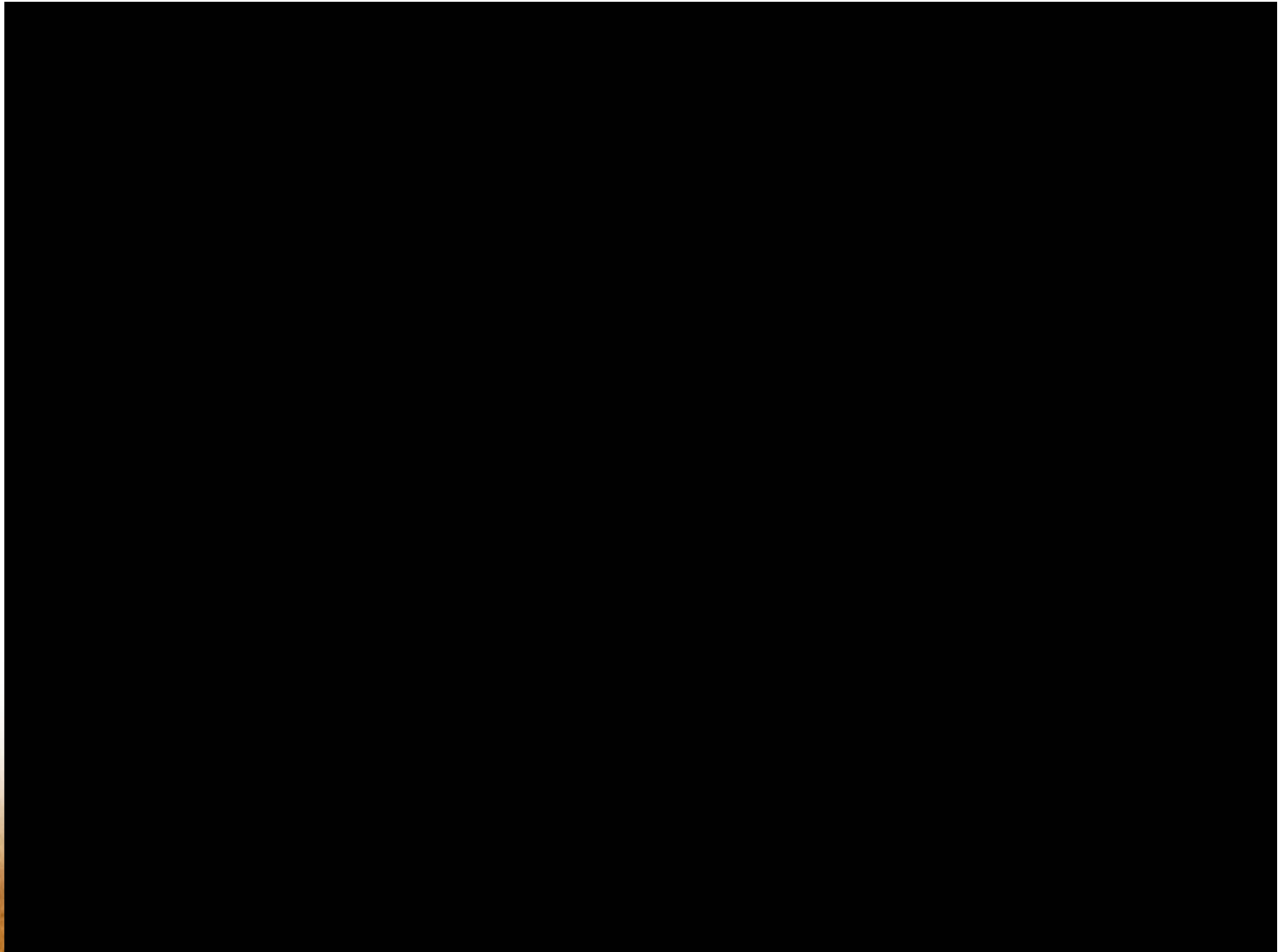


Physician Satisfaction

- *It used to be virtually impossible to keep up with my absent partner's patients and tasks while seeing my own patients.*
- *I would have quit by now if it wasn't for the support of the NP at my site.*
- *Thank you! Please do not change this model!*



What Physicians Say Today



Cost of Program



Lessons Learned

1. Physician Champion critical to Success...

- Interviews the APC candidates
- Sets expectations with physicians
- Monitors program, troubleshoots
- Involved with APC Performance evaluations



Lessons Learned

2. Some APC's will not prefer this model...

- Need experienced APC's who are open to something different than full-time patient care.



Lessons Learned

3. APC's must have experience

- Managing complex panels
- Managing complex patient-care visits
- Patients/visits/tasks cannot be screened to ensure “appropriate” complexity
- There is MD oversight, back-up—but the model is not amenable to “teaching”...



Lessons Learned

4. APC's time must be protected to allow MD-Support to occur.

- **Avoid pre-booking**
- **Avoid filling schedule with patient visits**
 - **Model collapses if APC's used primarily as an outlet for overflow.**
 - **Constant vigilance necessary...**



Lessons Learned

5. APC's **cannot be used** to do the job of RN, LVN, MA, Care Managers, Phone staff, etc.

- They must be reserved for Physician-level work



Lessons Learned

6. The **medical group must be willing** to see the hiring of the APC's as a **cost-neutral** investment

- An **investment in long-term health** of the PCP departments
- Income generation if present is a bonus



Successful Turn-around

- Multi



➤ APC MD-Support Model

Policy

Service

LVN's



Successful Turn-around

- **No physician lost from the Family Medicine Department due to burn-out since the original exodus in 2010.**

