

Acute Patient Transfer Coordination

Collaboration the key to closing health gaps for WA regional patients

Situation:

St John Western Australia (SJWA) Ambulance services communities across 2.5 million sq-kms and last year responded to 50,000 country cases, an increase of 9% from 2021. Triple Zero (000) calls are managed by the SJWA State Operations Centre. Where appropriate, Triple Zero (000) rural calls are diverted to Royal Flying Doctor Service Western Operations for an aeromedical response as almost half of calls are Inter-Hospital Patient Transfers (IHPTs).

Task:

Country interhospital patient transfer requests are now referred to the WA Country Health Service's Acute Patient Transfer Coordination stream. APTC is a physician-led service providing a centralised approach to road and aeromedical retrieval requests from rural hospitals. SJWA and RFDS operate collaboratively within the APTC to enhance patient safety and timely transfer through improved resource utilisation.

Action:

To facilitate equity of access to health care for regional patients who require transfer to a higher level of definitive care. A senior clinician in APTC (doctor or experienced paramedic) triages IHPTs and prioritises transport based on patient needs, clinical escort requirement and asset availability. The SJWA and RFDS liaison officers are integral to the success of this process. This ensures timelier direct care, especially in life-threatening emergencies (Priority 1 & 2 calls).

Result:

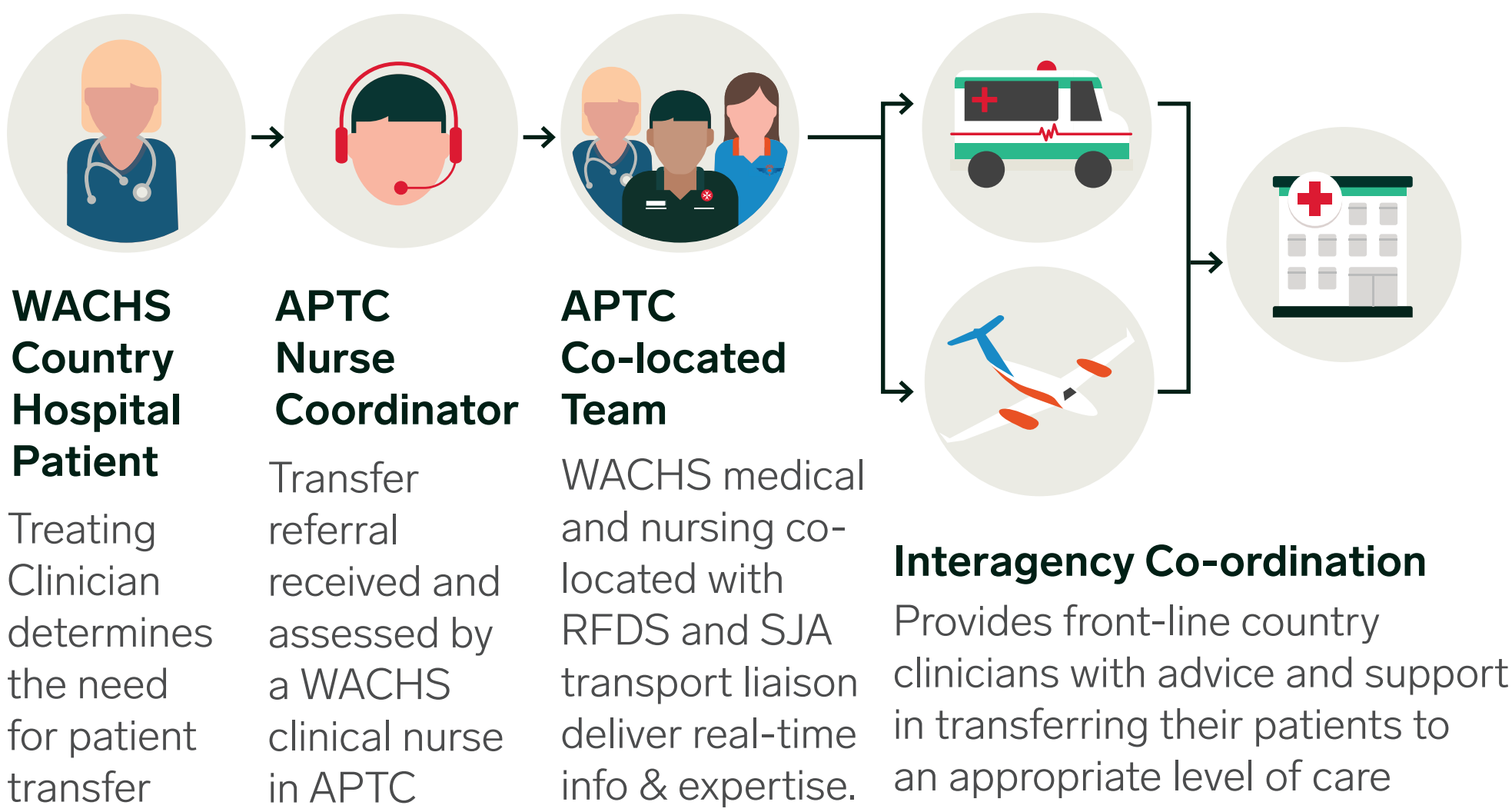
APTC commenced in February 2022, and transitioned to 24/7 cover a year later. Over this time, there has been a 70% decrease in urgent ambulance IHPT requests. Through the collaboration between services, APTC has enabled a consistent approach to IHPT requests with ambulance resources being used more efficiently. The flow-on effect is increasing emergency response capacity to the community.

50,000 country cases, up 9% from 2021

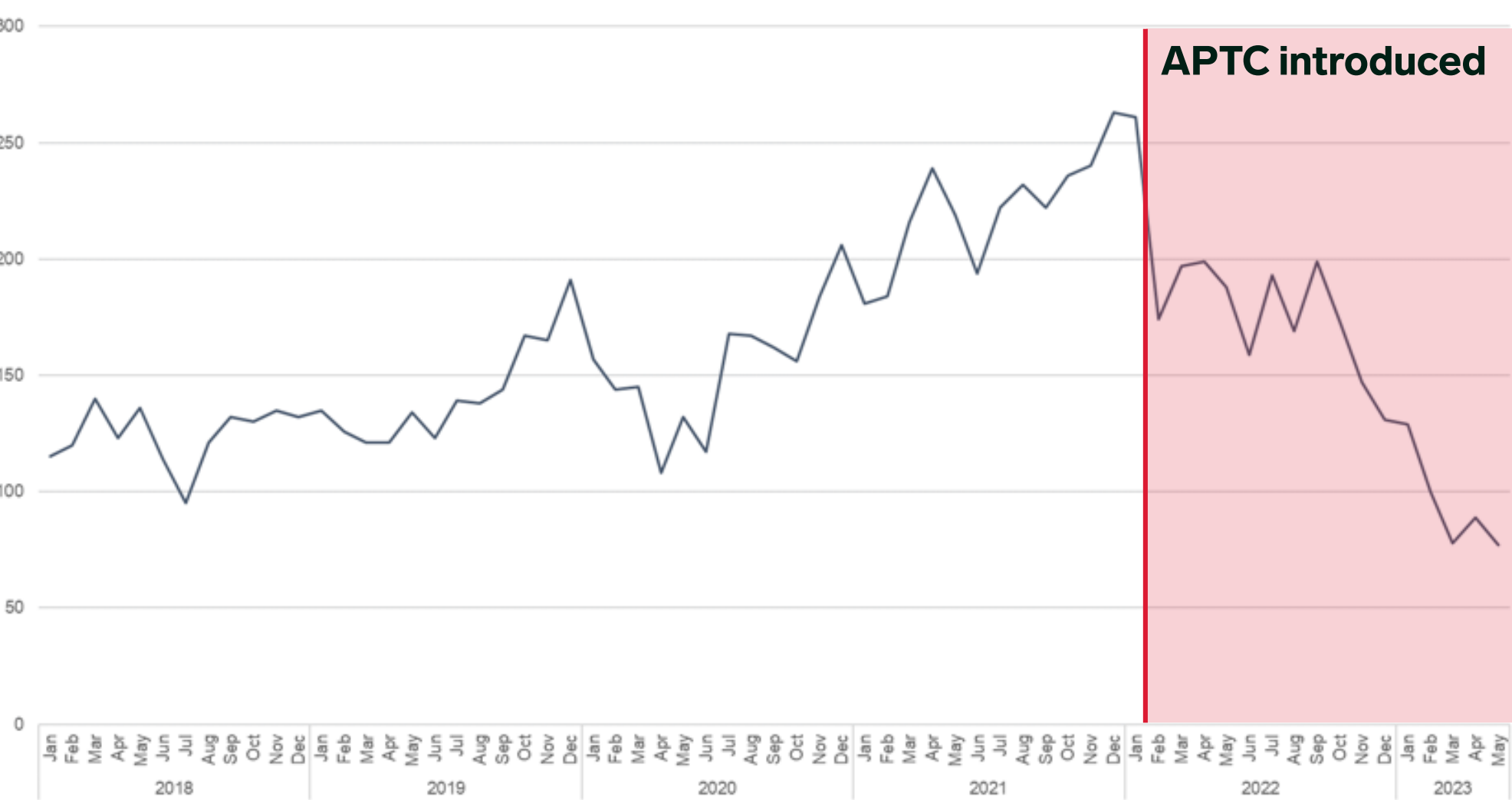
Develop APTC into fully comprehensive 24/7 operation

20,000+ IHPTs completed in the first 12 months (road and air)

~70% decrease in urgent ambulance IHPT requests



Urgent Ambulance Inter-Hospital Patient Transfers in Country WA



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Scan the QR code to watch a video explainer about APTC



Government of Western Australia
WA Country Health Service



St John