

## Background

- Health system pharmacies face a severe pharmacy technician staffing shortage. Recent surveys report a turnover rate of 21% to 30%, with a vacancy rate of over 20% and a 48% delay in the expansion of new services due to the current staffing shortage.
- Pharmacy technicians are the lifeline of a specialty pharmacy performing vital functions from prior authorization services, insurance benefit investigation, copay, and foundation assistance, to calling patients for delivery set up.
- We temporarily relied on extending overtime for technicians and utilizing pharmacists for technician tasks to alleviate the staffing shortage.
- With the rapid expansion of our specialty pharmacy services, we realized the need for a comprehensive approach to recruiting and training technicians.

## Objective

- To create a recruitment strategy and implement a state-of-the-art specialty pharmacy training curriculum for specialty pharmacy liaisons.

## Methods

### Recruitment



- Onsite and remote open house organized in conjunction with the human resources department
- Community outreach targeting local community colleges and high school job fairs by pharmacy technician supervisors

### Training



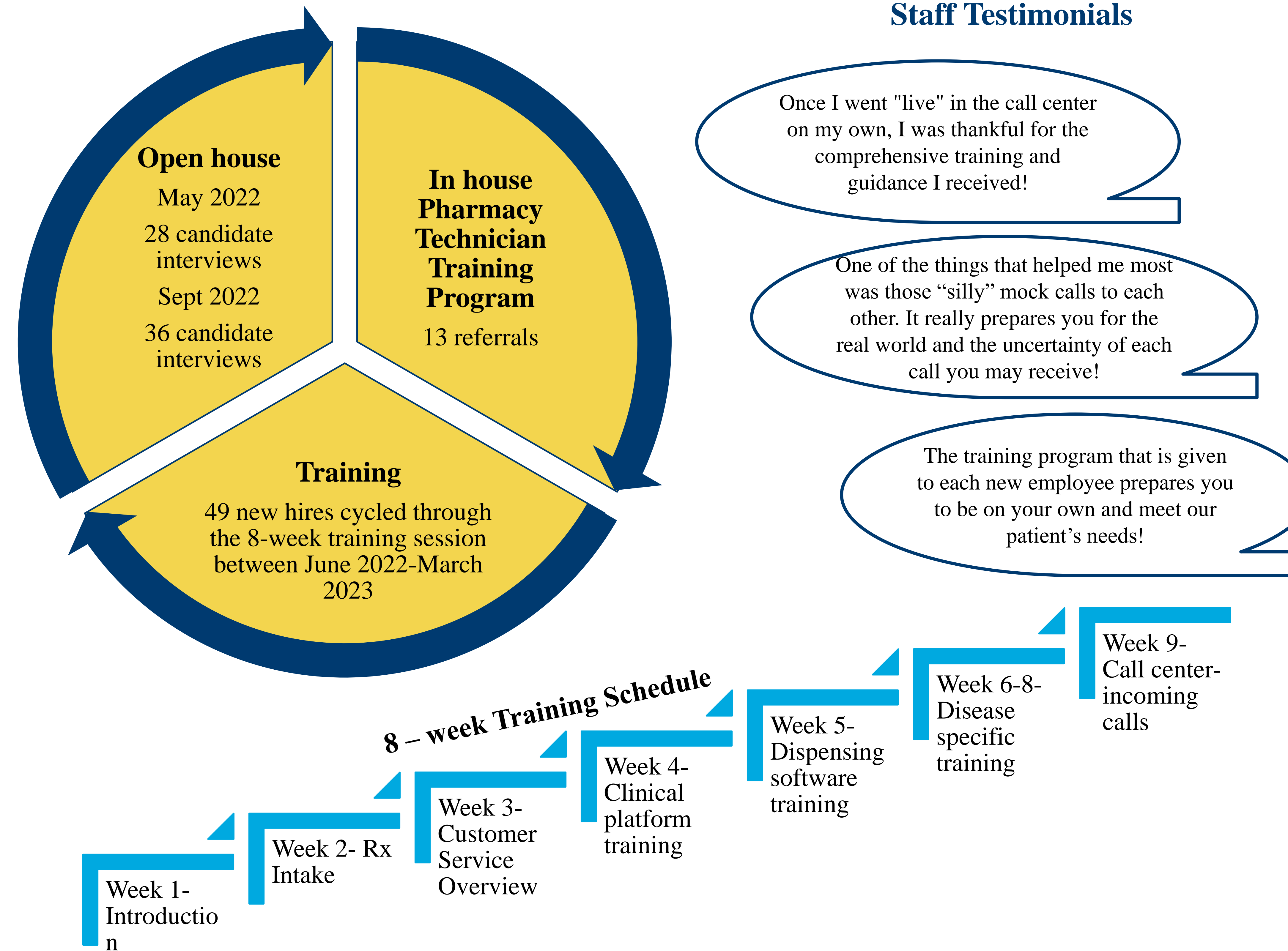
- Training classroom proposal to simulate a live call center submitted and approved
- Education coordinators developed an 8-week curriculum in oncology, transplant, infectious diseases, multiple sclerosis and inflammatory disease states

### Call Center Staffing



- Staffing in the call center under supervision, after the completion of the 8-week training rotation

## Results



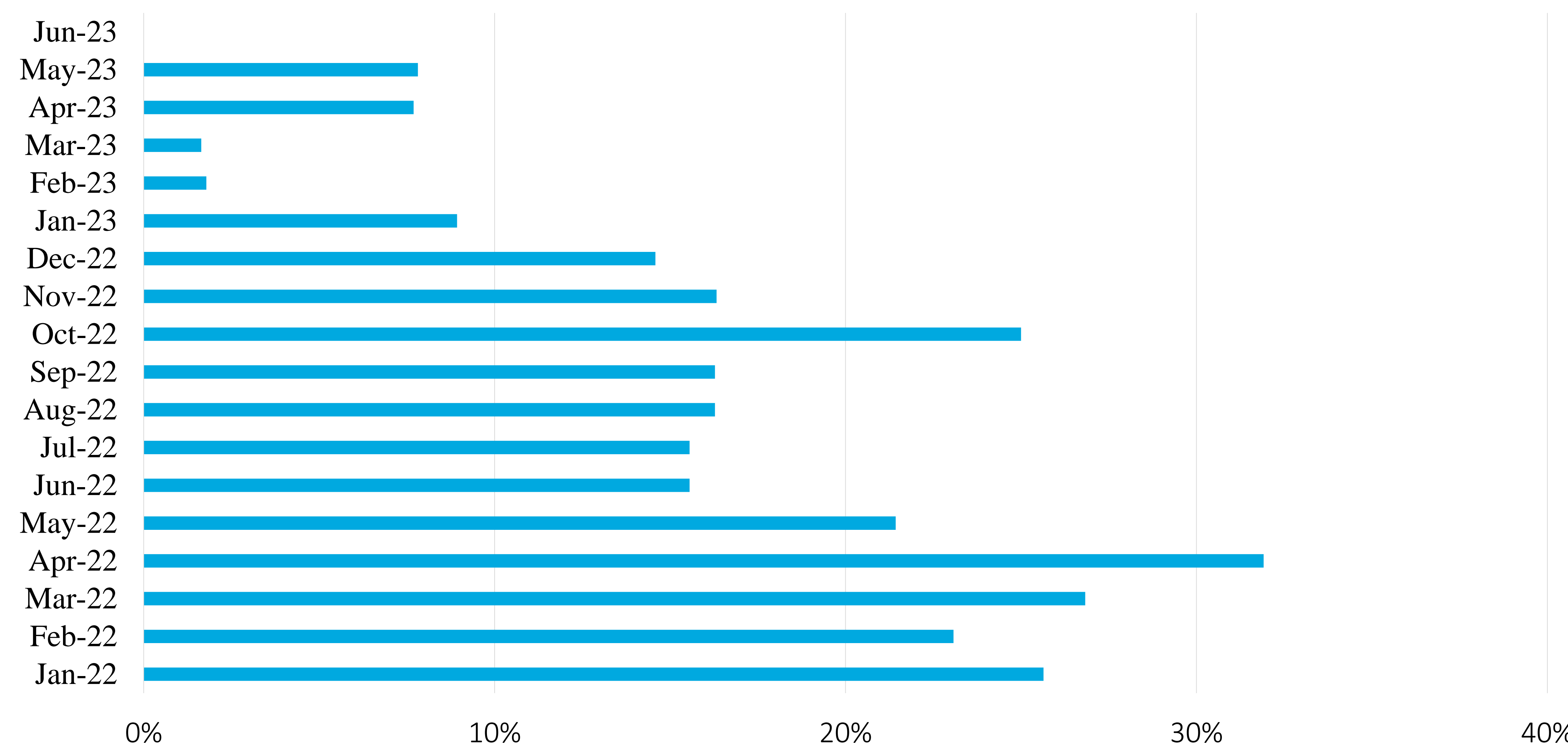
## Staff Testimonials

Once I went "live" in the call center on my own, I was thankful for the comprehensive training and guidance I received!

One of the things that helped me most was those "silly" mock calls to each other. It really prepares you for the real world and the uncertainty of each call you may receive!

The training program that is given to each new employee prepares you to be on your own and meet our patient's needs!

**Percent Vacancy of Specialty Pharmacy Liaisons**



## Discussion

- In 2022, our vacancy rates for the specialty pharmacy liaison position averaged 21% comparable to the national technician shortage.
- For YTD 2023 (until June 2023), our vacancy rates averaged 9%. The vacancy rate for June 2023 was 0%.
- The pharmacy technician recruitment open houses yielded a total of 64 candidate interviews.
- Candidates who did not meet the criteria for the specialty pharmacy liaison position were referred to the inhouse pharmacy technician training program or to our sister retail locations
- Candidates interested in the pharmacy technician training program were given the option of the specialty pharmacy track
- Two education coordinators trained 49 newly hired specialty pharmacy liaisons in a temporary classroom setting

## Barriers/Limitations

- Constant back filling of positions due to specialty pharmacy liaison recruitment from the call center into the prior authorization and medication assistance departments
- Expanded patient management program required the training of newly hired liaisons in additional disease states

## Future Directions

- Development and expansion of the pharmacy technician curriculum to include the two retail locations within our health system.
- Creation of a formal classroom on-site for all pharmacy locations

## Conclusion

A specialty pharmacy focused recruitment and training curriculum resulted in alleviating the specialty pharmacy technician staffing shortage in a HSSP.

## References

1. Pharmacy technician shortage survey findings: executive summary. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. March 2022. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.ashp.org/-/media/assets/pharmacytechnician/docs/Technician-Shortage-Survey-Exec-Summary.pdf>

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