

# Improving the Utilization of the PHQ-9 Tool in Primary Care

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### PROBLEM STATEMENT

- The routine utilization of an evidenced-based standardized evaluation tool such as the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) is necessary to assess the stability of major depressive disorder (MDD) symptoms and improve patient outcomes.
- Primary care providers (PCPs) regularly deliver mental health services to individuals with MDD yet seldom receive guidance to manage the condition after initial diagnosis. As a result, clinical outcomes and treatment response are inadequately managed.

### PROJECT PURPOSE

- The purpose of this project was to improve PCP knowledge regarding management of MDD, implement an evidence-based assessment tool to standardize MDD management, and increase utilization of the PHQ-9 questionnaire to improve patient outcomes.
- Clinical question: In adult patients with major depressive disorder (MDD) currently on antidepressant therapy managed in primary care, does the use of an educational intervention for providers regarding follow up management using the PHQ-9 questionnaire result in improved patient outcomes and standardized provider care?

### MODEL/NURSING THEORY

- This pilot evidence-based QI project was guided by the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) conceptual framework.
- Following the PDSA framework, a retrospective and prospective data review evaluated for a change after implementation of educational intervention regarding PHQ-9 use at follow up visits.

### METHODS

#### Subjects (Participants)

- Patients >/ 18 y.o. with an established diagnosis of MDD currently on antidepressant therapy
- N=102 retrospective review
- N=105 prospective review

#### Setting

- A primary care clinic in the suburban setting treating ~6,000 patients/year.
- Office staff: three providers, three medical assistants, and four clerical staff members.

#### Instruments/Tools

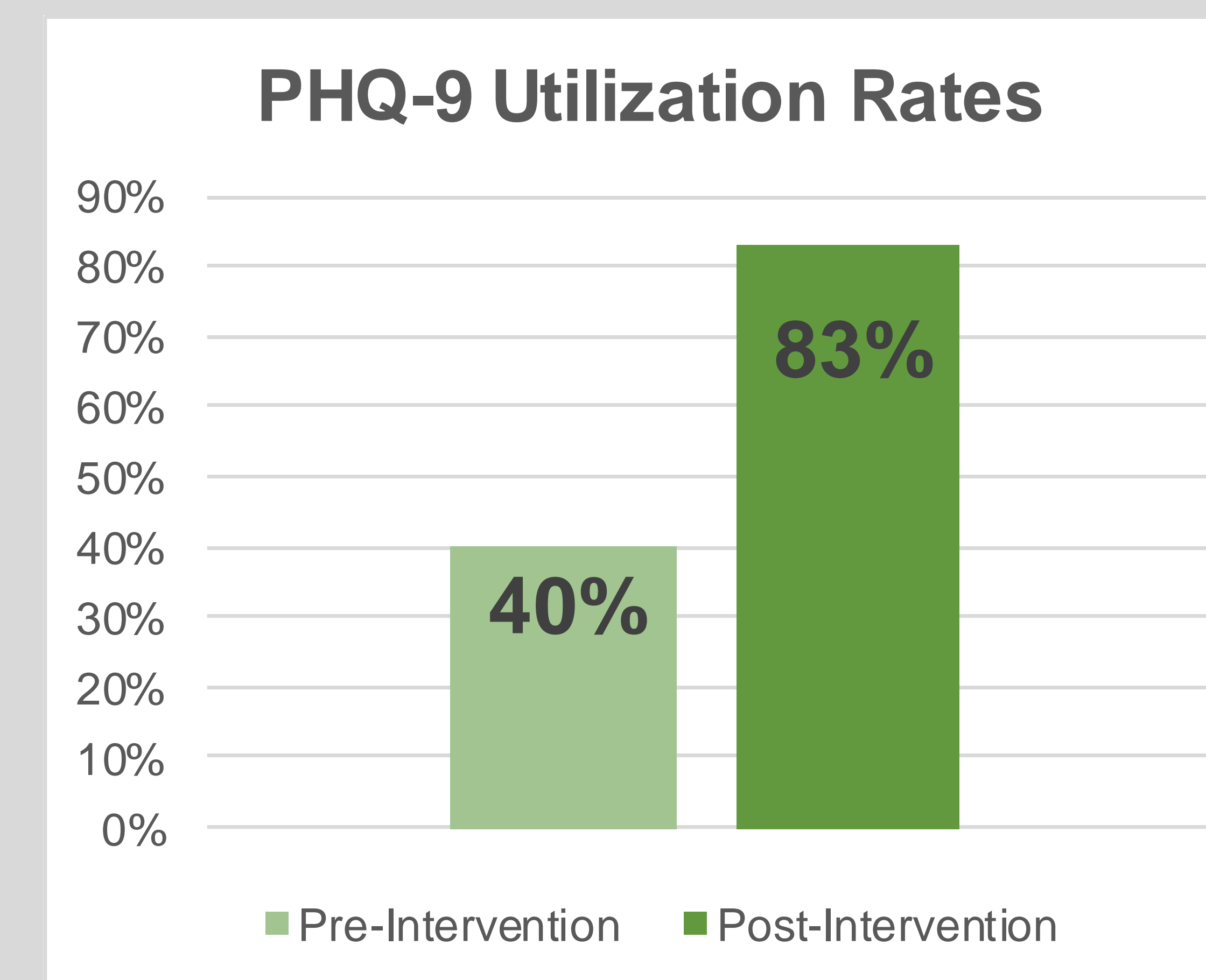
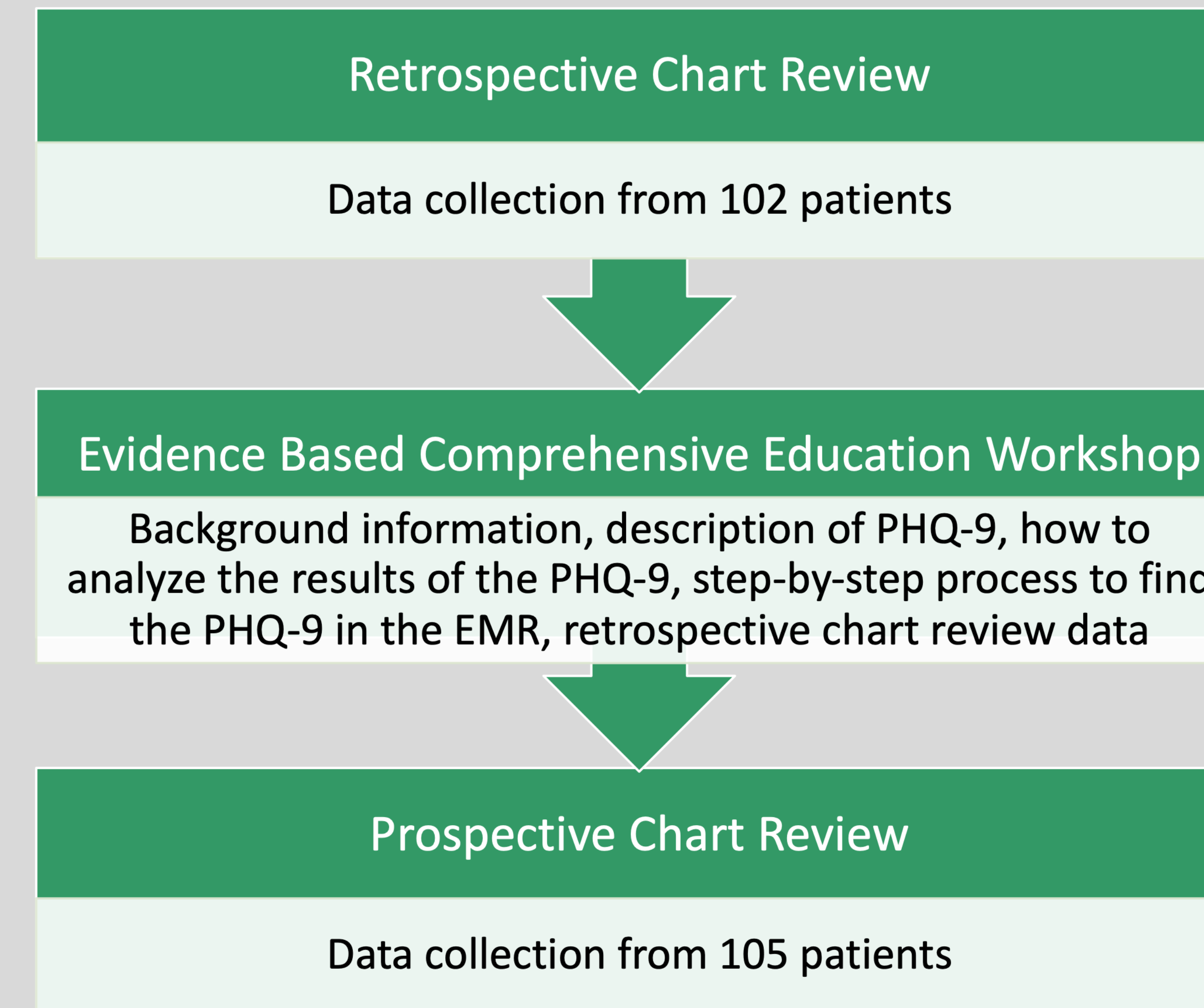
- Pre/posttest electronic chart review collected :PHQ-9 utilization rates, resulting changes in medication therapy, and number of referrals to psychiatry/psychology
- Data was entered & analyzed into SPSS.

#### Intervention and Data Collection

- QI project took place between 11/19-01/20

### RESULTS

- Chi square analysis of pre/post PHQ-9 utilization rates revealed the intervention had a statistically significant effect ( $P < 0.05$ ) on PHQ-9 use.
- Statistical significance ( $P < 0.05$ ) was not reached for one-way ANOVA analysis of PHQ-9 score in relation to a change of medical therapy or mental health referrals.



### DISCUSSION

- The results of the QI project showed successful implementation and adoption of standardized management of patients with MDD on antidepressant therapy in primary care.
- This is evidenced by a statistically significant increase of PHQ-9 utilization rates to 83% following implementation of the educational workshop intervention.
- Statistical significance was not reached for PHQ-9 scores influencing a change in medical therapy or mental health referrals may be due by providers using raw scores for treatment not "category of depression severity" as used in this analysis as well as the stability of the patient population surveyed.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVANCE PRACTICE NURSING

- Increase provider knowledge and utilization of the PHQ9 in primary care to improve patient outcomes.

### SUSTAINABILITY

- Can be easily replicated in similar settings

### REFERENCES



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**PHQ-9 utilization rates improved by 43% following implementation of a standardized protocol.**