



FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION OF THE ENCORE PHYSICIANS PROGRAM

UPDATED FEBRUARY 2022



DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

- The **Encore Physicians Program** was launched in 2018. Kaiser Permanente provided key partnership for the project, including financial support for program development and operations, participation on the steering committee, and critical clinical resources
- The Encore Physicians Program works to address provider shortages by **matching retired physicians into paid positions at community health centers** throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Engage R+D, with support from the California Health Care Foundation, has been the **evaluation** partner for this work.
- This document summarizes findings from three years of evaluation of the Encore Physicians Program. (See the following slide for guidance on how to use and attribute the information in this document.)

USING THIS DOCUMENT

- This document is designed as a **master deck** with a range of information from the evaluation of the Encore Physicians Program.
- Each page is **annotated** with additional information from the evaluation report.
- The deck can be presented in part or in full **for use with various audiences**, including potential physician and health center participants in the program, health care funder groups, and programs looking to replicate this model. We recommend selecting the most relevant parts of the deck to share depending on the audience.
- The information in this deck may also be **combined with other slides** such as participant testimonials, program strategic plans, etc. to suit the intended purpose of each presentation.

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- COVID-19 Context
- Encore Physicians Program Response to the Pandemic



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE ENCORE MODEL

In 2018, Kaiser Permanente partnered with the **Encore Fellowship Program**, which matches skilled, seasoned professionals with social sector organizations in high impact, paid leadership engagements.

Together they developed the **Encore Physicians Program**, which works to address provider shortages by matching retired physicians into paid placements at community health centers.

The Encore model, shown at right, provided structure and support for the work.

Enduring Influence

Meaningful Duration

High-Touch Selection and Matching

Compensation

Onboarding and Support

Program Operations



Interest from Retired Physicians and Health Center Needs

Overall, there has been wide interest from retired physicians, though not all are a good fit for health centers' needs.

- There has been continued interest in the program from retired physicians over time, many of whom hear about the program through The Permanente Medical Group (TPMG) newsletter and through personal connections.
- About half of physician applicants find placements at health centers, including during the pandemic.
- The main reason physicians are not placed in the program is that their specialty is not needed, indicating a potential mismatch between health centers' needs and interested physicians. A few were not placed because they were not a good fit with health centers' mission and values.
- While there was some concern that physicians would not be located where health centers needed them, in general there is a supply of interested physicians located within commuting distance of interested clinics.



Participant Satisfaction

Overall, retired physicians and health centers have been very satisfied with the program.

- Health centers reported high satisfaction with the matching process, Encore physicians' quality of care, and support from the Encore Physicians Program.
- Encore physicians reported that the program gave them a sense of purpose, they appreciated the part-time schedules, and that the matching process was smooth.
- Health centers are overcoming challenges such as working with Encore physicians' part-time schedules to ensure high quality care.
- Encore physicians reported that the onboarding and credentialing process at health centers can be time-consuming and that it is important to find a clinic that is a good fit for their skills and time.



Outcomes

Physicians helped expand workforce capacity and access to care, while benefitting from their participation.

- The ability of the Encore Physicians Program to place both primary care physicians and specialists enhances its potential to address workforce issues.
- Some specialists - such as OBGYNs, cardiologists, podiatrists, and orthopedists - are sometimes a good fit for health centers and can fill gaps in specialized care.
- Across the board, health centers reported receiving positive feedback from patients about Encore physicians.
- Encore physicians reported that the placements helped give them a sense of purpose in their retirement.



COVID

While program participation slowed at the start of the pandemic, interest in the program remained strong at the end of 2020.

- In Spring 2020 at the start of the pandemic in the US, health centers experienced a decrease in patient visits and other changes that led to lost revenues and staff furloughs. Later in 2020, the transition to telehealth improved patient access to care and health center revenues, which renewed, at least in part, the need for Encore physicians.
- Physician interest in the program remained strong, with Encore physicians returning to their placements throughout Summer 2020 and more physicians applying toward the end of the year.
- The Encore Physicians Program made some adaptations during the pandemic, with many physicians working virtually. This shift to telehealth may provide opportunities to adapt the program.



INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE PROGRAM



PROGRAM NEED

IN 2018, BAY AREA HEALTH CENTERS REPORTED EXPERIENCING PROVIDER SHORTAGES

“We do not pay the salaries that other systems pay, so it’s just tremendously hard to recruit.”

–Participating Health Center

“I was very interested [in the Encore Physicians Program] because workforce shortages are always something we’re dealing with.”

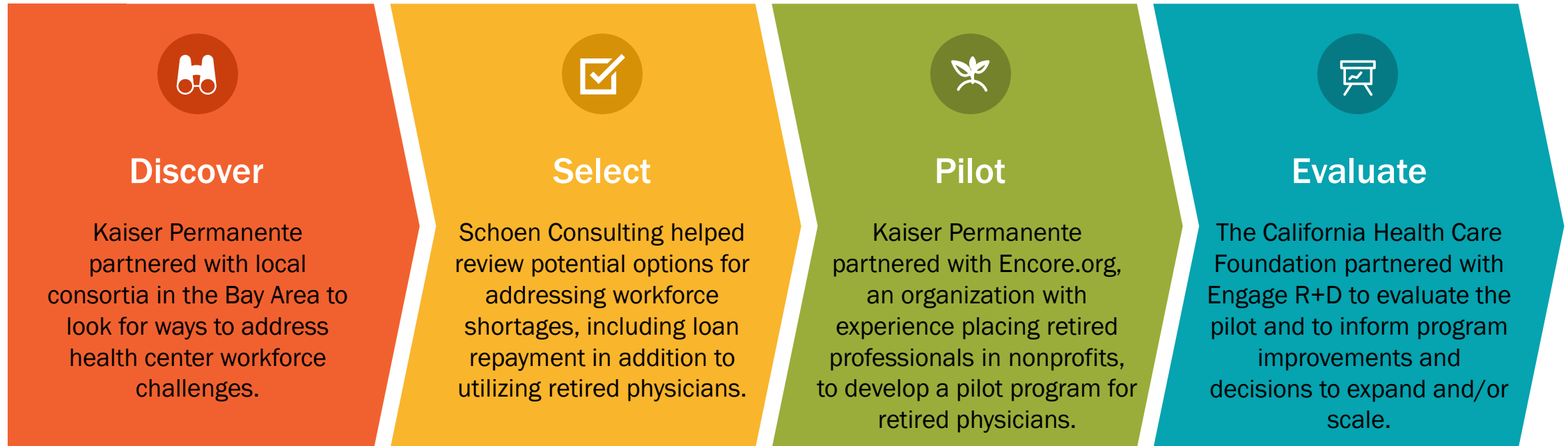
–Participating Health Center



TO ADDRESS PROVIDER SHORTAGES:

- **Kaiser Permanente partnered with the Encore Fellowship Program**, which matches skilled, seasoned professionals with social sector organizations in high impact, paid leadership engagements.
- Together they developed the **Encore Physicians Program**, which works to address provider shortages by matching retired physicians into paid placements at community health centers.
- The Encore Physicians Program had a goal of placing three physicians during the 2018-19 pilot. They exceeded this number by three-fold, **placing nine physicians** at Bay Area health centers in its first year.

PROCESS FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT:



ABOUT THE EVALUATION



FROM 2019-2021, ENGAGE R+D CONDUCTED AN EVALUATION OF THE ENCORE PHYSICIANS PROGRAM, INCLUDING:

1

2019 PILOT EVALUATION

- Measuring **health center demand** and **physician interest**
- Assessing the **feasibility** of the Encore model
- Documenting the extent to which the program addresses **provider shortages**

2

2020 COVID EVALUATION

- Understanding the **impact of COVID** on health centers and physicians
- Documenting how the program **pivoted** its approach to support health centers





3

2021 EVALUATION

- Documenting the **health center experience**
- Reassessing health center **workforce needs**
- Describing **key program components** for expansion



2018-2021 EVALUATION ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:

-  Document review
-  Program and health center data
-  Interviews with Encore.org staff, Encore physicians, health centers (2019 and 2021), and safety net experts (2020)
-  Program surveys of physicians (2019) and health centers (2019)



EVALUATION FINDINGS

EVALUATION FINDINGS: PROGRAM MODEL

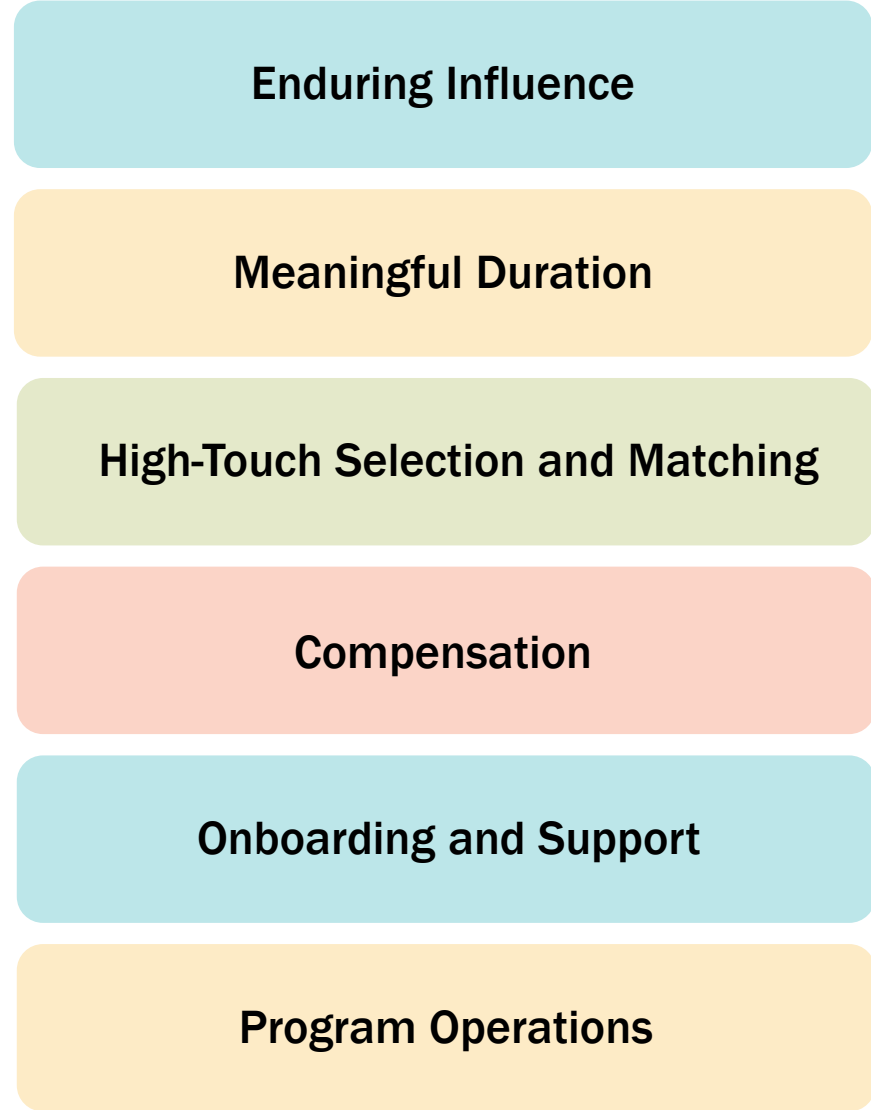


THE ENCORE MODEL

In 2018, Kaiser Permanente partnered with the **Encore Fellowship Program**, which matches skilled, seasoned professionals with social sector organizations in high impact, paid leadership engagements.

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The Encore model, shown at right, provided structure and support for the work.





THE PROGRAM ADAPTED THE ENCORE FELLOWSHIP MODEL TO FIT THE UNIQUE HEALTH CENTER CONTEXT

	Encore Fellowship Model	Adaptations
Enduring Influence	Retired individuals build nonprofit capacity that endures beyond their fellowship	Encore Physicians are service providers rather than capacity builders
Meaningful Duration	6- to 12-month placements providing enough time for fellows to achieve meaningful impact	Physicians may choose to continue working past one year
High-Touch Selection and Matching	The program carefully screens and matches fellows and hosts	The screening and matching criteria were adapted to the specific context
Compensation	Encore Fellows receive a modest stipend paid by corporate and philanthropic sponsors	Physicians are typically hired on by health centers as staff and paid similar to other physicians
Onboarding and Support	Fellows receive guidance and support	Onboarding guidance was adapted to fit the physician context
Program Operations	An organization manages both the big picture issues and the details and relationships	Several of the individual tools were adapted to the physician context

SUSTAINING THE PROGRAM MODEL

Observations from the 2021 Evaluation

- Foundational elements of program include having a match between the supply of retired physicians and health center demand and ensuring participant satisfaction.
- Regional program directors, support staff for infrastructure and project management, and support from regional health care leadership work together to sustain the Encore Physicians Program.
- Encore Physicians Program directors use a combination of medical expertise and other core skills to match health centers and retired physicians.
- The Encore Fellowship model provides structures and support to the Encore Physicians Program.
- Support for project management helps ensure the program runs smoothly.
- Strong partnerships with health care consortia can help support the program's success.

EVALUATION FINDINGS: INTEREST FROM RETIRED PHYSICIANS AND NEEDS OF HEALTH CENTERS

SUMMARY

Overall, there has been wide interest from retired physicians, though not all are a good fit for health centers' needs.

- There has been continued interest in the program from retired physicians over time, many of whom hear about the program through the TPMG newsletter and through personal connections
- About half of physician applicants find placements at health centers, including during the pandemic
- The main reason physicians are not placed in the program is that their specialty is not needed, indicating a potential mismatch between health centers' needs and interested physicians. A few were not placed because they were not a good fit with health centers' values.
- While there was some concern that physicians would not be located where health centers needed them, in general there is a supply of interested physicians located within commuting distance of interested clinics



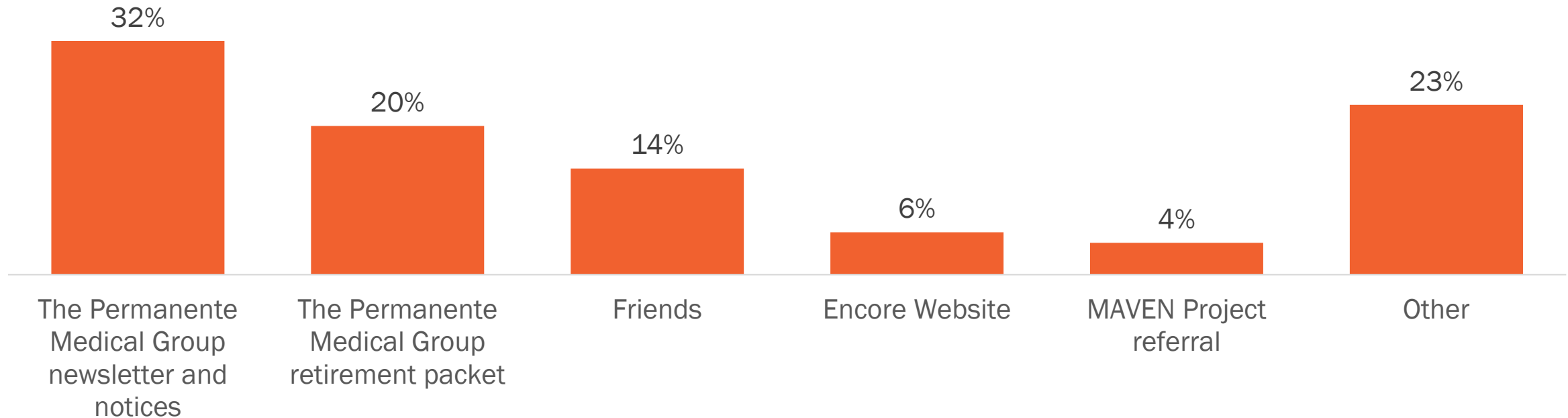
HIGH-TOUCH MATCHING PROCESS





PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT:

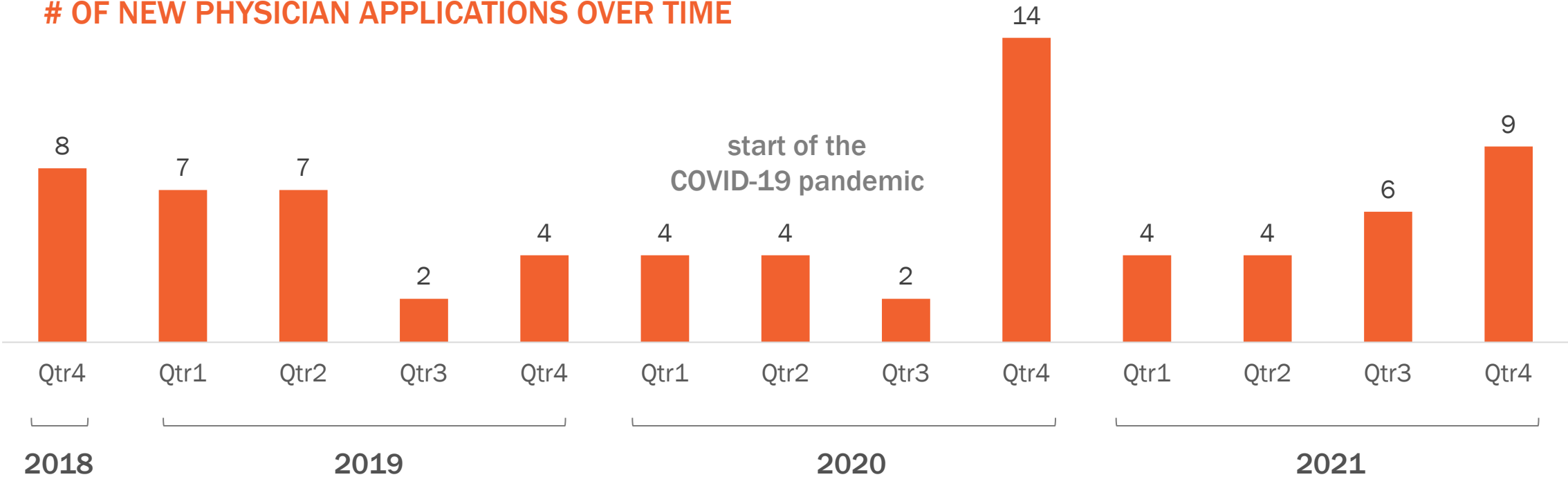
MANY PARTICIPANTS HEAR ABOUT THE PROGRAM THROUGH THE TPMG NEWSLETTER AND THROUGH PERSONAL CONNECTIONS





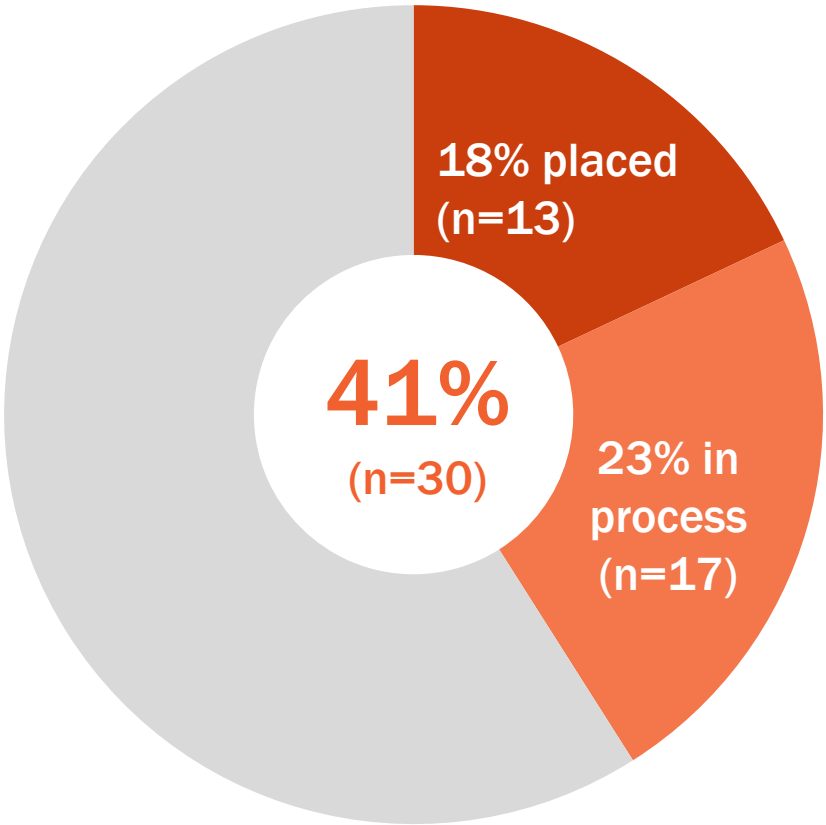
PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT: THERE HAS BEEN CONTINUED INTEREST IN THE PROGRAM FROM RETIRED PHYSICIANS OVER TIME

OF NEW PHYSICIAN APPLICATIONS OVER TIME





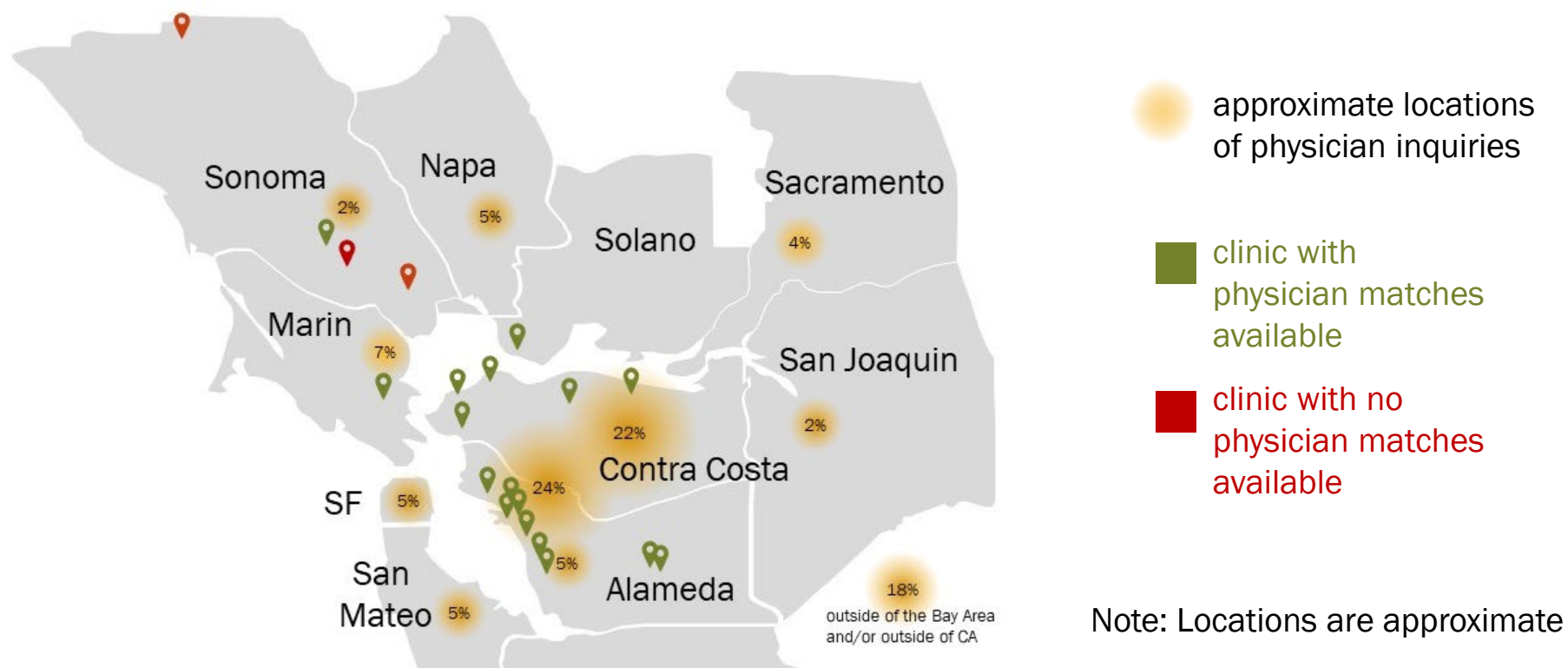
MATCHING PROCESS:
FOUR IN TEN PHYSICIAN
APPLICANTS FIND PLACEMENTS
OR ARE IN THE PROCESS OF
BEING PLACED AT HEALTH
CENTERS





MATCHING PROCESS:

IN GENERAL, THERE IS A SUPPLY OF INTERESTED PHYSICIANS LOCATED WITHIN COMMUTING DISTANCE OF PARTICIPATING CLINICS

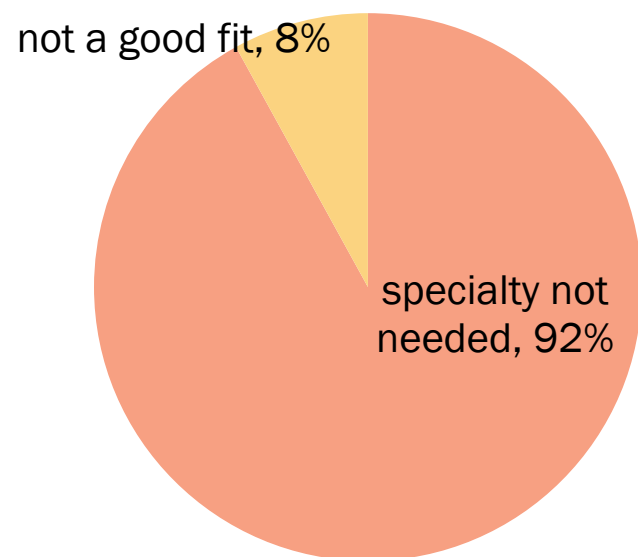




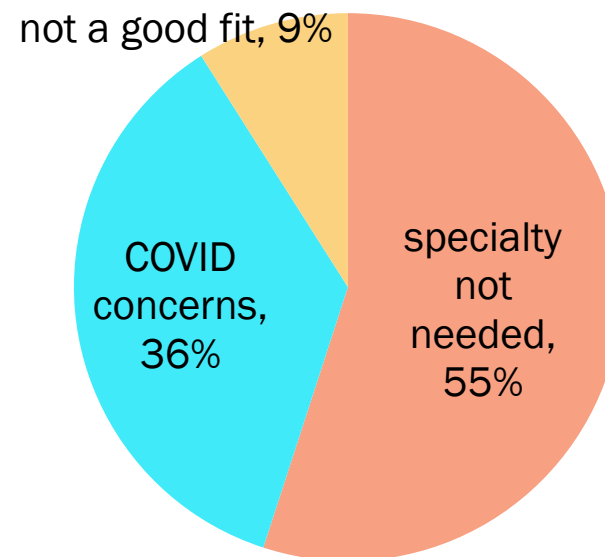
MATCHING PROCESS:

THE MAIN REASON PHYSICIANS ARE NOT PLACED IN THE PROGRAM IS THAT THEIR SPECIALTY IS NOT IN DEMAND

Before the Pandemic (n=12)



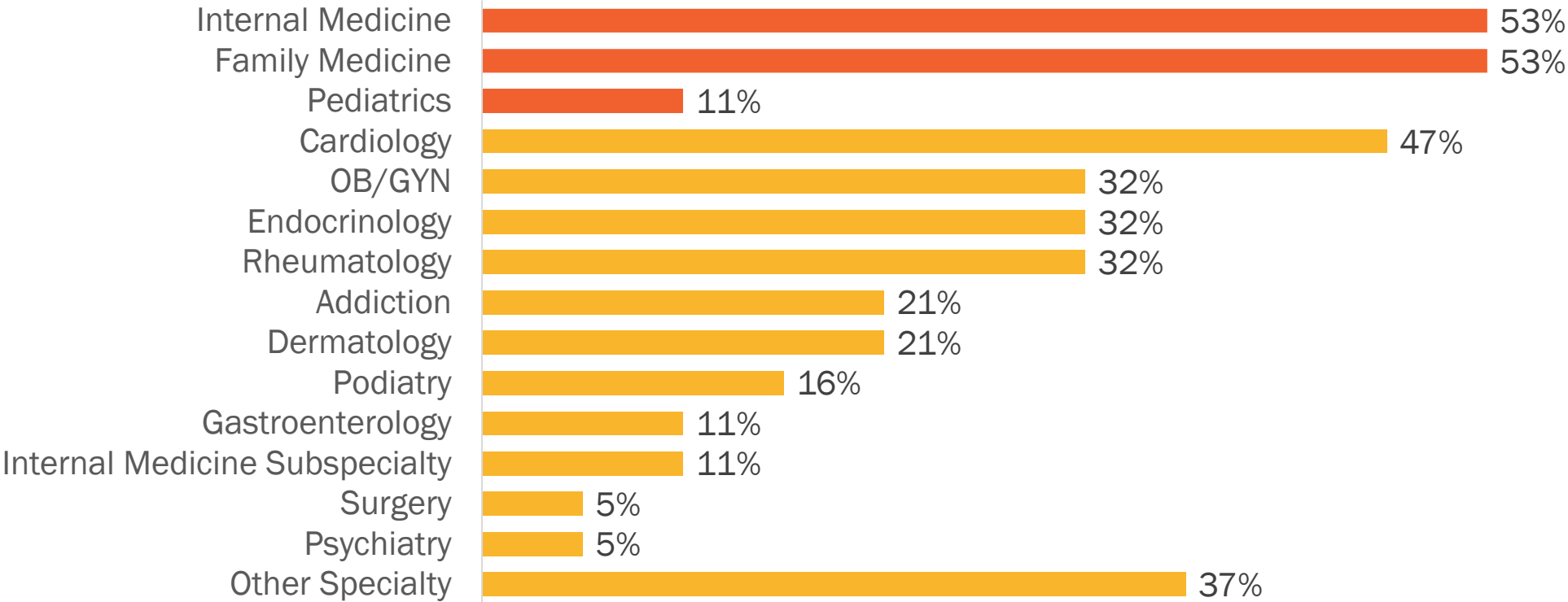
During 2020 (n=11)





MATCHING PROCESS:

MOST HEALTH CENTERS WERE LOOKING FOR PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS, FOLLOWED BY SOME SPECIALISTS





MATCHING CHALLENGE:

THERE IS A POTENTIAL MISMATCH BETWEEN HEALTH CENTERS' NEEDS AND INTERESTED PHYSICIANS

25% of applicants are a good match because they can work in primary care

internal medicine, family medicine
pediatrics, and emergency medicine

25%

48% of applicants have specialties that are sometimes a good match for health centers

cardiology OB/GYN podiatry neurology rheumatology
orthopedics surgery otolaryngology

48%

26% of applicants have specialties that are not a good match

anesthesia oncology physical med
radiology ophthalmology pulmonary

26%

EVALUATION FINDINGS: PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION

SUMMARY

Overall, retired physicians and health centers have been very satisfied with the program.

- Health centers reported high satisfaction with the matching process, Encore physicians' quality of care, and support from the Encore Physicians Program
- Encore physicians reported that the program gave them a sense of purpose, they appreciated the part-time schedules, and that the matching process was smooth
- Health centers are overcoming challenges such as working with Encore physicians' part-time schedules to ensure high quality care
- Encore physicians reported that the onboarding and credentialing process at health centers can be time-consuming and that it is important to find a clinic that is a good fit for their skills and time

SUCCESSES—HEALTH CENTERS REPORTED HIGH SATISFACTION WITH:

- The matching process
- Encore physicians' quality of care
- The Encore Physicians Program support, including working with the Program Directors

“Pretty much every single patient that the Encore physician sees talks about how much they love them... They will say how much attention the physician gave them... and how they felt like they were heard.”
- Participating health center

“[The Encore Physician] is a great teacher. They are appreciated by the staff. Staff say they are smart, humble and approachable. They have an excellent attitude. They are a true team player.”
- Participating health center

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES:

- **Productivity standards:** While not all health centers track productivity standards for all types of physicians, they report that Encore physicians are meeting their expectations
- **Continuity of care:** While Encore physicians only work part-time, health centers are able to provide continuity of care by pairing the Encore physicians with other part-time physicians, assigning them to urgent care rather than have them carry a patient panel, and other solutions that ensure quality of care



“[The Encore Physician] has positive feedback from patients and fellow staff on their bedside manner and approachability. They are a very welcome addition to the staff and both patients and staff are thankful for their services.”

– Participating health center



“[The Encore Physician] has been a wonderful addition to the provider team. They are willing to teach and support our providers in caring for their patients, show an obvious commitment to the underserved patient population, and have made it possible for [patients] to attain [specialty] consults regardless of their ability to pay.”

– Participating health center

SUCCESSES—PARTICIPATING PHYSICIANS REPORTED THAT:

- The matching process went smoothly
- They appreciated working reduced schedules in retirement
- The program gave them a sense of purpose

“When people retire [it can result in] a void and impact your sense of self-identity... it’s nice to fall back on the skills you had and still help people. To me, that was one of the nice things about this program.”
- Encore physician

“The interaction with patients is very rewarding. They’re very appreciative of having the clinic there... [and] being able to see a consistent provider.”
- Encore physician

CHALLENGES—PARTICIPATING PHYSICIANS REPORTED THAT:

- Working with a higher need population is both rewarding and challenging
- The onboarding and credentialing process at health centers can be time-consuming
- It is important to find a clinic that is a good fit for their skills and time

“This is a very, very needy population that doesn’t have access to good insurance. Sometimes you’ll order [a prescription] and the pharmacy will say that it’s not covered [by government programs] ... And [if the patient is homeless], how can I give them medicine that needs refrigeration?”

- Encore physician



“It's been very positive and it's definitely been a good fit for me. I feel like I could very possibly continue working for [the health center] for a number of years..”

– Encore Physician



“I would make sure that the new providers were aware that there are options as far as how to optimize the schedule to fit yourself. I'd tell them that clinics do expect you to work a more regular schedule, but definitely will let you modify it down.”

– Encore physician

EVALUATION FINDINGS: OUTCOMES

SUMMARY

Encore physicians helped expand workforce capacity and access to care, while benefitting from their participation.

- The ability of the Encore Physicians Program to place both primary care physicians and specialists enhances its potential to address workforce issues.
- Some specialists - such as OBGYNs, cardiologists, podiatrists, and orthopedists - are sometimes a good fit for health centers and can fill gaps in specialized care.
- Across the board, health centers reported receiving positive feedback from patients about Encore physicians.
- Encore physicians reported that the placements helped give them a sense of purpose in their retirement.



ENCORE PHYSICIANS HELP EXPAND WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND ACCESS TO CARE

- The ability of the Encore Physicians Program to place both primary care physicians and specialists enhances its potential to **address workforce issues**.
- Some specialists - such as OBGYNs, cardiologists, podiatrists, orthopedists - can be a good fit for health centers and can fill gaps in specialized care, reducing referrals and expediting care.



ENCORE PHYSICIANS ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE AT CLINICS

- Across the board, health centers reported receiving **positive feedback from patients** about Encore physicians.
- Health center staff saw Encore physicians as providing **valuable guidance and support** to their staff.



“We’re able to see more patients [overall] when we have [the Encore physician]. It’s helpful that it’s a doctor with lots of experience.”

– Participating health center



“Health centers typically really value a few hours a week of consultative specialists like cardiology, endocrinology, podiatry, and dermatology... If Encore provides physicians in some of these consultative specialties, it's a high value.”

– Health center workforce expert



FOR THE ENCORE PHYSICIANS, THE EXPERIENCE IS LIFE-ENHANCING

- Encore physicians reported that the placements helped give them **a sense of purpose** in their retirement.
- Positive interactions with patients and other health center staff were **rewarding**.
- They gained a more holistic **understanding** of the health care system provider team.



“It's been very positive and it's definitely a good fit for me. I feel like I could very possibly continue working for [the health center] for a number of years.”

– Encore physician



“I want to work with the underserved.
I also think the fact that I got my
vaccine made me feel like I need to
contribute to the community somehow.”

– Encore physician

A person wearing a white face mask is shown from the chest up, looking down. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color. On the left side, white text is displayed in a bold, sans-serif font.

SUPPORTING HEALTH CENTERS DURING COVID-19 (2020 EVALUATION)



WHEN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC TOOK HOLD IN THE BAY AREA, THE EVALUATION APPROACH PIVOTED TO FOCUS ON:

- Understanding the impact of COVID on health centers and physicians
- Documenting how the program pivoted its approach to support health centers

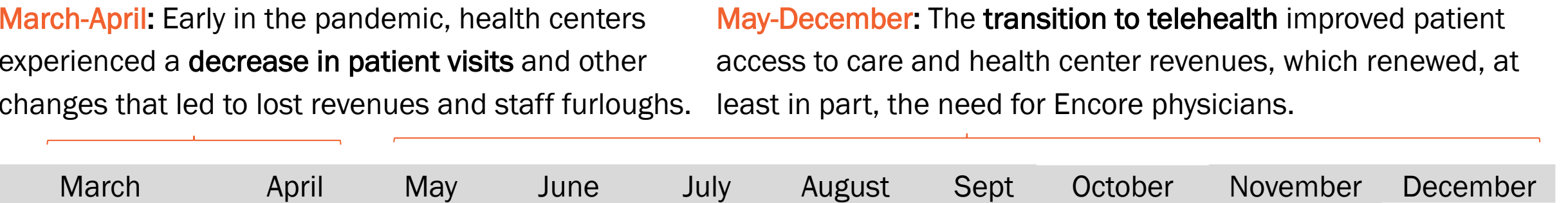
SUMMARY

While program participation slowed at the start of pandemic, interest in the program remained strong at the end of 2020.

- In Spring 2020 at the start of the pandemic in the US, health centers experienced a decrease in patient visits and other changes that led to lost revenues and staff furloughs. Later in 2020, the transition to telehealth improved patient access to care and health center revenues, which renewed, at least in part, the need for Encore physicians.
- Physician interest in the program remained strong, with Encore physicians returning to their placements throughout Summer 2020 and more physicians applying toward the end of the year.
- The Encore Physicians Program made some adaptations during the pandemic, with many physicians working virtually. This shift to telehealth may provide opportunities to adapt the program.



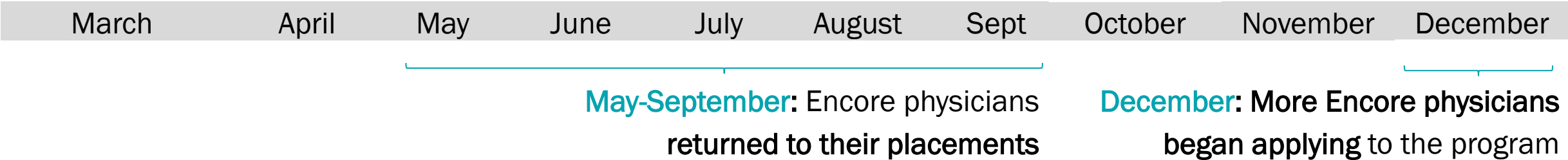
HEALTH CENTERS' STAFFING NEEDS SHIFTED THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC





PHYSICIAN INTEREST IN THE PROGRAM REMAINED STRONG

The Encore Physicians Program received 14 new physician applicants in the last part of 2020





“Several of the health centers were able to create telehealth positions for the [existing] Encore physicians. Within about two months, several of the health centers were having the Encore physicians come back to do one day in the clinic and one day of telehealth.”

– Encore staff member



“We’re used to working by email or by phone which, if the patient doesn’t really need to be seen, that's the way to do it.”

– Encore Physician



THE ENCORE PHYSICIANS PROGRAM MADE SOME ADAPTATIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC

- Recruitment and matching for the Encore Physicians Program shifted to a **virtual model**
- Encore physicians generally **transitioned smoothly to telehealth**, with some challenges.
- There may be opportunities for the Encore Physicians Program to support **emerging needs** at health centers



THE SHIFT TO TELEHEALTH MAY PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO ADAPT THE ENCORE PHYSICIANS PROGRAM, INCLUDING:

- Whether the program might place physicians in fully or partially remote positions at health centers long-term
- If telehealth services are best suited to primary and/or specialty care physicians
- How the guidelines may continue to shift regarding providing remote care

A person is sitting at a desk, working on a laptop. The laptop screen shows a video call with a woman. There is a white water bottle on the desk next to the laptop. The background is slightly blurred, showing some plants and office equipment. The entire image is overlaid with a teal gradient.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR 2022 AND BEYOND



CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM

- The Encore Physicians Program shows **continued promise** for addressing health center needs
- **Matching health center needs with available physicians** requires ongoing work
- There may be a greater need for retired physicians who are **multi-lingual** and can provide culturally competent care
- Health centers should **continue to learn from one another** about how to best support Encore physicians



CONSIDERATIONS FOR EXPANSION

- The shift to **telehealth** may provide opportunities to adapt the Encore Physicians Program
- There are several opportunities to sustain and expand the program, including charging a **recruitment fee** to health centers and expanding to **new geographies**
- It will be important to ensure the **alignment of partners** as the program grows
- There may be opportunities to expand this program model to **other health professions**