

ABSTRACT

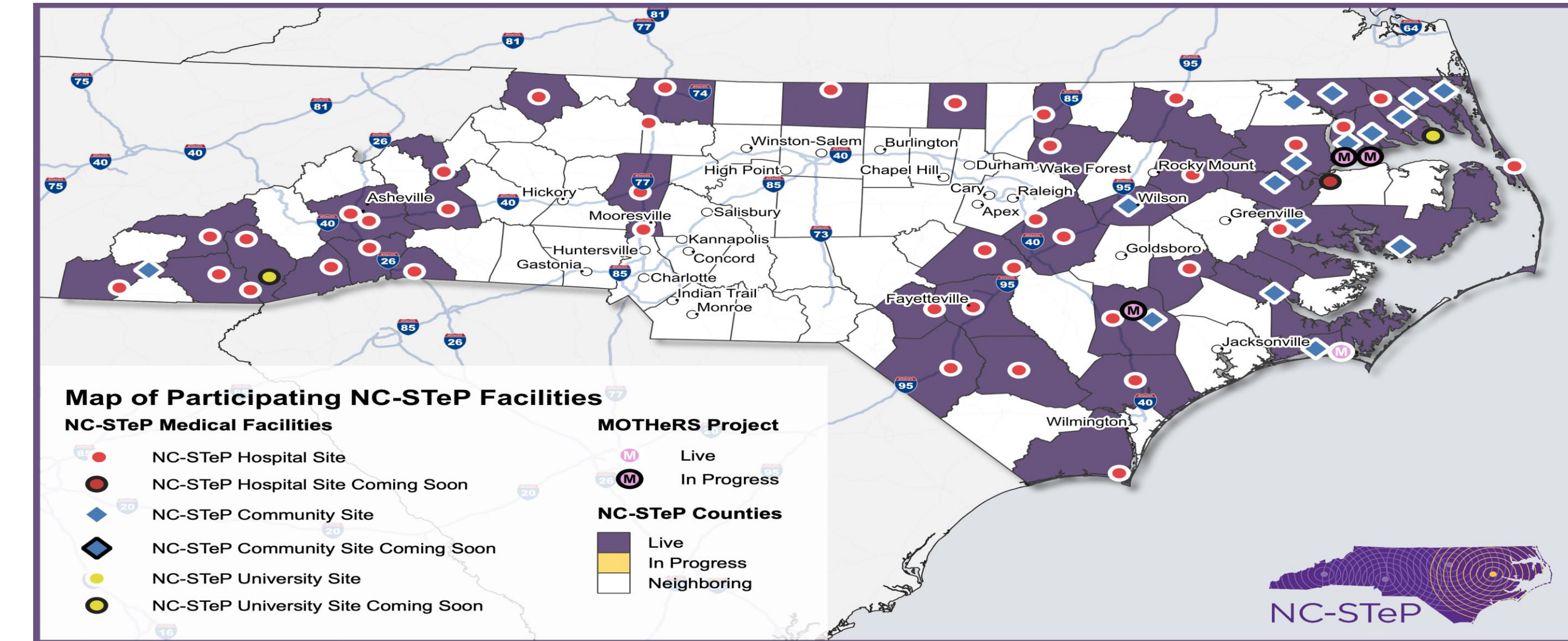
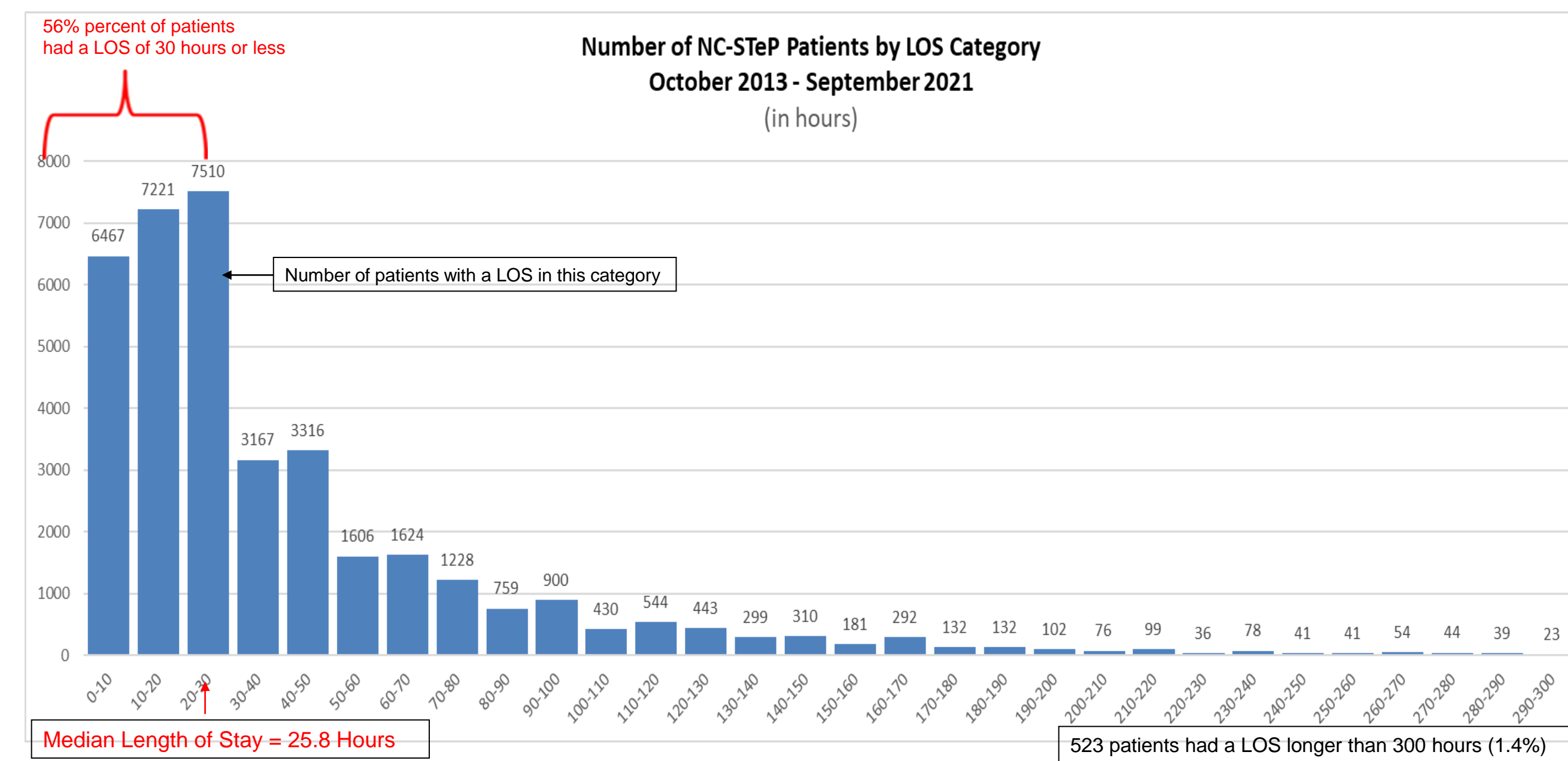
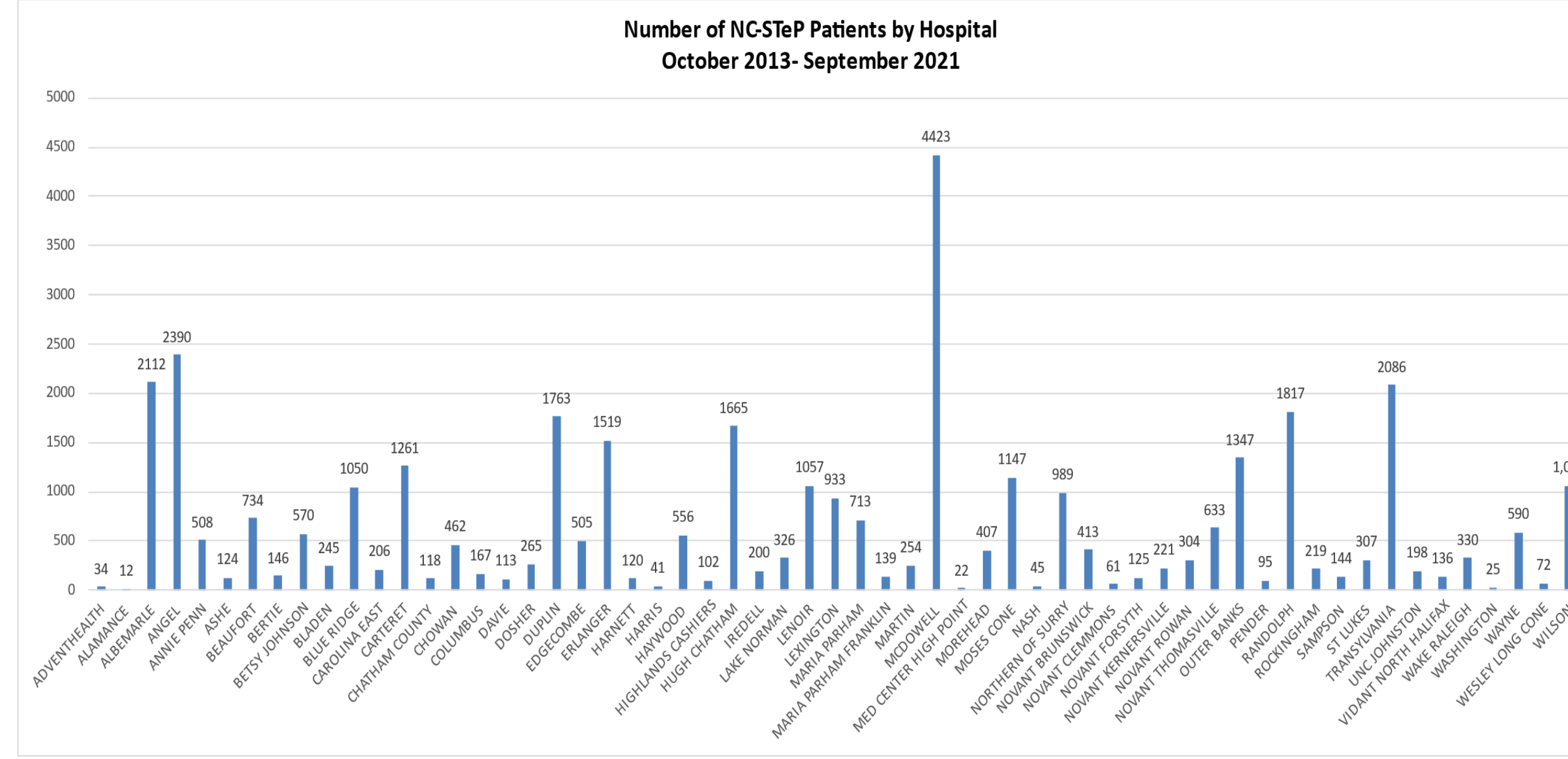
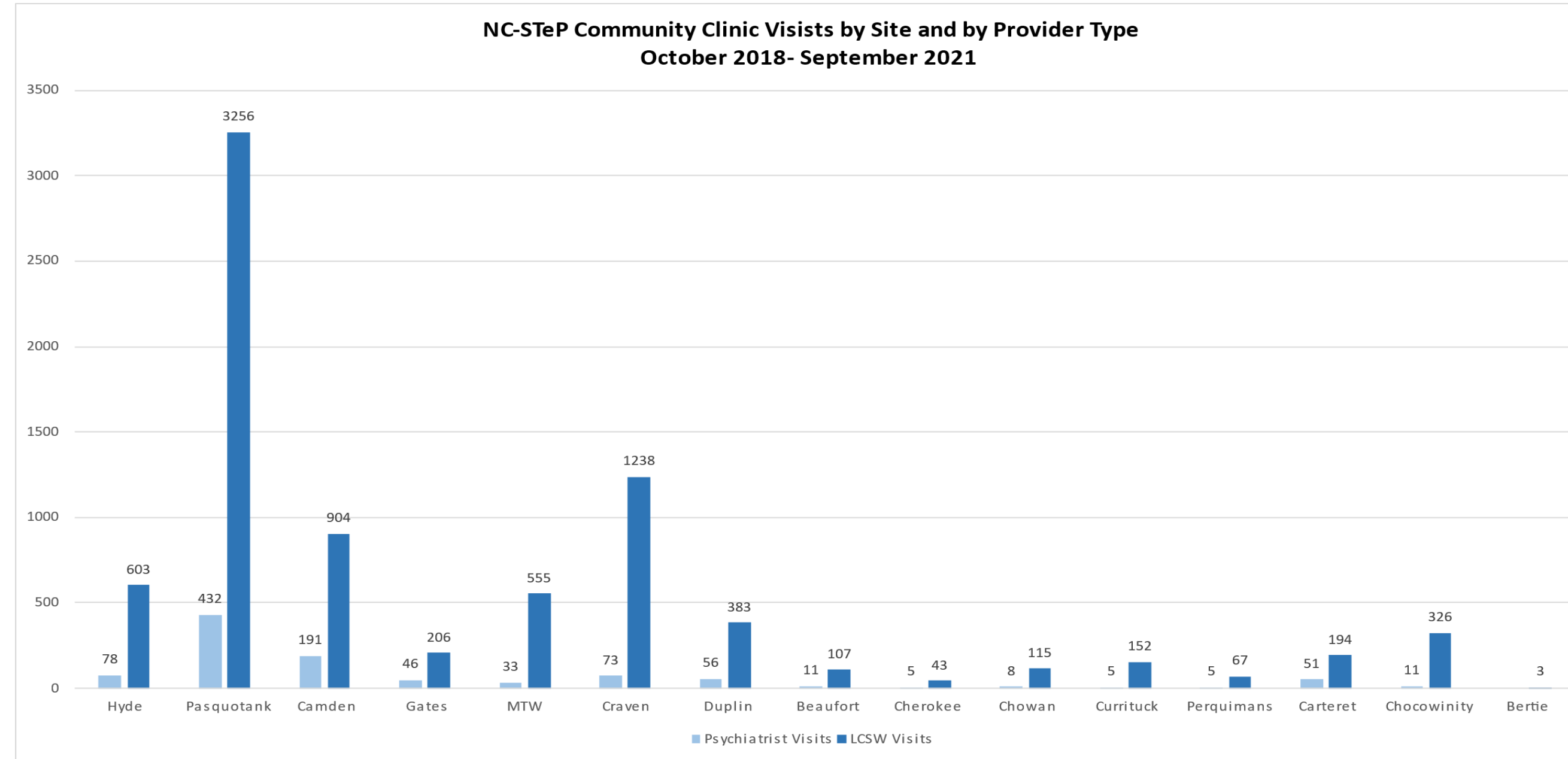
North Carolina Statewide Telepsychiatry program (NC-STeP) provides telepsychiatry services in hospital emergency departments to individuals experiencing an acute behavioral health crisis. The program has significantly reduced patient length of stay in emergency departments (EDs), provided cost savings to the health care delivery system through overturned involuntary commitments, and has achieved high rates of staff and provider satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

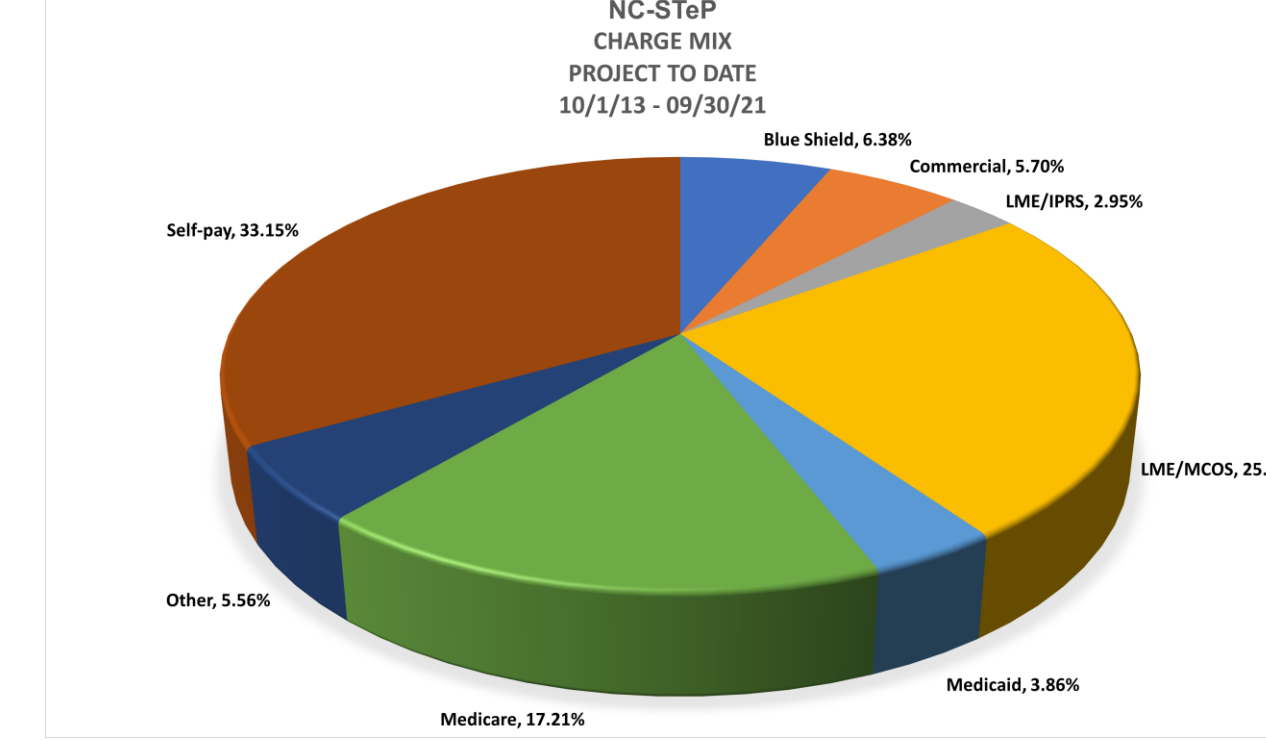
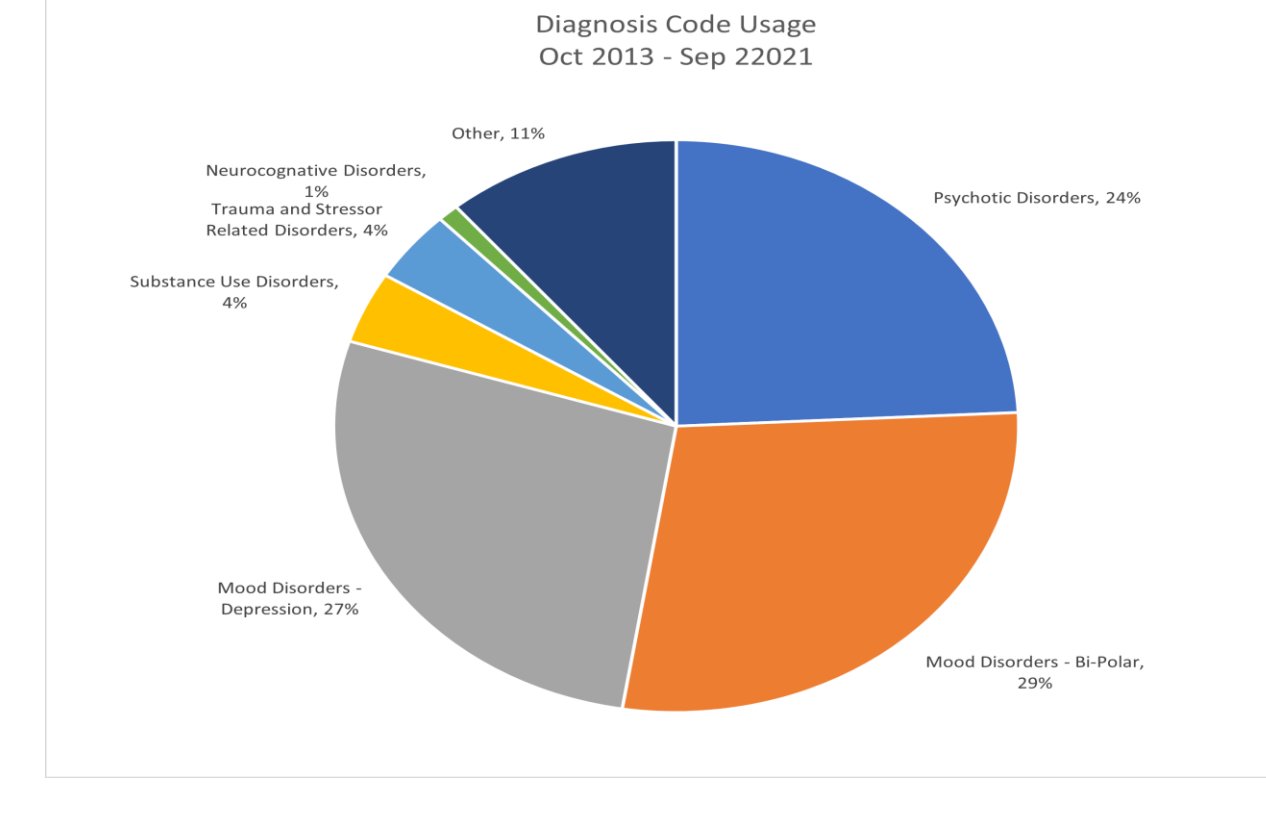
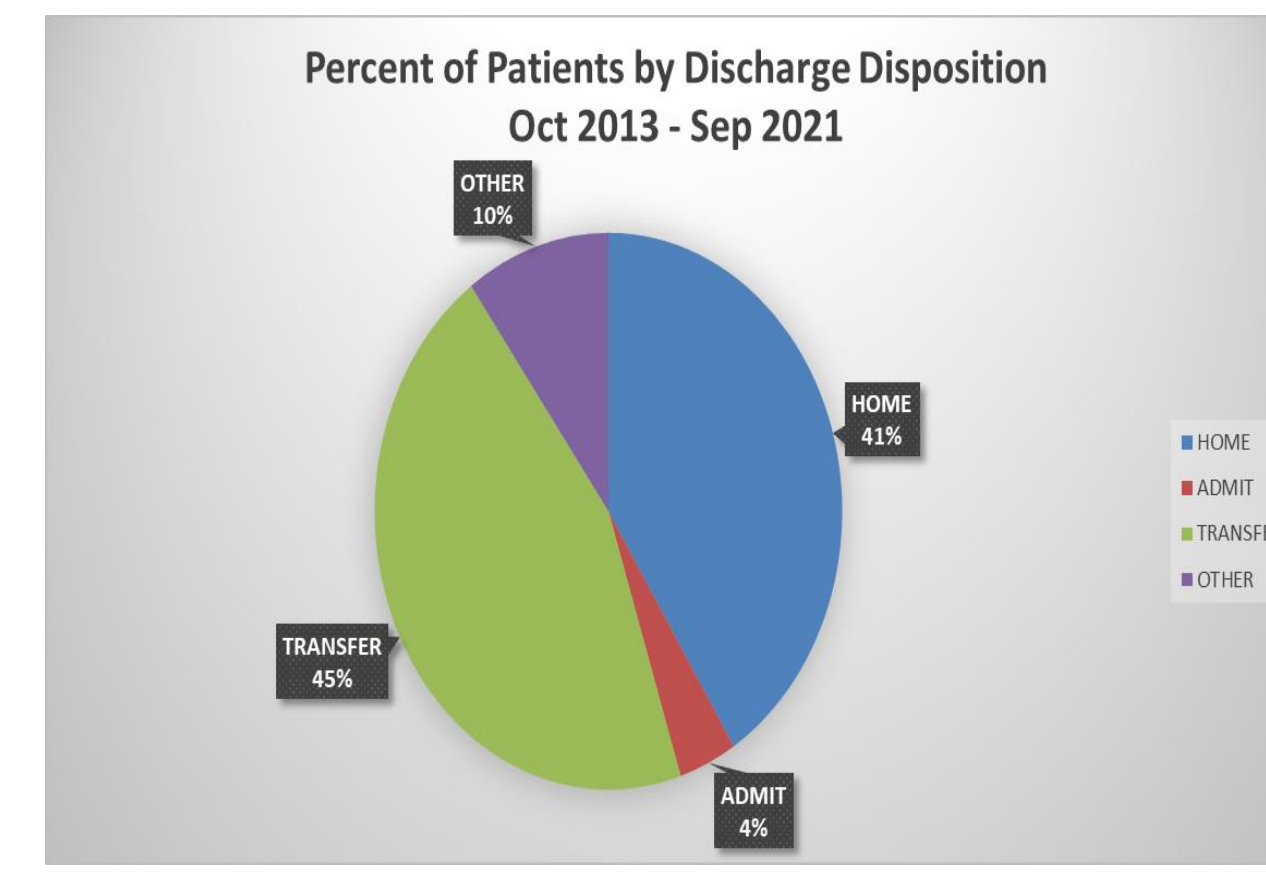
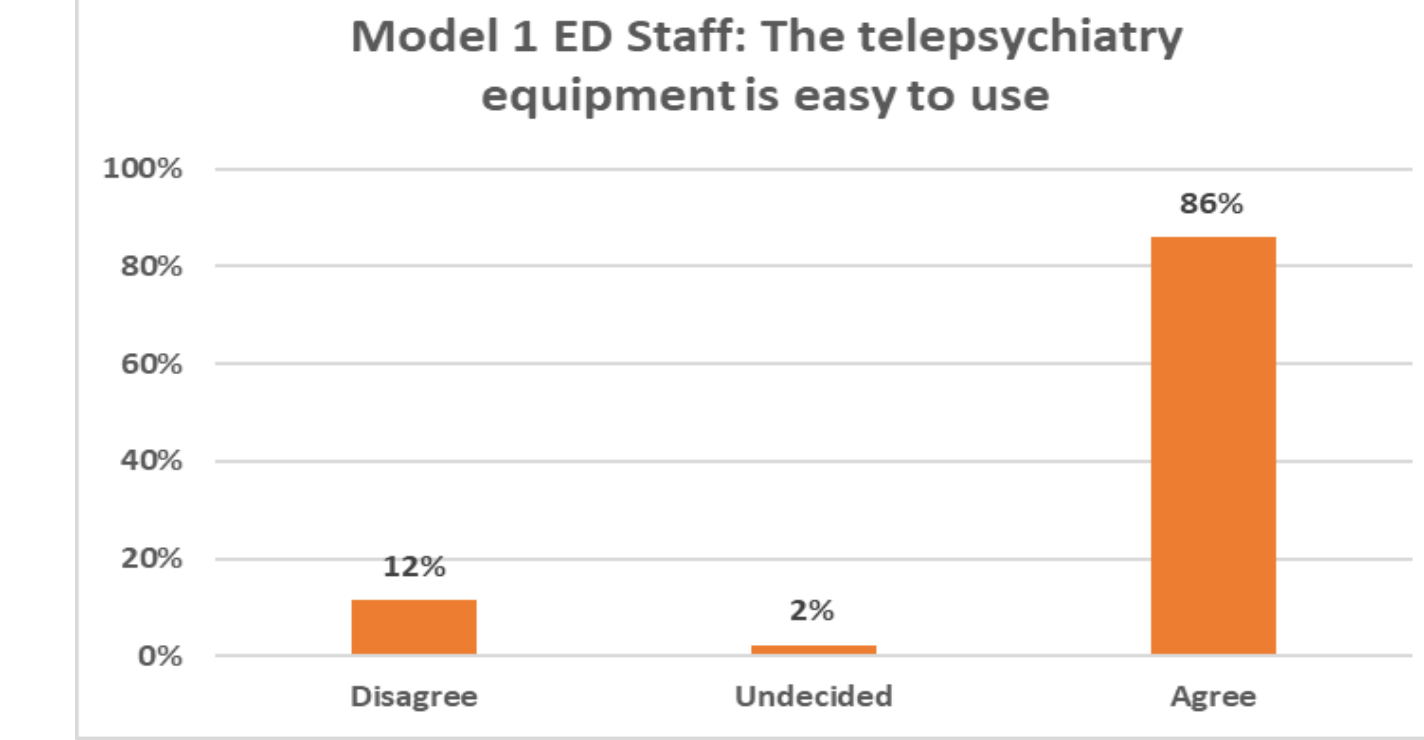
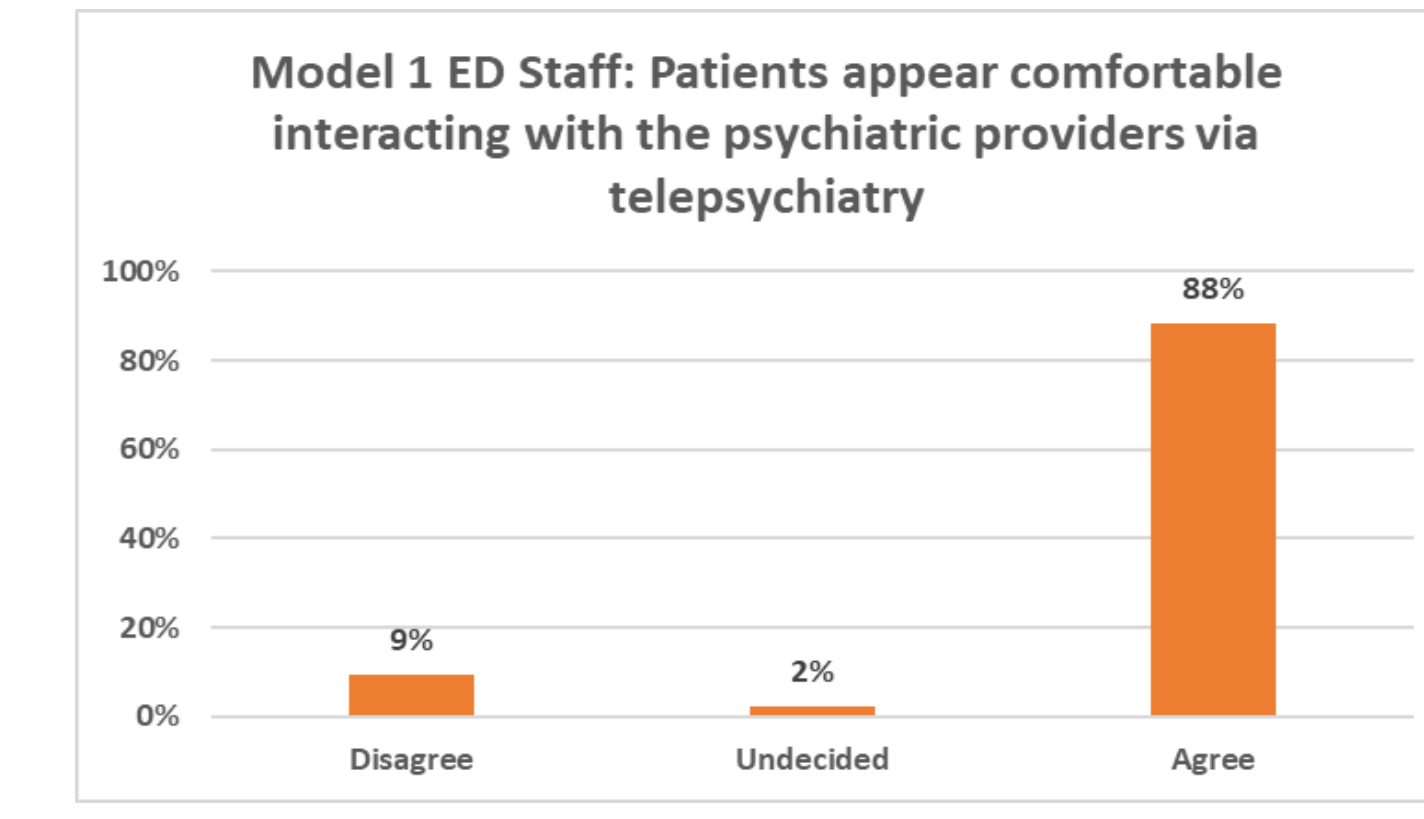
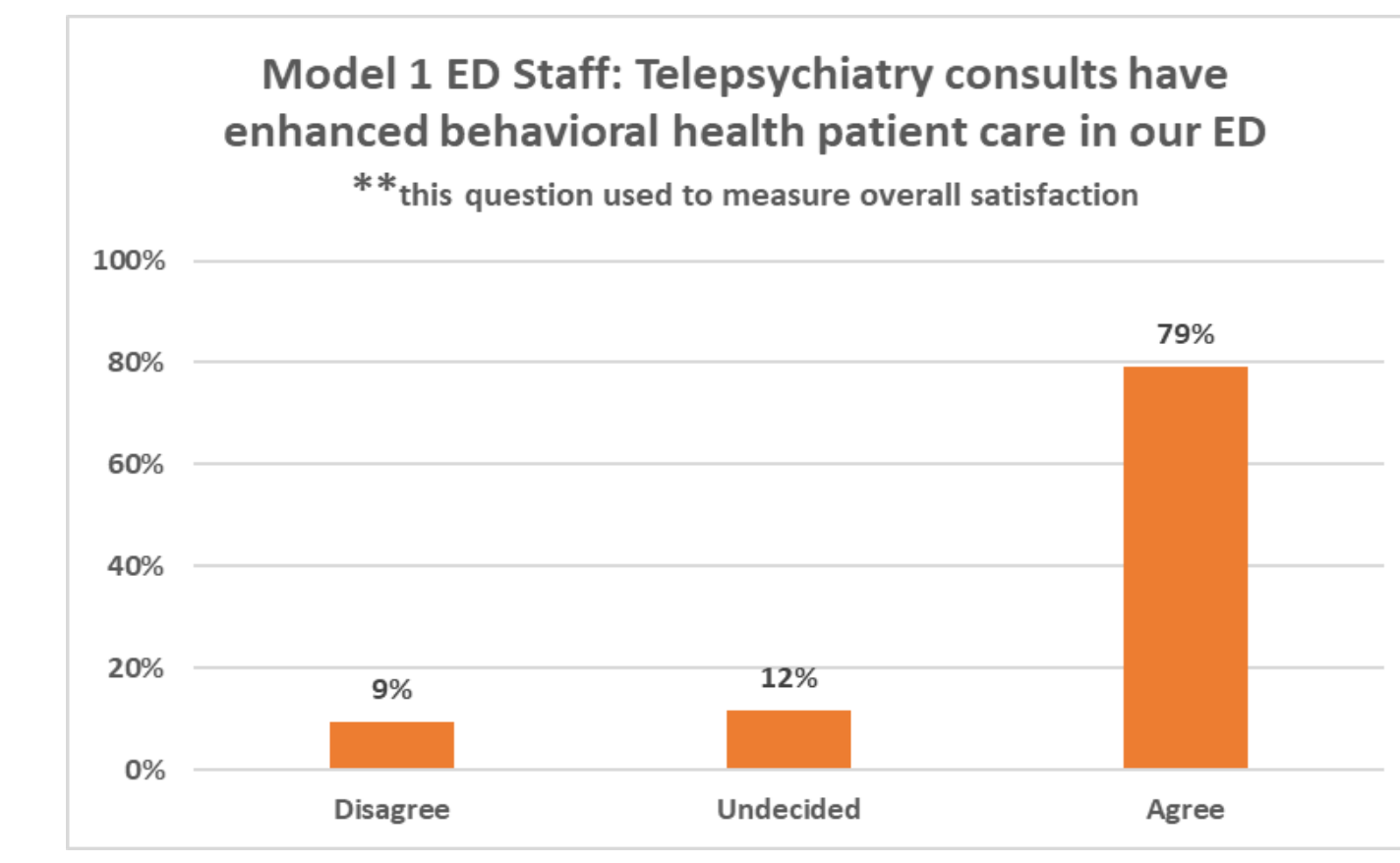
Mental disorders are common and they are associated with high levels of distress, morbidity, disability, and mortality. Many people with these disorders do not have access to psychiatrist services due to the shortage and mal-distribution of psychiatrists. This has resulted in patients going to hospital emergency departments (EDs) to seek services, resulting in long lengths of stay (LOS) and boarding of psychiatric patients in EDs. NC-STeP was developed in response to NC Session Law 2013-360 which was recodified as G.S.143B-139 in 2018 which expanded the scope of NC-STeP to community-based settings in addition to emergency departments. The vision of NC-STeP is to assure that individuals who present to EDs anywhere in the state of North Carolina experiencing an acute behavioral health crisis will receive timely, evidenced-based psychiatric treatment. East Carolina University's Center for Telepsychiatry is the home for this program that is connecting 41 hospital EDs across North Carolina

MATERIALS AND METHODS

NC-STeP utilizes telepsychiatry, which provides the patient with a face-to-face interaction with the provider through real time video-conferencing technology. Videoconferencing is facilitated using mobile carts and desktop units. A web portal has been designed and implemented that combines scheduling, EMR, and data management systems.



Satisfaction Survey



RESULTS

- 41 hospitals in the network with 40 live
- 6 clinical provider hubs operational
- 49,643 telepsychiatry assessments completed as of September, 2021
- Average time from request to completed consult 3:43 (hr:mins)
- Total of 22,127 IVCs were reported of which 7,662 IVCs were overturned
- Of the ED patients who received telepsychiatry services, 41% were discharged to home and 45% were discharged to another facility.
- 33% of patients served were uninsured
- Median length of stay for all ED telepsychiatry patients was 25.8 hours
- 16 community site clinics
- Total patient visits 9,346
 - visits with Psychiatrist 1,016
 - visits with LCSW 8,243

DISCUSSION

- NC-STeP is positioned well to create collaborative linkages and develop innovative models of mental health care:
 - ED's and hospitals
 - Community-based mental health providers
 - Primary care providers
 - FQHCs and public health centers

NEXT STEPS

- 25 community site clinics by end of 2022 (subject to funding)
- Continuous improvement of telecommunication methods and web based portal, linking hospitals and providers in sharing information for schedule of patient, exchange clinical data and support the administrative and billing functions
- Evidence based practices employing standardized treatment protocols

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