

# ESTABLISHING A STANDARDIZED DISCHARGE PROCESS FOR OUTPATIENTS ON CLOZAPINE

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## DESCRIPTION

Humber River Health (HRH) is a community hospital whose Mental Health Department manages over 20,000 outpatient visits annually. The outpatient Clozapine Clinic, serving over 140 patients, is staffed by a Registered Nurse and multiple Psychiatrists. It supports the complex needs of individuals prescribed clozapine, an anti-psychotic for treatment-resistant schizophrenia. As the clinic increasingly accepts acutely ill patients, the lack of a standardized discharge process has led to a backlog of stable patients, limiting access for those with more urgent needs. Given clozapine's stringent prescribing and monitoring requirements, HRH engaged key stakeholders to design and implement a standardized discharge pathway. This transitions stable patients to Primary Care Providers (PCPs), ensuring continued monitoring while optimizing specialized psychiatric resources. Many patients face socioeconomic barriers and belong to marginalized communities. Transitioning care to the community promotes continuity, reduces stigma, and improves access. Ultimately, the project enhances equity by increasing availability of hospital-based psychiatric services for acutely ill individuals.

## OBJECTIVE

To implement a standardized process that facilitates the safe discharge of stable outpatients on clozapine to community-based Primary Care Providers and the HRH Nurse Practitioner (NP).

## ACTIONS TAKEN

In February 2022, a needs assessment was conducted, and key stakeholders were engaged to co-develop a safe and sustainable outflow process. Consensus criteria were created to identify appropriate stable patients, regulatory restrictions for PCP prescribing were clarified, and minimum handover requirements were defined. An outflow process map and templates were developed and refined through multiple iterations with input from HRH's Quality and Patient Safety (QPS) team. A select sample of psychiatrists and patients were consulted and assisted with revisions. For patients ineligible for discharge, a "step-down" pathway was introduced, transitioning care to a departmental Nurse Practitioner. Patients and families were engaged through shared decision-making to support comfort and safety in the transition.

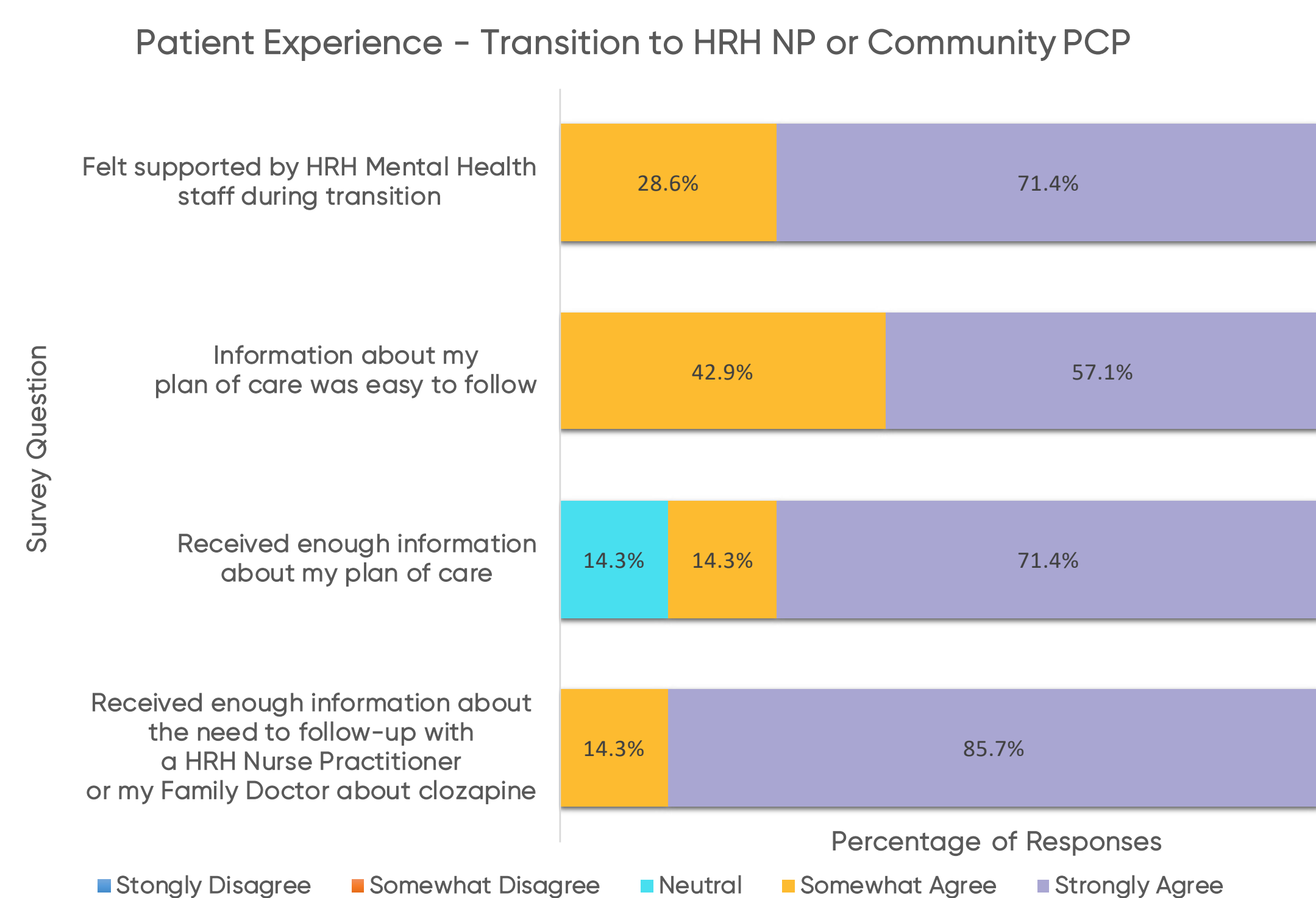


Figure 1. Qualitative Patient Experience Survey data from a sample of patients transitioning through the clozapine discharge pathway showed that patients felt supported and informed during their transition to the HRH NP and Community PCP.

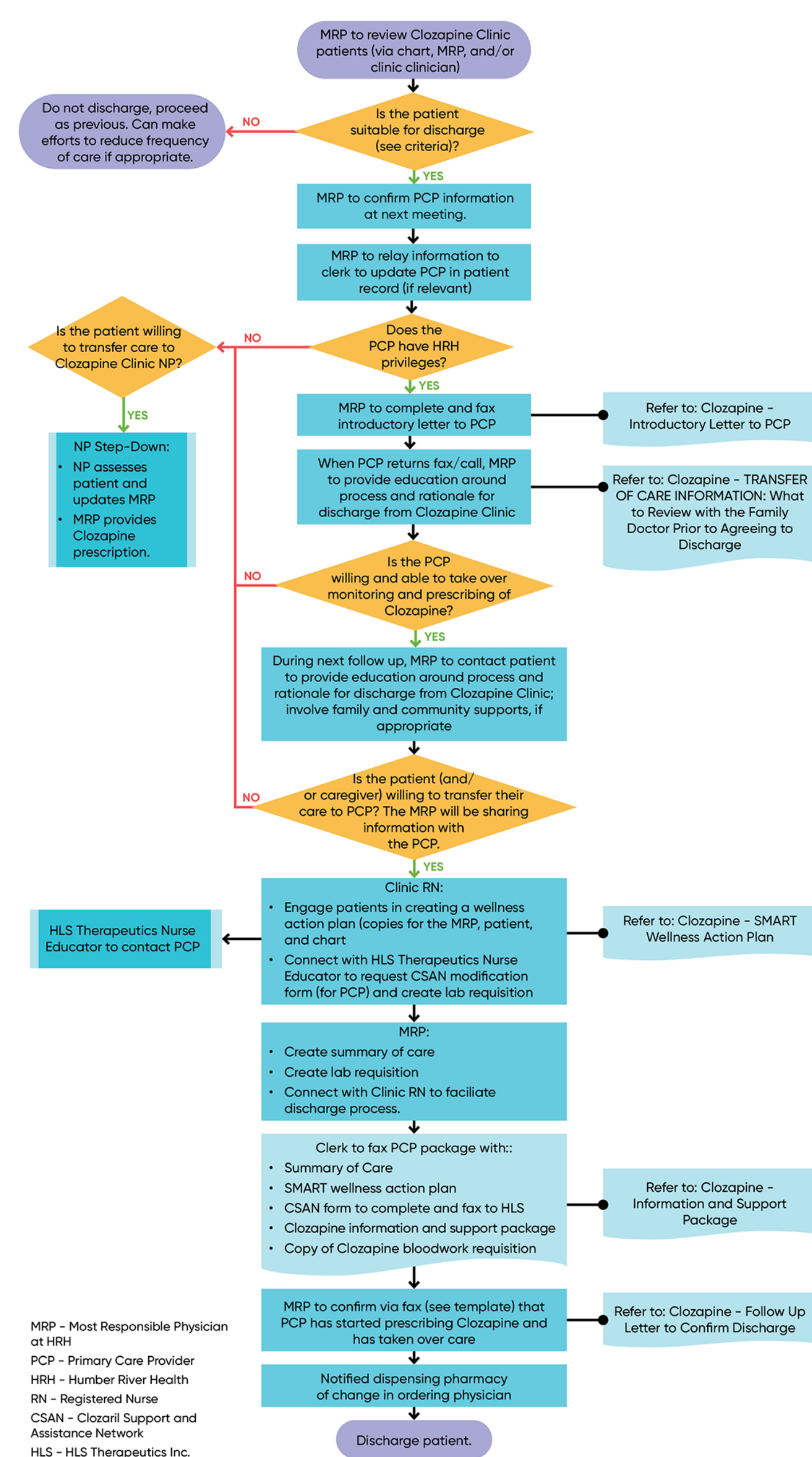


Figure 2. Clozapine discharge transition pathway.

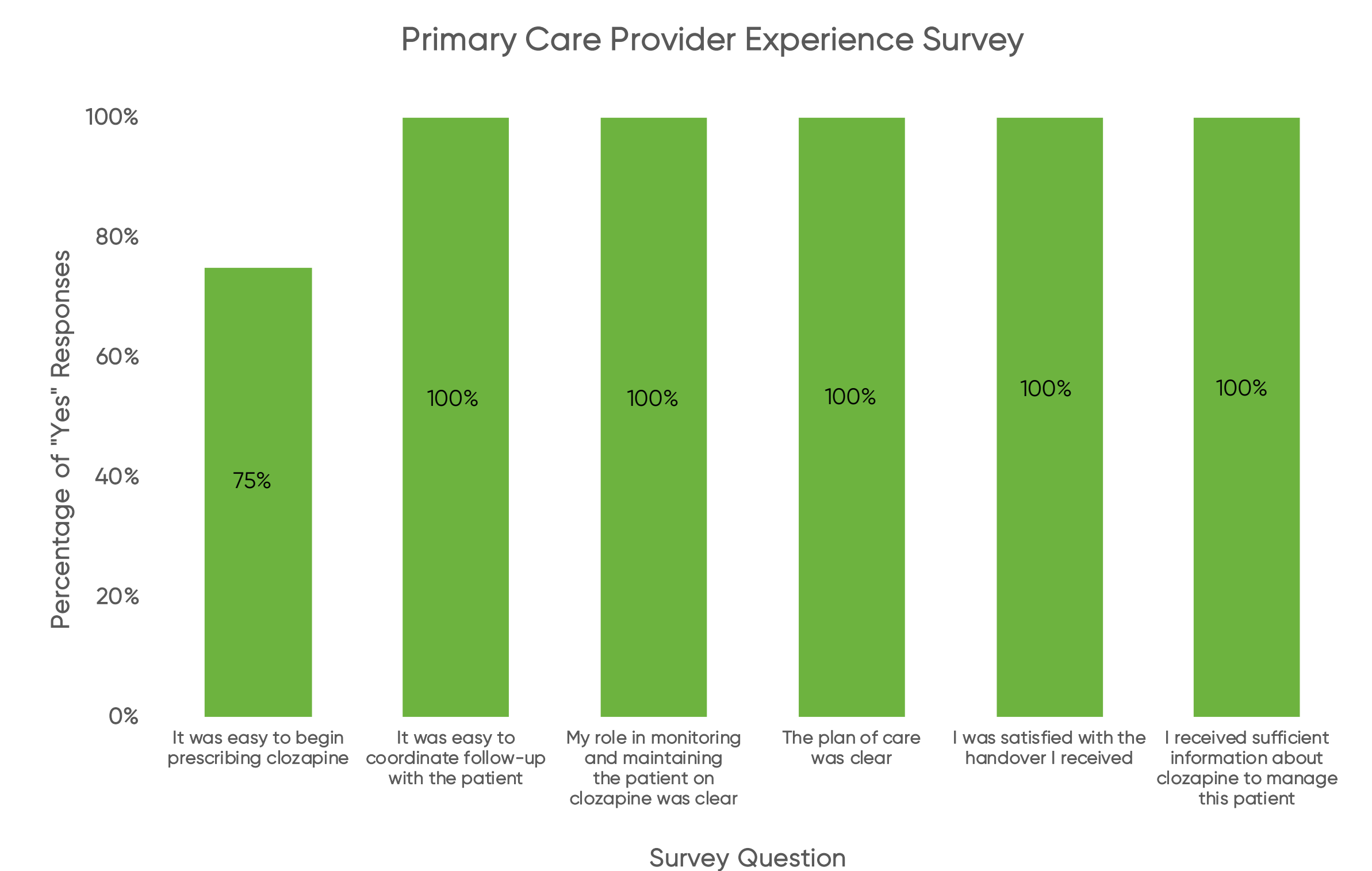


Figure 3. PCP Experience Survey results showed that PCPs had overwhelmingly positive experiences transitioning patients to community care.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

To date, four patients have been discharged, and nine are progressing through the step-down pathway. Patients and PCPs reported high satisfaction with the information and support provided. No adverse outcomes (e.g., readmissions, missed bloodwork, treatment lapses) were reported.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Standardizing discharge processes improved safety and streamlined care transitions. Earlier involvement of QPS and Pharmacy teams would have strengthened alignment with Clozapine prescribing requirements.

