

# STRENGTHENING PATIENT AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF THE ORGANIZATION

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## DESCRIPTION

Partnering with patients, families, and caregivers is integral to improving quality, patient safety, and transparency in maintaining a high reliability healthcare organization. The Patient and Family Advisors (PFA) at Humber River Health (HRH) share their lived experiences across all levels, from frontline quality improvement initiatives to corporate governance. Currently, PFAs are active members at board level and other corporate committees, engage in research projects, program and unit/department level councils. Through continued commitment, advocacy, and inclusion of PFA perspectives in decision-making, aligning with the organization's strategic initiatives and mission, HRH has expanded the integration of these valued voices and center them at the corporate and board level, particularly in strategy and governance.

## OBJECTIVE

To strengthen PFA engagement across the organization by engaging their perspectives in governance, strategy, planning, delivery, and evaluation of care to improve quality and patient safety at HRH.

## ACTIONS TAKEN

- Expanded PFA participation from councils to governance and corporate committees
- Incorporated representation on the Board Quality Assurance Committee.
- Sustained the Corporate Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC), four program-specific PFACs, and 20 unit/department level Reinventing Patient Care Councils (RPCCs).
- Included in research projects and corporate committees (i.e., Surgical Quality Improvement, Infection Prevention and Control, and Corporate Patient Safety Committees).
- Aligned council/committee activities with HRH's Quality and Safety Framework to ensure engagement informs organizational priorities.
- Developed orientation and mentorship supports to prepare PFAs for participation in interdisciplinary and decision-making discussions.
- Strengthened collaboration between councils and corporate teams to align engagement priorities and our continued commitment to patient- and family-centered care.

Patient and Family Advisor Activities at HRH

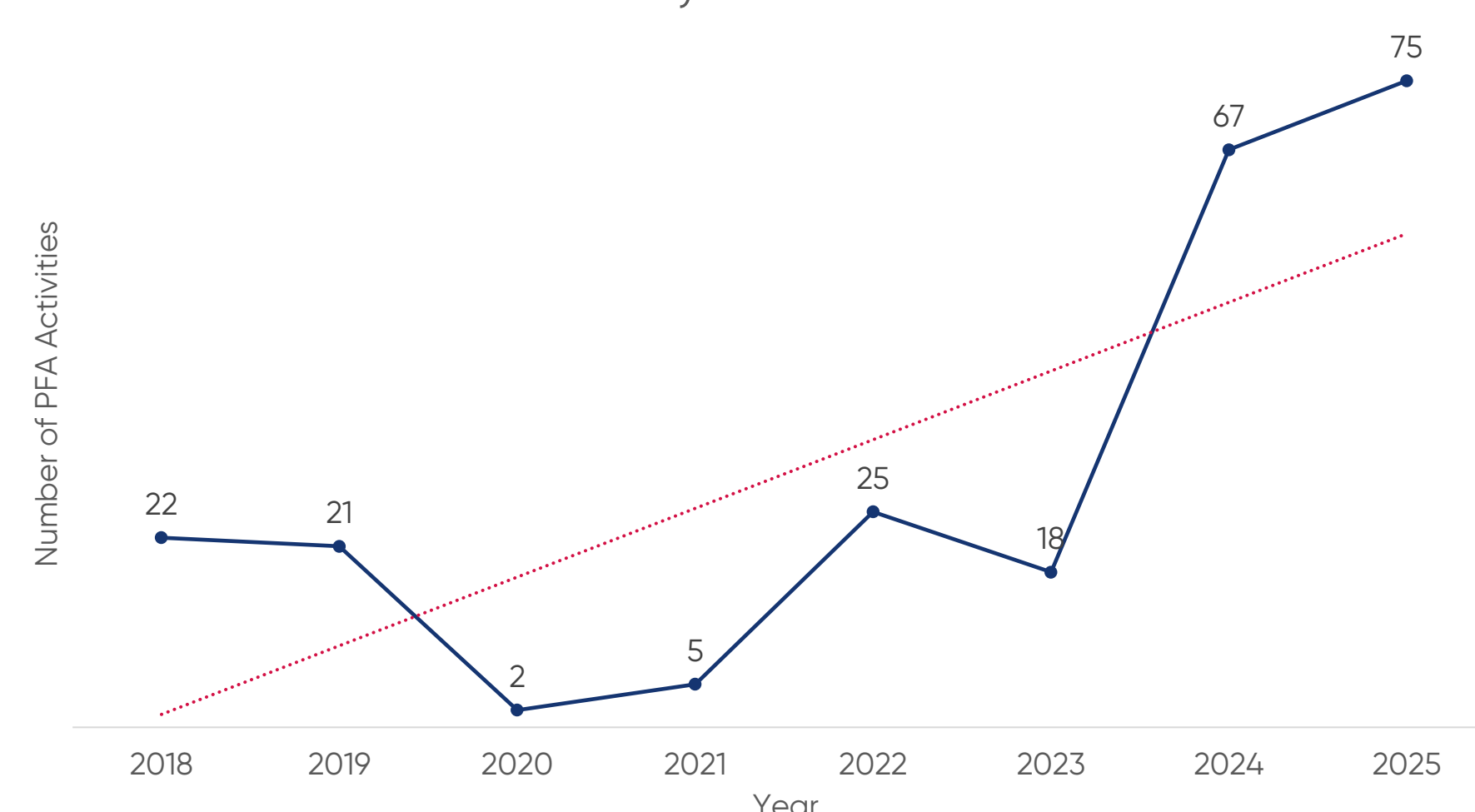


Figure 1. Patient and Family Advisors (PFAs) participate in diverse activities including RPCC projects, board level presentations, forums, and abstract submissions. Broader PFA representation at HRH led to increased engagement across hospital initiatives (average annual increase of 101.3%).

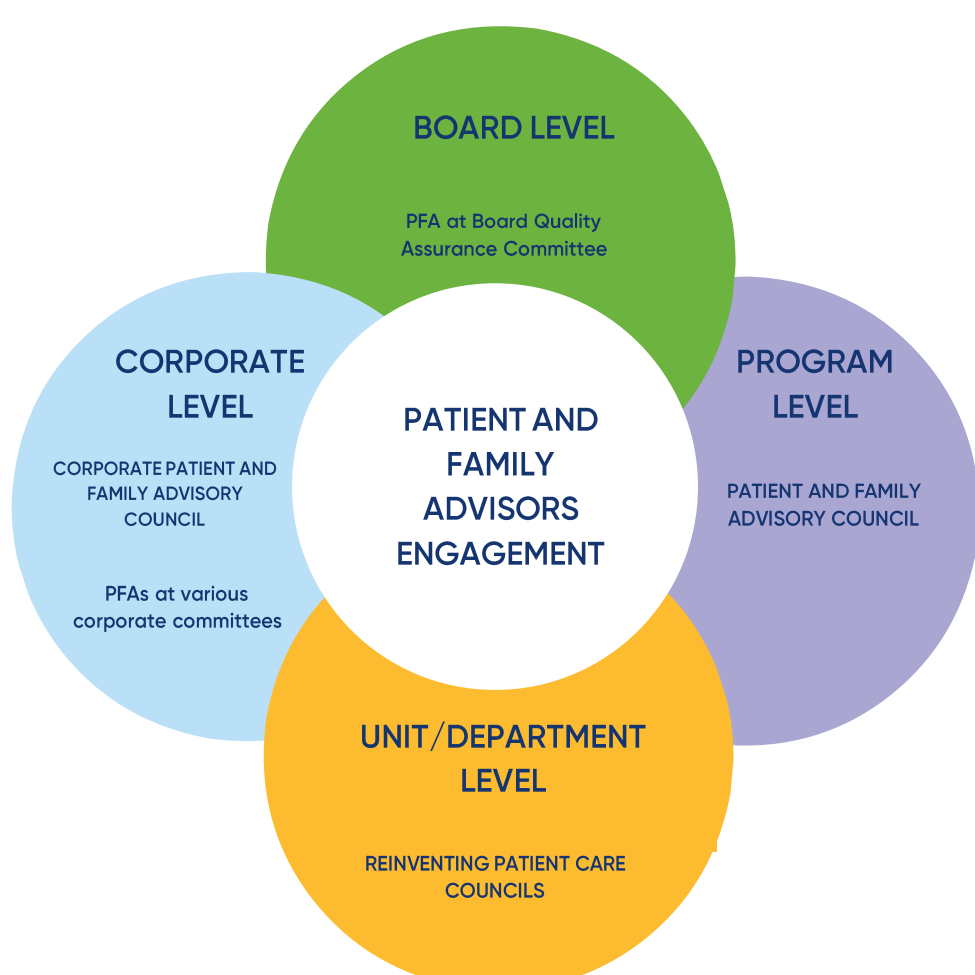


Figure 3. The valuable perspectives of the Patient and Family Advisors at Humber River Health are embedded across all levels of the organization from the unit/department level to the board level.

Number of Patient and Family Advisors

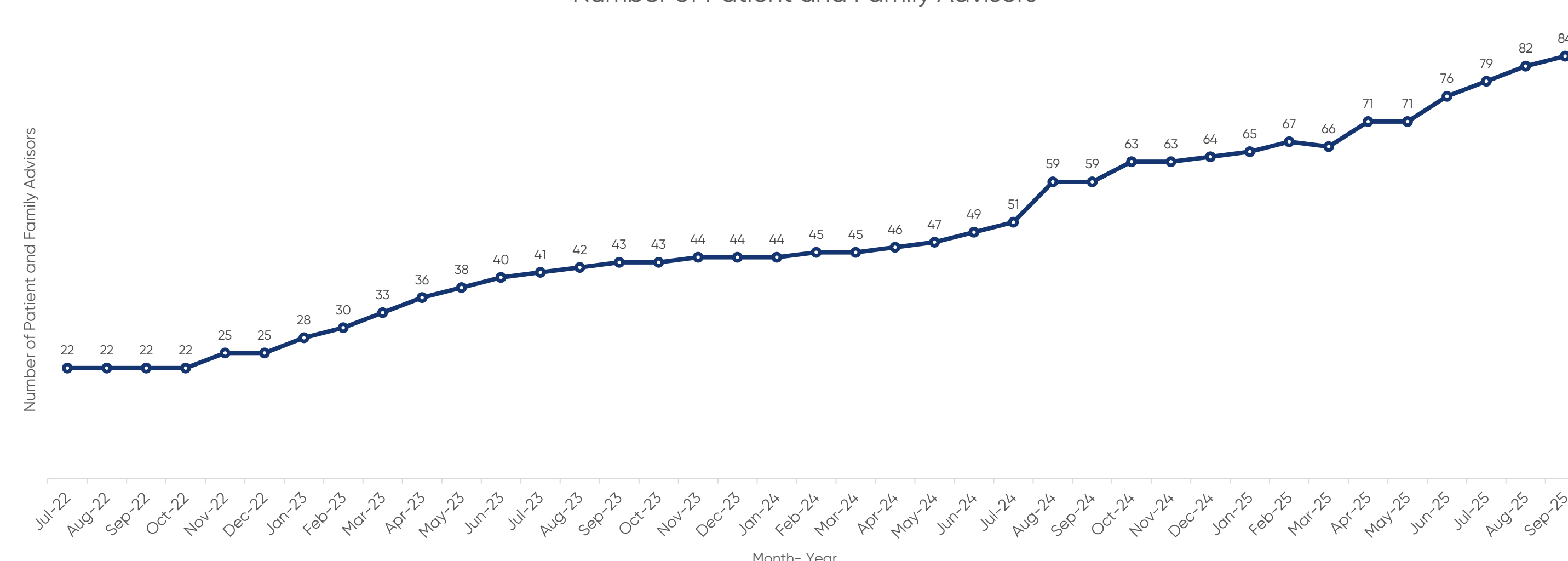


Figure 2. Expanding PFA engagement opportunities at HRH resulted in consistent growth in PFA membership to meet rising involvement demands.

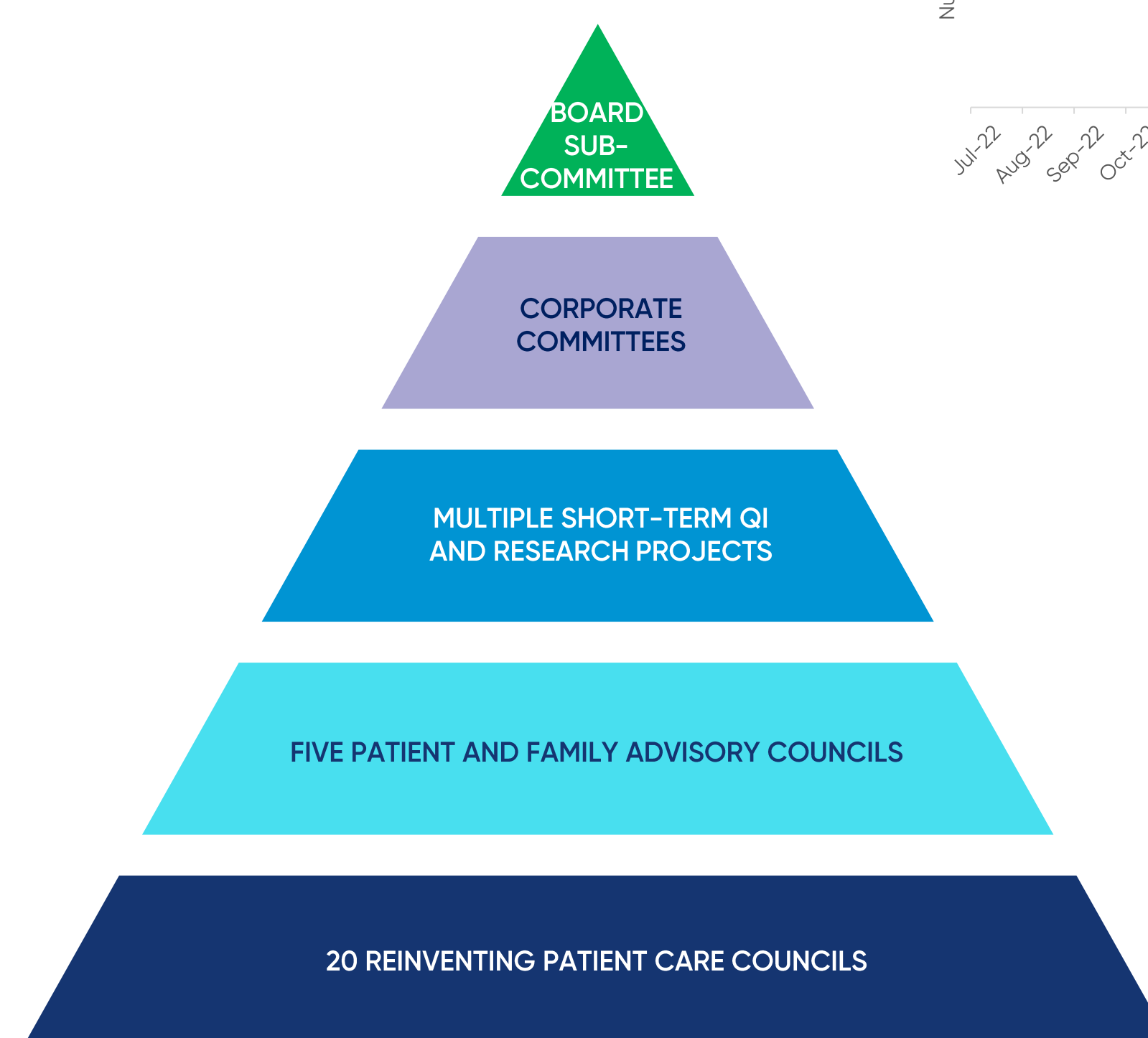


Figure 4. The PFA engagement pyramid depicts the multilevel structure of Patient and Family Advisor involvement at HRH, spanning unit, program, corporate, research and governance.

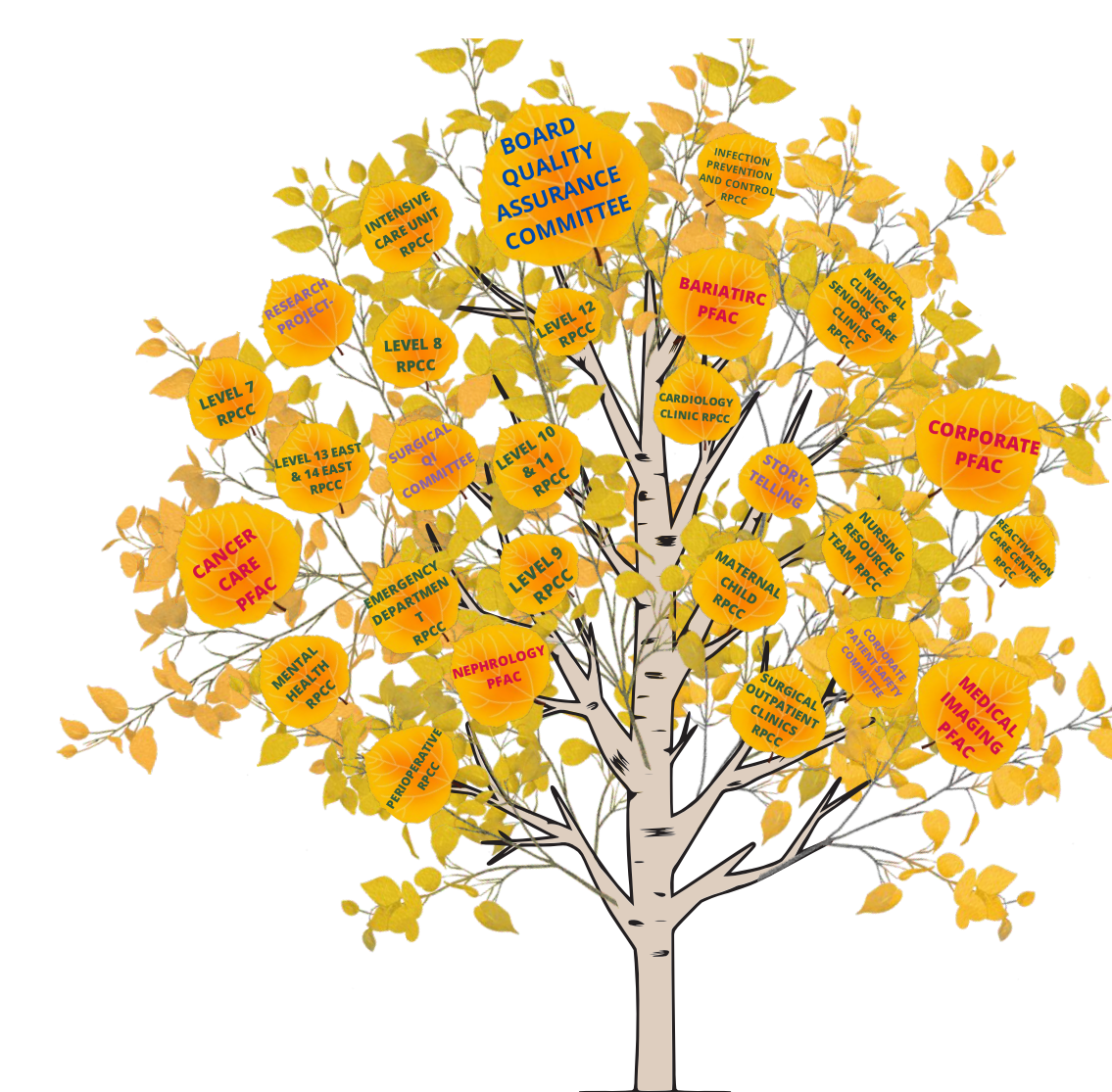


Figure 5. The PFAs are engaged across various councils and committees, reflecting HRH's mission of working together with our community to deliver innovative, safe, and equitable care. This image uses an aspen tree to represent the many branches of engagement, distinct yet rooted in shared purpose. Inspired by the Aspen Grove Art installation on the Hospital façade.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Broader PFA representation at HRH led to an average annual increase of 101.3% in PFA-related activities. This has strengthened collaboration among PFAs, clinical teams, and leadership, aligning PFACs, RPCCs, and corporate priorities. Multi-level engagement reinforces HRH's commitment to patient- and family-centred care and drives continuous improvement in patient safety and experience, while supporting HRH's mission of working together with our community to deliver innovative, safe, and equitable care.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Embedding PFAs across all organizational levels has strengthened collaboration, transparency, and shared accountability, enabling meaningful engagement rooted in the core principles of patient- and family-centred care.

