

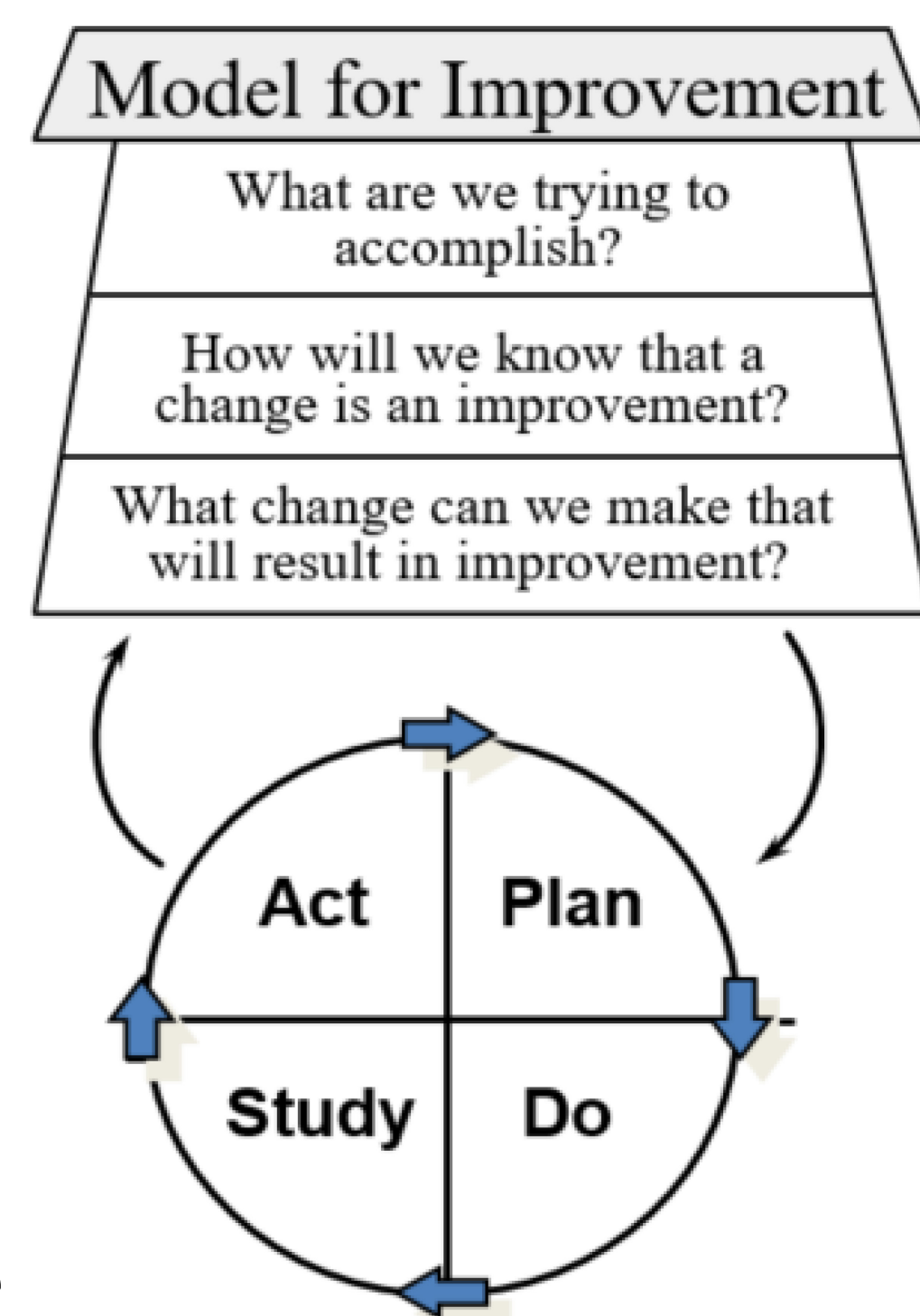
# Reducing Loss to Follow-Up in New York State through Quality Improvement and use of a Fax-Back Form

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## PURPOSE:

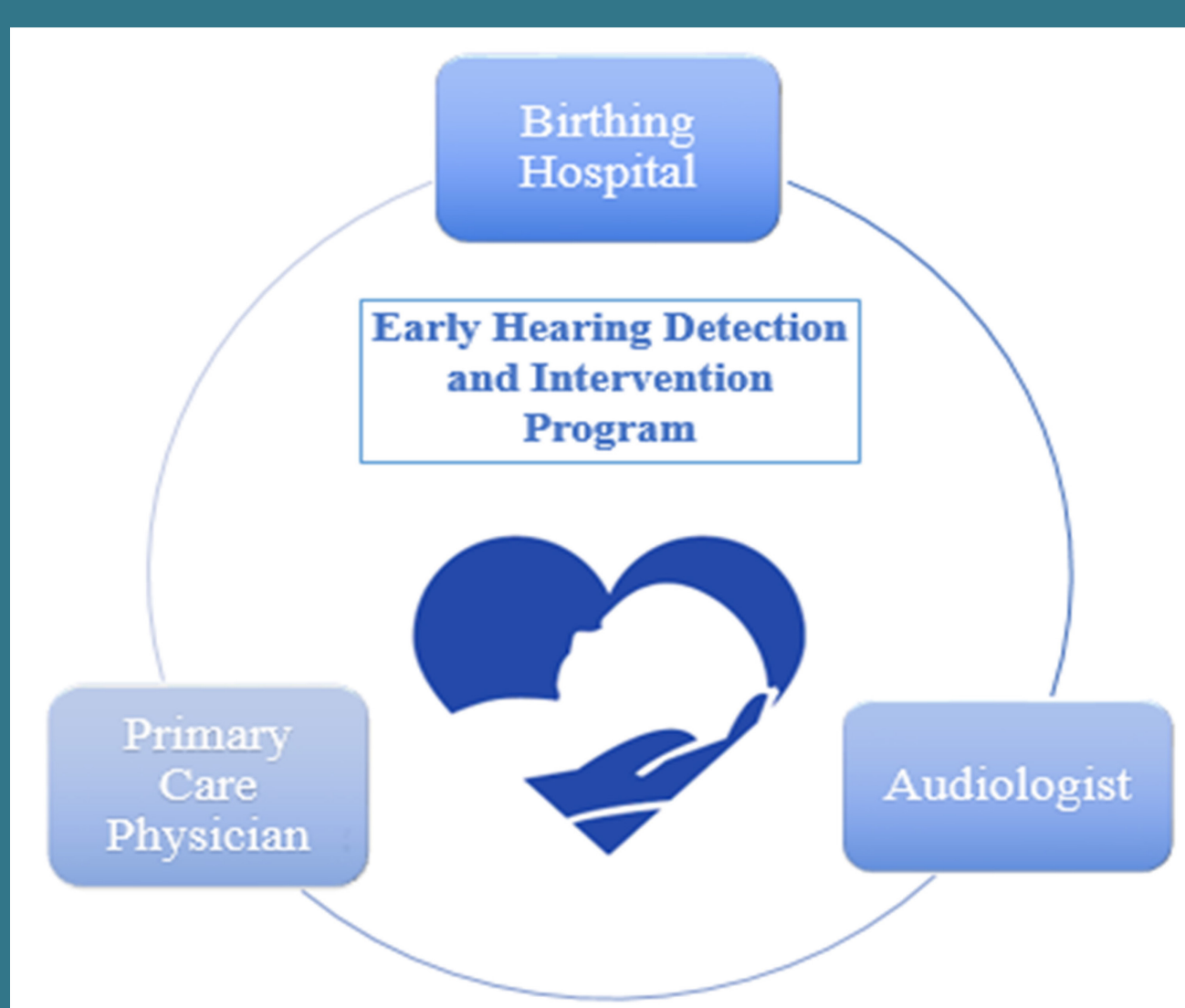
Using quality improvement methodology, track and reduce the number of babies who are lost to follow-up to ensure that all infants receive a timely and accurate newborn hearing screening and diagnosis, and infants with hearing loss receive appropriate intervention, enabling each child to reach his or her full potential.

The Model for Improvement is a simple yet powerful tool for accelerating improvement. Using this model, the fax-back form was tested, adapted, and implemented as a tool to improve communication among providers. The goal was to close the communication gap between providers.



## BACKGROUND:

In New York State in 2016 there were 2,629 infants who did not pass their initial hearing screening. Of those infants who did not pass the initial screening, 1,503 had no documented diagnosis. These infants are considered lost to follow-up. The follow-up rate for NYS in 2016 was 37.5%. The goal was to increase the number of infants with documented results.



**AIM:** We aim to improve newborn hearing screening follow-up documentation and referral of infants with hearing loss to the New York State Early Intervention Program (NYSEIP).

## PDSA:

### PLAN:

- Use fax-back form at the time of diagnostic evaluation to alert the PCP of the results and the need for follow-up.
- Use fax-back form across the care continuum (audiology, PCP, specialists, Department of Health, and early intervention).

### DO:

- Fax-back form was used by the birthing hospital to notify the audiologist, primary care provider, and Department of Health NYEHDI Program if an infant did not pass or did not receive the initial hearing screen.
- Fax-back form was used by a referral provider or pediatric audiologist to send back the hearing screen results to the birthing hospital and Department of Health NYEHDI Program.
- Fax-back form was tracked by the NYEHDI program by region.
- The NYEHDI Program provided targeted outreach to both the referral provider and/or the primary care physician to follow up on missing results.

### STUDY:

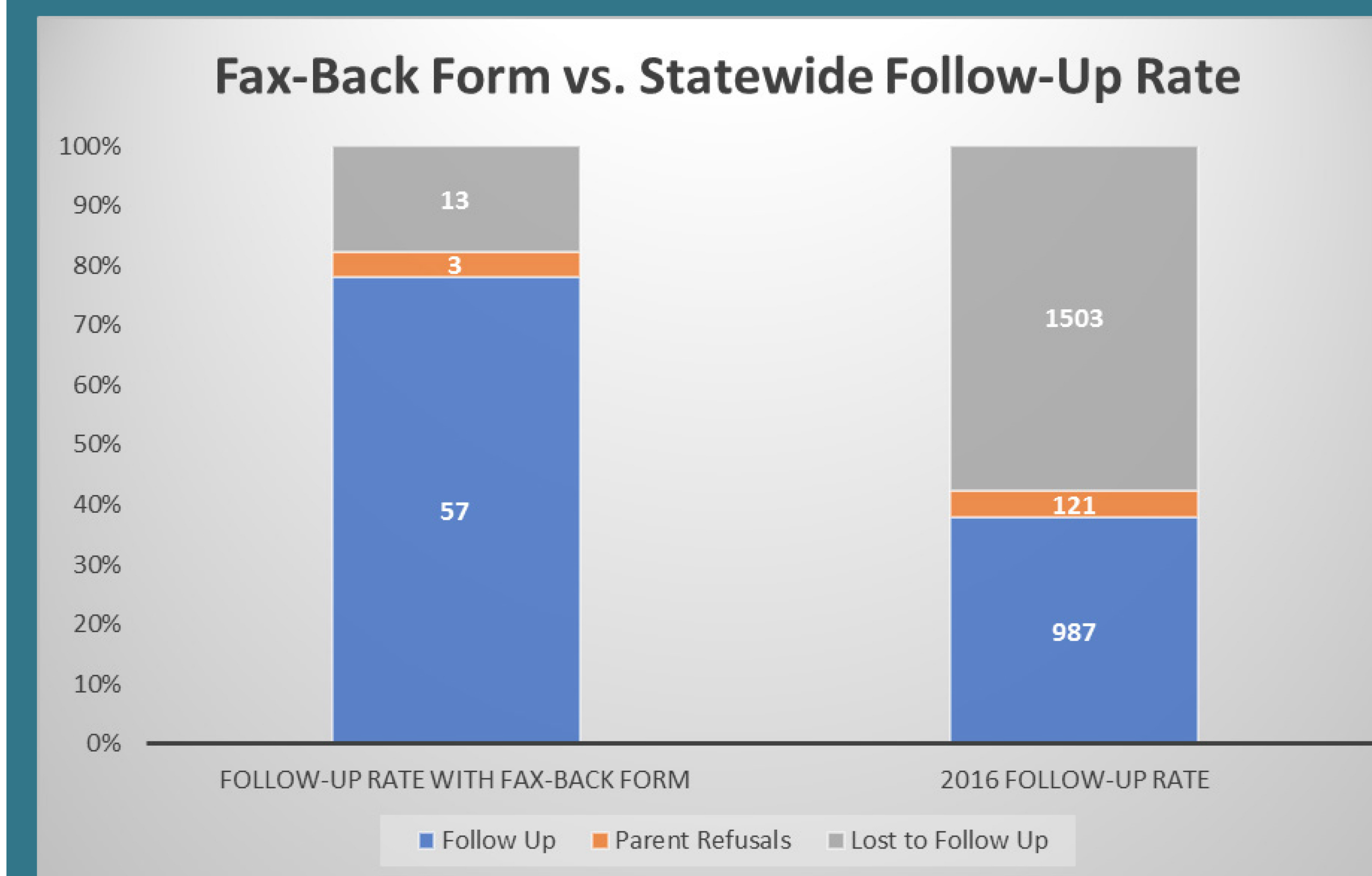
- Was the fax-back form incomplete or illegible?
- Was correct patient information included on form?
- Did providers comply with the faxing of follow-up result?
- Was the NYEHDI program included in fax transmissions?
- Were all infants tracked and followed?
- Were there any HIPAA concerns from the providers?

### ACT:

- Audiologists revised the fax-back form to communicate no-shows, insurance issues, and parent refusals
- The NYEHDI Program used the fax-back form to request missing diagnostic results from providers identified through a separate match between the NYEHDI and NYSEIP
- The fax-back form was used by a hospital that transferred NICU babies to an out-of-state hospital, which resulted in an improved initial hearing screening rate from 95% to 98.7%.

## RESULTS:

- Of the 73 infants tracked, 57 infants (78%) had a follow-up hearing test result documented in the information system.
- This was significantly higher when compared to the follow-up rate of 37.5% for the rest of New York State in 2016.



## CONCLUSIONS:

- A standard letter clarifying and confirming NYEHDI Program authority to receive information was developed to resolve HIPAA concerns.
- The fax-back form can be an effective tool for birthing hospitals, audiologists, pediatricians, and the Department of Health to help ensure infants who did not receive or did not pass their initial hearing screen receive a timely follow-up screen.
- The form will be disseminated statewide and its use encouraged.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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