

# Building a Pathway to Better Breast Specimen Handling

Ingrid Rush, MHA, BSN, RN; Donna Amado, MSN, RN, CNOR; Nancy Giacomozzi, MEd, BSN, RN-BC, CNOR; Rhiannon Gwin, AD, RN; Jeanne Sheehan, BSN, RN; Rebecca McGillivray, BSN, RN, CNOR



## Boston Medical Center Perioperative Services

### THE TEAM

#### Frontline Perioperative Nurses

Clinical Instructors  
Perioperative Services

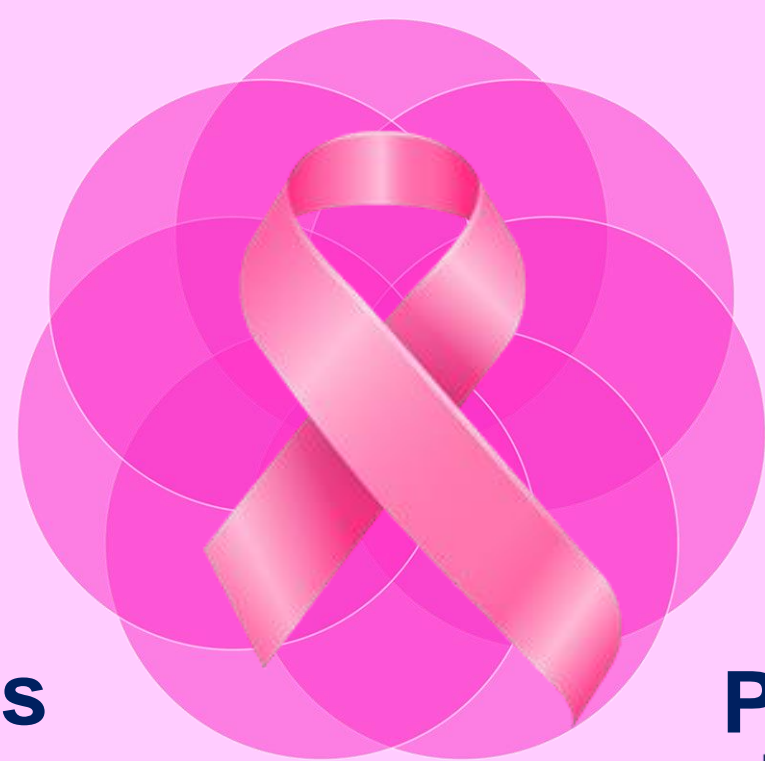
Breast Surgical  
Oncology Surgeons

Perioperative Services  
Leadership

Clinical Quality  
Improvement Specialist

Clinical Informaticist  
Perioperative Services

Pathology Department  
Leadership



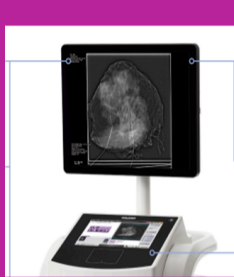
### BACKGROUND & PURPOSE



Breast specimens removed for cancer diagnosis are often irreplaceable. Loss or delay between surgery and processing, may cause unnecessary treatment or delay in treatment



A recent increase in surgical breast specimen errors and deficiencies from out-of-body time to analysis by the pathologist within 1 hour required identifying systems failures across departments and BMC's main and ambulatory ORs



New technology (e.g., specimen radiography system) used in the room reduces surgical time for the patient but was a disruption to perioperative workflows



We had a dual purpose:

- Decrease specimen handling errors
- Standardize chain of custody from out-of-body time of the main specimen to delivery to the OR pathology room for analysis

### PREPARATION & PLANNING

#### QI Specialist

- Observation of oncology breast cases in both ambulatory surgery and the main operating room

#### QI Specialists & OR Nurses

- OR staff interviews to identify challenges to safe specimen handling

#### Breast Surgeons

- Surgeons review and standardize verbiage for naming specimens

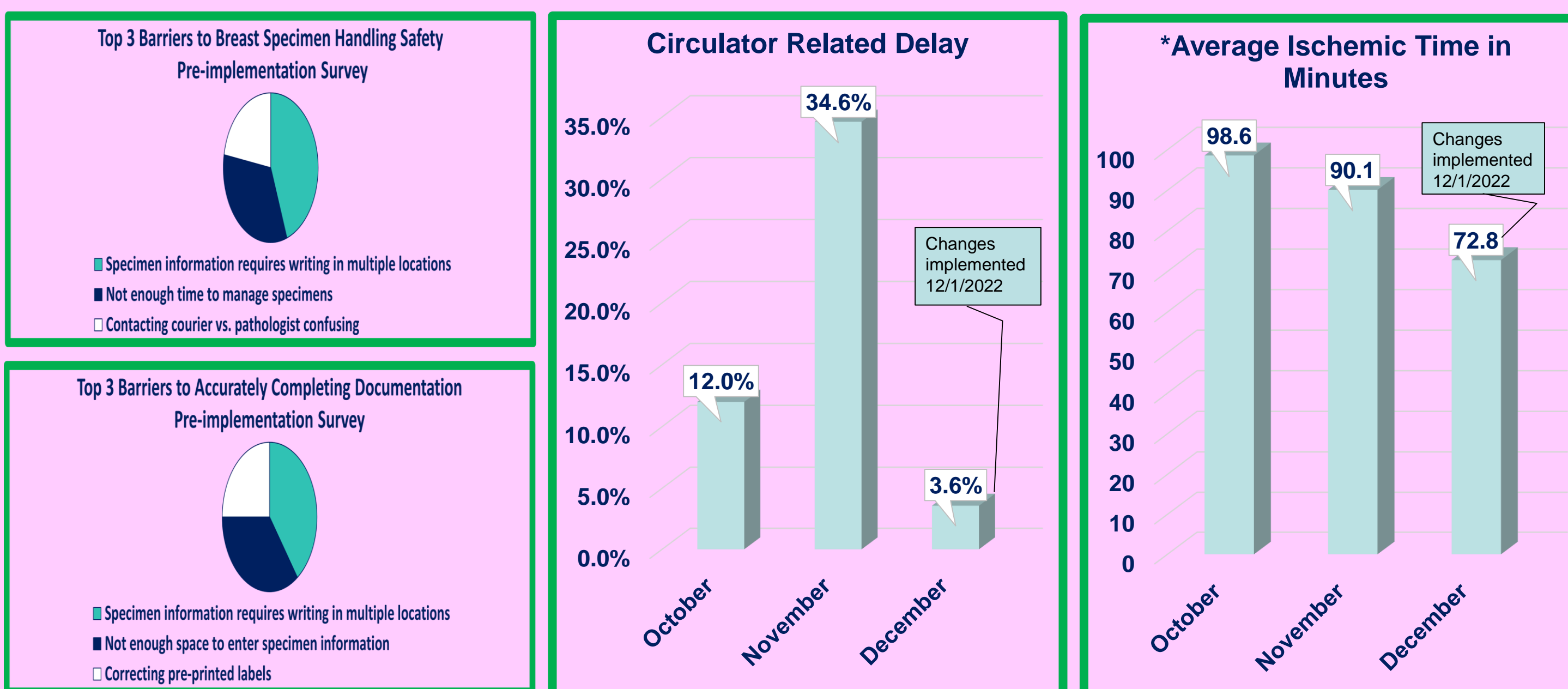
#### Interdisciplinary team

- Layout of breast-specimen-specific pathology form and review of policies and processes to extract key points for easy navigation

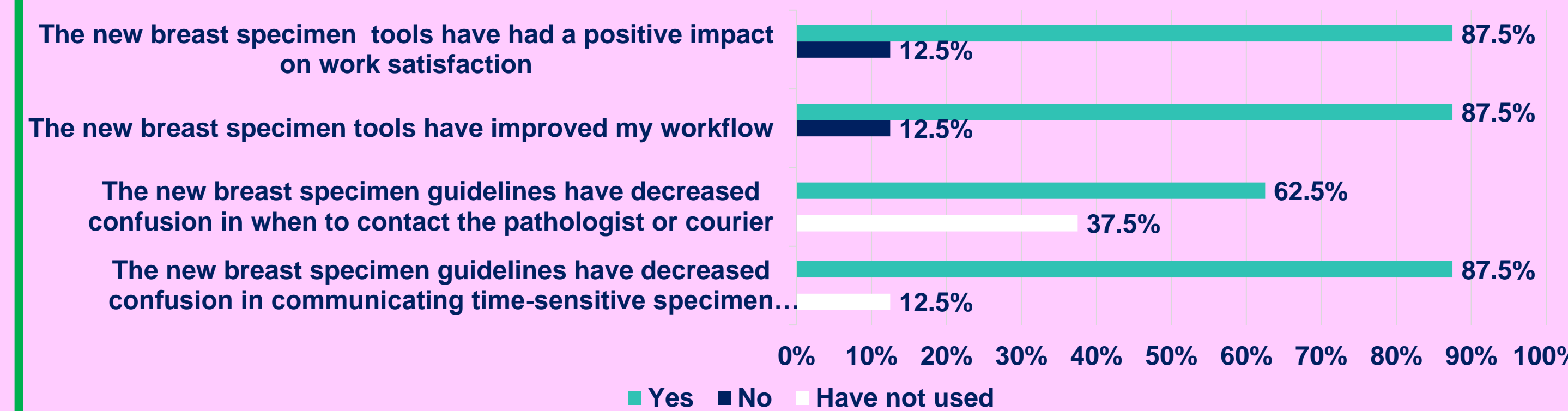
#### Clinical informaticist

- Create breast-specific pre-built standard text for use in specimen documentation and, breast navigation section in the EHR

### OUTCOMES



#### Impact of Breast Specimen Handling Tools on Workflow and Patient Care Post-Implementation



### BREAST SPECIMEN HANDLING TOOLS

**Revised Pre-printed Breast Specimen Labels**

Revised labels match pre-built text phrases in the EHR and breast specific path form

**Poster References, Pathway Tools & Breast Cancer Resources for Black Women**

**MAIN BREAST SPECIMEN**

**BREAST-SPECIFIC PATH FORM**

- Complete Page of page section if using more than 1 form
- Form is specific to breast specimens and matches pre-built text phrases in the EHR and pre-printed labels

**Electronic Record**

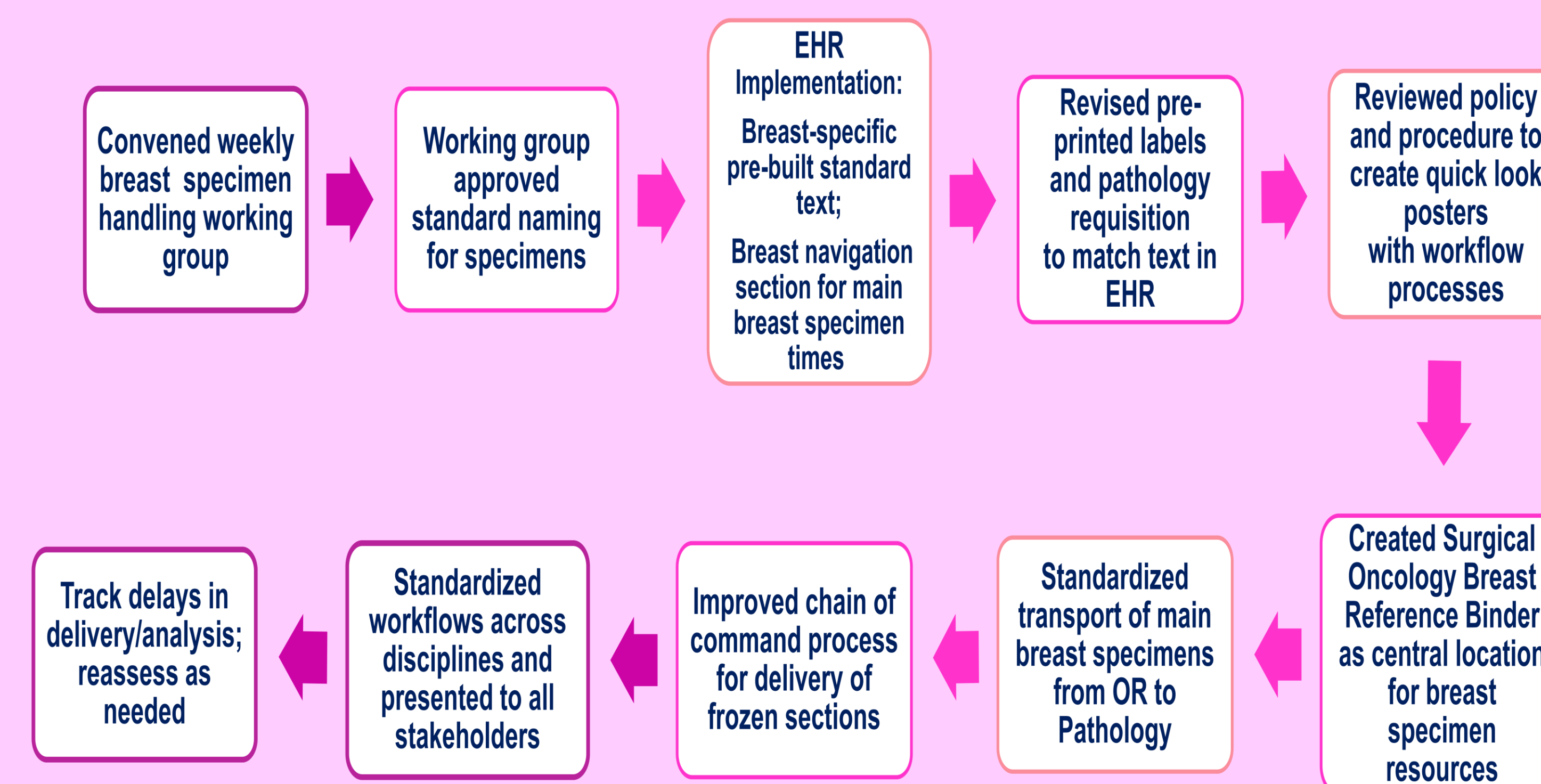
**Breast Navigator Section**

- Implemented to document the times of the main breast specimen in the EHR from out of body time through delivery to pathology

**Breast Specific Pre-Built Text**

- Standardize specimen naming across disciplines
- Reduce time to enter specimens into the EHR
- Reduce errors in labeling specimens

### IMPLEMENTATION



### IMPLICATIONS FOR PERIOPERATIVE NURSING



Loss of or delay in processing an irreplaceable specimen can have a devastating impact on both the patient and the team



If we hope to have zero errors or deficiencies when handling specimens and in particular irreplaceable specimens, frontline nursing staff and surgeons must be involved as part of an interdisciplinary team from the beginning



Nursing workflows should be assessed prior to the introduction of new technology to make sure everyone benefits from its installation



Reduction of data entry into various fields, and writing out specimen labels and requisitions has saved time in specimen management and allowed for safer patient practice. Additionally, the single location where policy & procedure information is accessed in a simplified format increased satisfaction among OR team members

### CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

- When implementing any new technology or process for patient care, consideration of the impact on all stakeholders is critical. Strategically creating space for frontline workers' input early in the decision-making process may lead to lasting change and minimize disruptions in care
- This respectful mirroring of responsibilities not only fosters team goal orientation and compliance, but it also provides front-line nurses with the opportunity to feel empowered and gain in-depth knowledge of a process that impacts their area of work
- Next steps:
  - Obtain feedback from staff on the workflow and suggestions for improvement and sustainability
  - Reassess newly implemented tools and satisfaction survey
  - Specimen bags with "Irreplaceable" identifier
  - Implement pathology specimen software from EHR vendor

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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[ingrid.rush@bmc.org](mailto:ingrid.rush@bmc.org); [donna.amado@bmc.org](mailto:donna.amado@bmc.org); [nancy.giacomozzi@bmc.org](mailto:nancy.giacomozzi@bmc.org); [rhiannon.gwin@bmc.org](mailto:rhiannon.gwin@bmc.org); [jeanne.sheehan@bmc.org](mailto:jeanne.sheehan@bmc.org); [rebecca.mcguillivray@bmc.org](mailto:rebecca.mcguillivray@bmc.org)