

Transforming the Patient Refund Workflow

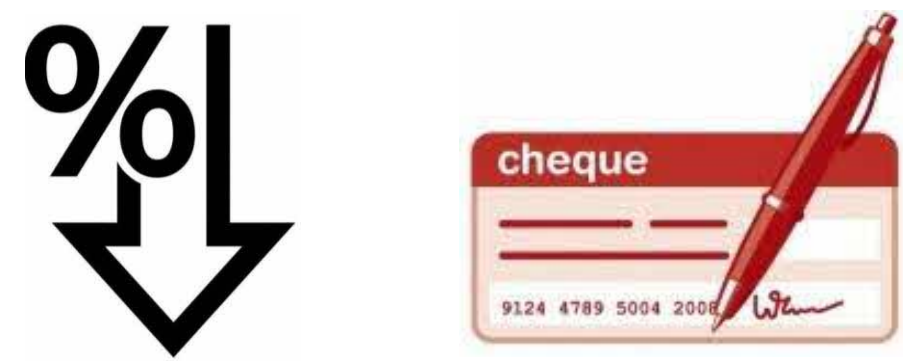
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Background Information and Project Objectives

In 2023, SGH processes approximately half of its refunds via Cheques. However, following the Monetary Authority of Singapore announcement to phase out the use of cheques in 2025, it is necessary to review and identify a suitable refund mode to replace cheques. SGH's current refunds process is also resource intensive and time consuming. On occasions of increased refund volume, additional effort and manpower may be required to manage adverse feedbacks due to lengthy refunds processing time. Hence, there is a need to study and identify improvement opportunities within the patient refund process to reduce the processing turnaround time and to improve the patient's overall experience in SGH.

Primary Objective:

Gradual reduction of cheques refunds and the eventual cessation of the usage of cheques.



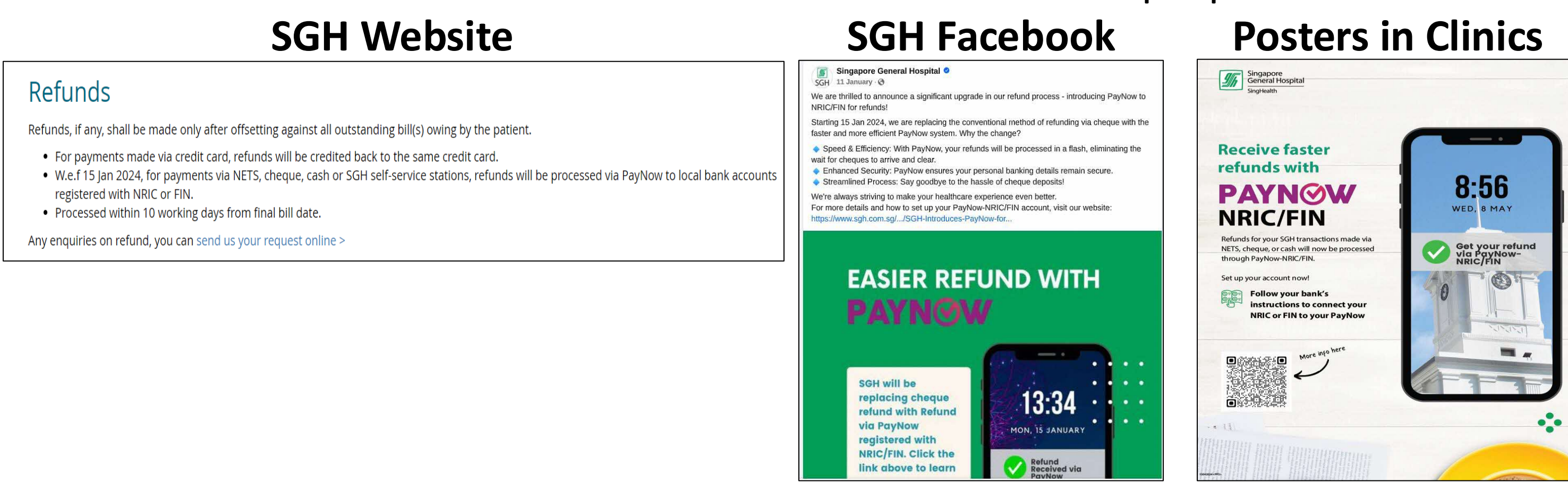
Secondary Objectives:

1. Increase the % of refunds processed within 7 working days.
2. Increase the % of refunds that are processed towards Patients

Implementation Plan

Pre-Implementation:

1. Development of communication material to announce new refund method, and announcement of new refund method across multiple platforms



2. Patient education of new refund method during financial counselling



System Enhancement to enable seamless processing of PayNow (NRIC) refunds

- Enhancement required to enable automatic retrieval of Patient's NRIC from SAP PAT Master record when 1FSS triggers the PayNow (NRIC) payment run.
- Prior to enhancement, Patient's NRIC manually retrieved by SGH PFS Team.
- Enhancement Timeline:



Pilot Phase: January 2024 to June 2024

- Pre-determined number of cheque refund cases replaced with PayNow (NRIC).
- Pilot conducted with a small patient pool; initially started with 10 cases per week, eventually scaled up to 60 cases per week in June 2024.
- Pilot provided the platform to identify potential workflow issues, determine opportunities for improvement through regular feedback before full-scale implementation.

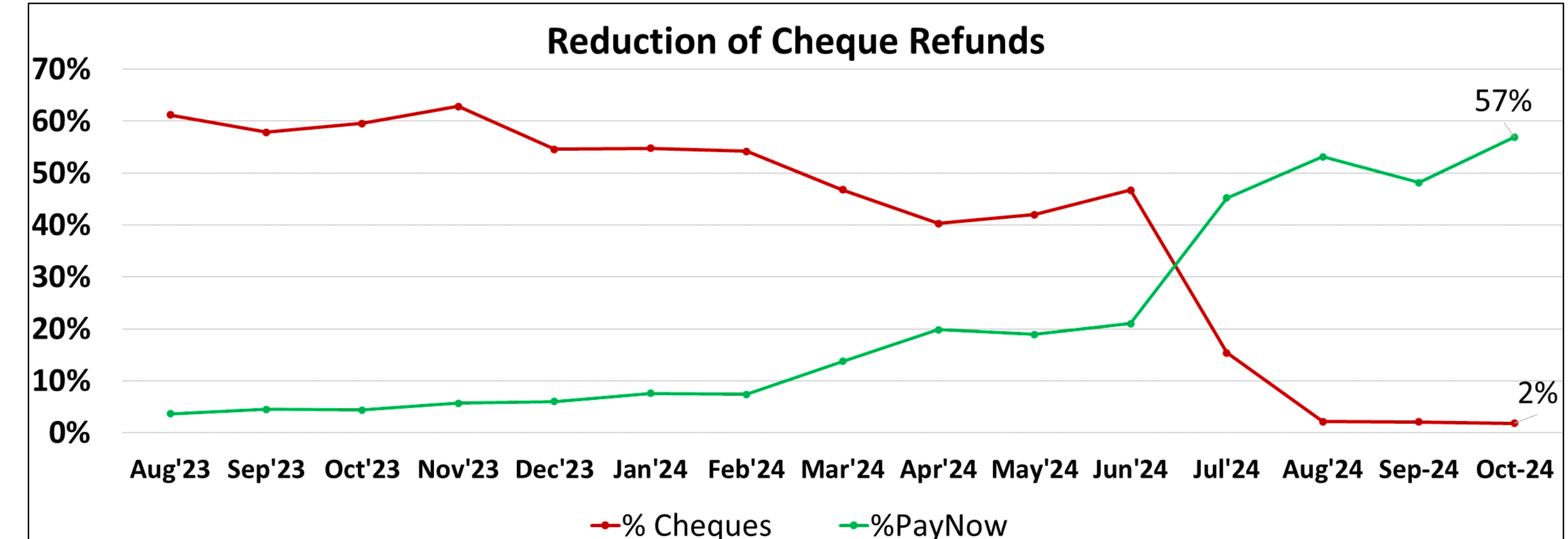
Full Scale Replacement of Cheque Refunds

- In July 2024, Team replaced all cheque refunds with PayNow (NRIC) as the system enhancement was completed and there was good progress from the pilot phase.
- Cheque refunds reduced to 1 to 2%.

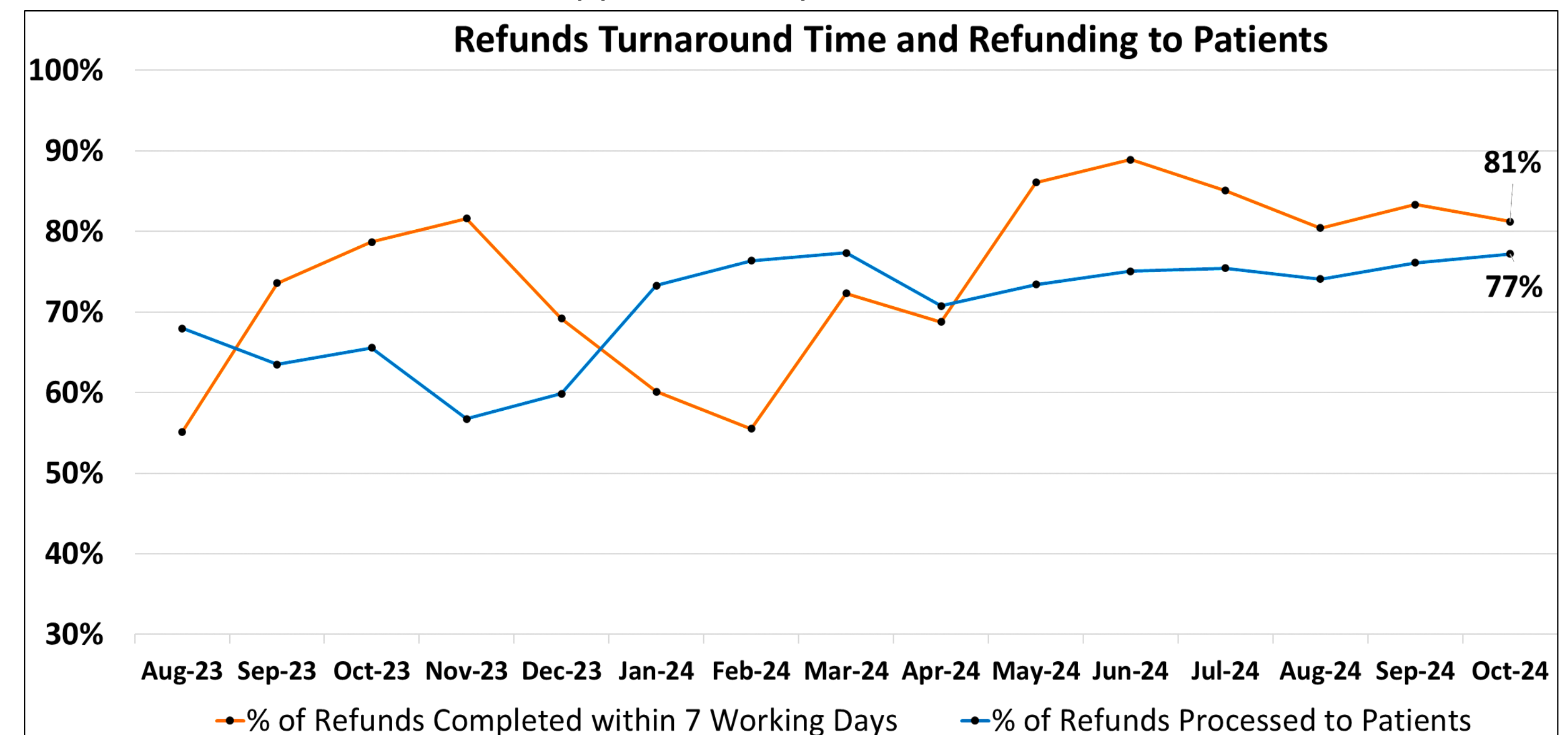
Challenges

- Team was concerned there may be high rate of failed PayNow transactions as patients may not have registered for PayNow (NRIC).
- To overcome this:
 1. Team collaborated with DBS to continuously monitor the % of unsuccessful transactions.
 2. Separate workflow was developed to manage failed PayNow refunds.
 - Patients with failed PayNow refunds will receive SMS notification to register for PayNow (NRIC) before they can receive their refunds.
 - Subsequently, these refunds are reprocessed after a 2–3 week period, allowing sufficient time for patients to complete their registration.

Results



- Usage of PayNow (NRIC) for refunds has increased, while usage of cheques for refunds has reduced to approximately 1-2%.



- % of refunds completed within 7 working days and % of refunds to patients has increased.