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Carrie Grinstead

Providence St. Joseph Health, carrie.grinstead@providence.org

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Using REDCap to Collect Library Service Statistics in a Large Health System

Carrie Grinstead, MLIS, AHIP¹
¹Providence St. Joseph Health

Background

CONTEXT

In January 2018, library services at Providence Health/Swedish and St. Joseph Health merged to form a single, unified system, incorporating nine libraries and sixteen full-time staff. We recognized a need to document the activities of our merged team in a consistent and meaningful way.

CHALLENGES

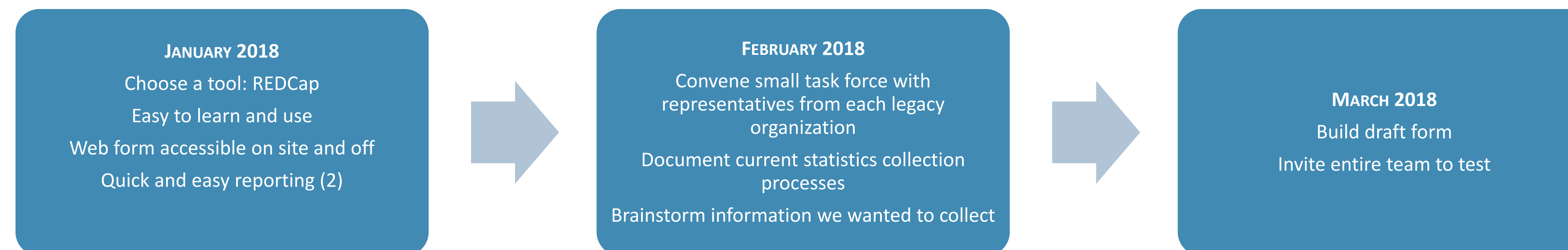
- Disparate methods of statistics collection at legacy organizations
- Variation in services offered at legacy organizations
 - Some sites serve patients, families, and the public
 - Some sites serve cancer centers and research institutes
- Large geographic spread
 - Patrons served across seven states
 - Library staff located in five states

Literature Search

Limited literature exists on statistics collection and reporting in health science libraries. In their comprehensive article on identifying and communicating the contributions of health science libraries, Abels and colleagues emphasize the importance of selecting measures that align to organizational goals (1). We selected measures that are simple for non-library professionals to understand and that document contributions to goals such as building research capacity throughout PSJH and achieving Magnet designation at more hospitals.

We also use our REDCap form to document our contributions to particular strategic initiatives. For example, the organization has a current goal of improving patient experience, and we now flag all requests that relate to this.

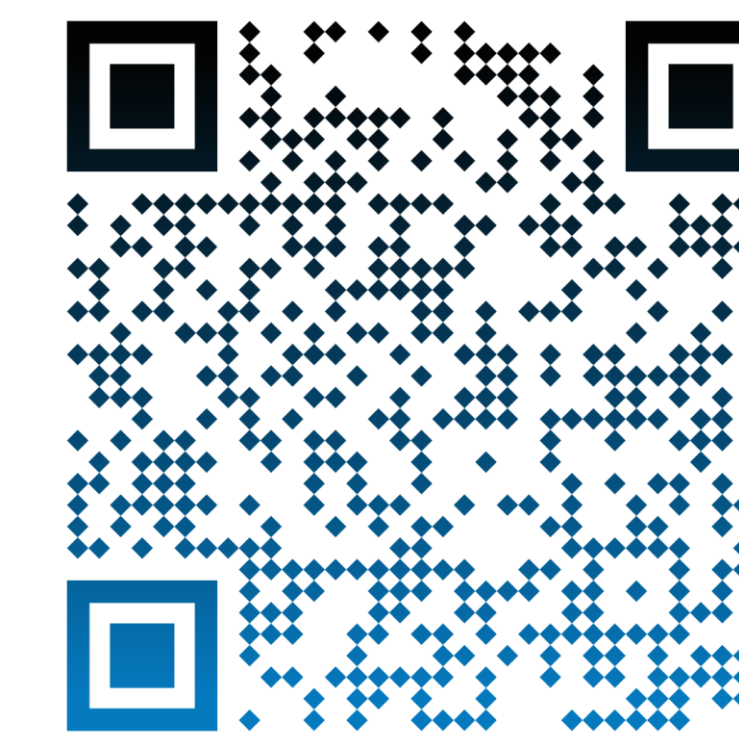
Building the Form



Results

Our REDCap form for statistics collection went live on April 1, 2018. The form is simple to use, and REDCap's branching logic functions allow us to collect detailed information without making the form unwieldy. Occasional communication and retraining for our team has been necessary, to ensure that fields in the form are understood and used consistently. Finally, we are using our reports to assess and further refine the form for 2019. Some fields, such as the purpose of a request, are rarely used and may be eliminated, while new fields may be added in consultation with the team.

A **sample form** is available at <https://tinyurl.com/y6gqot2w>, or through the QR code:



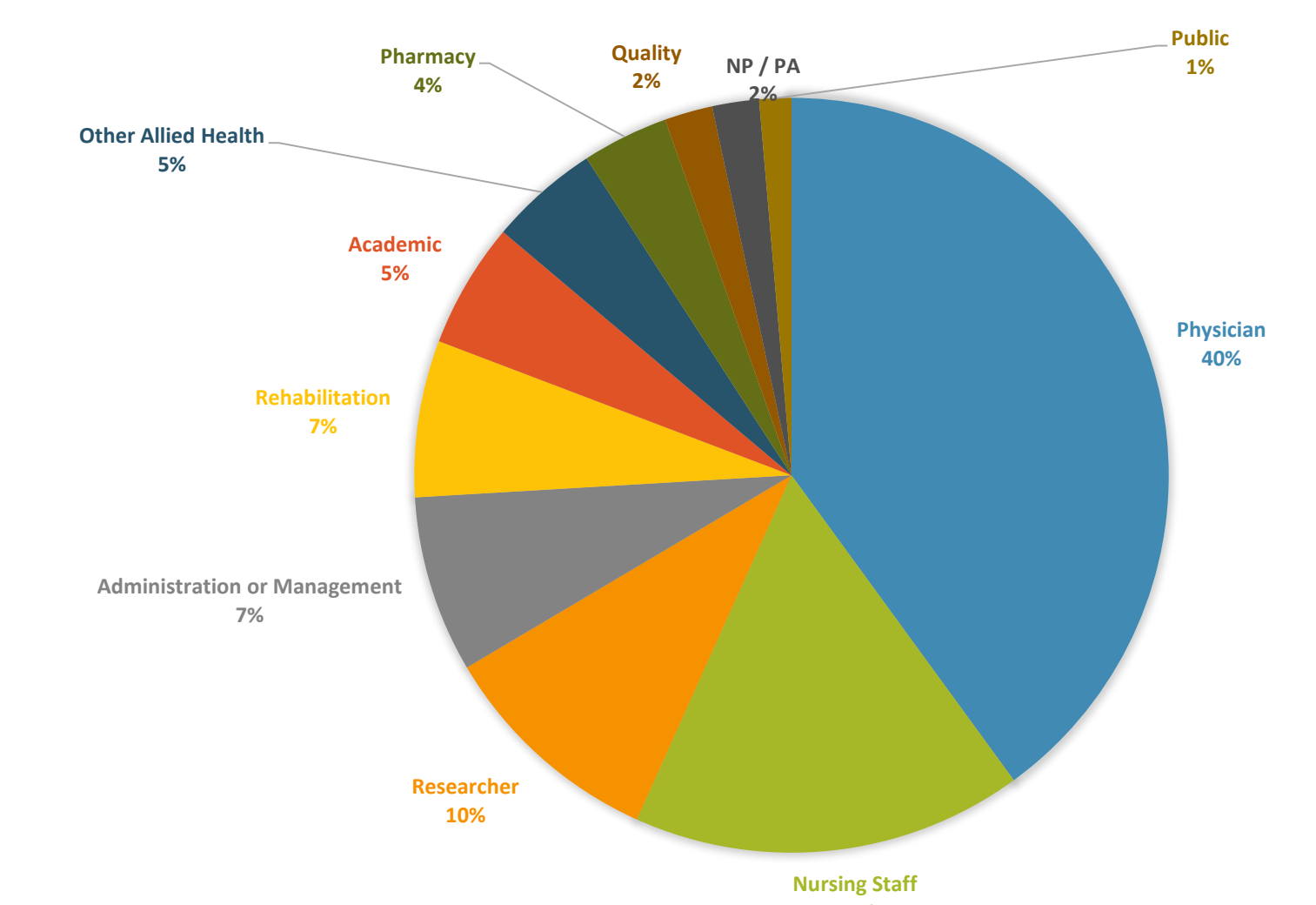
This is an exact copy of our stats form but uses REDCap's "draft mode" and does not collect real statistics.

Applications & Future Directions

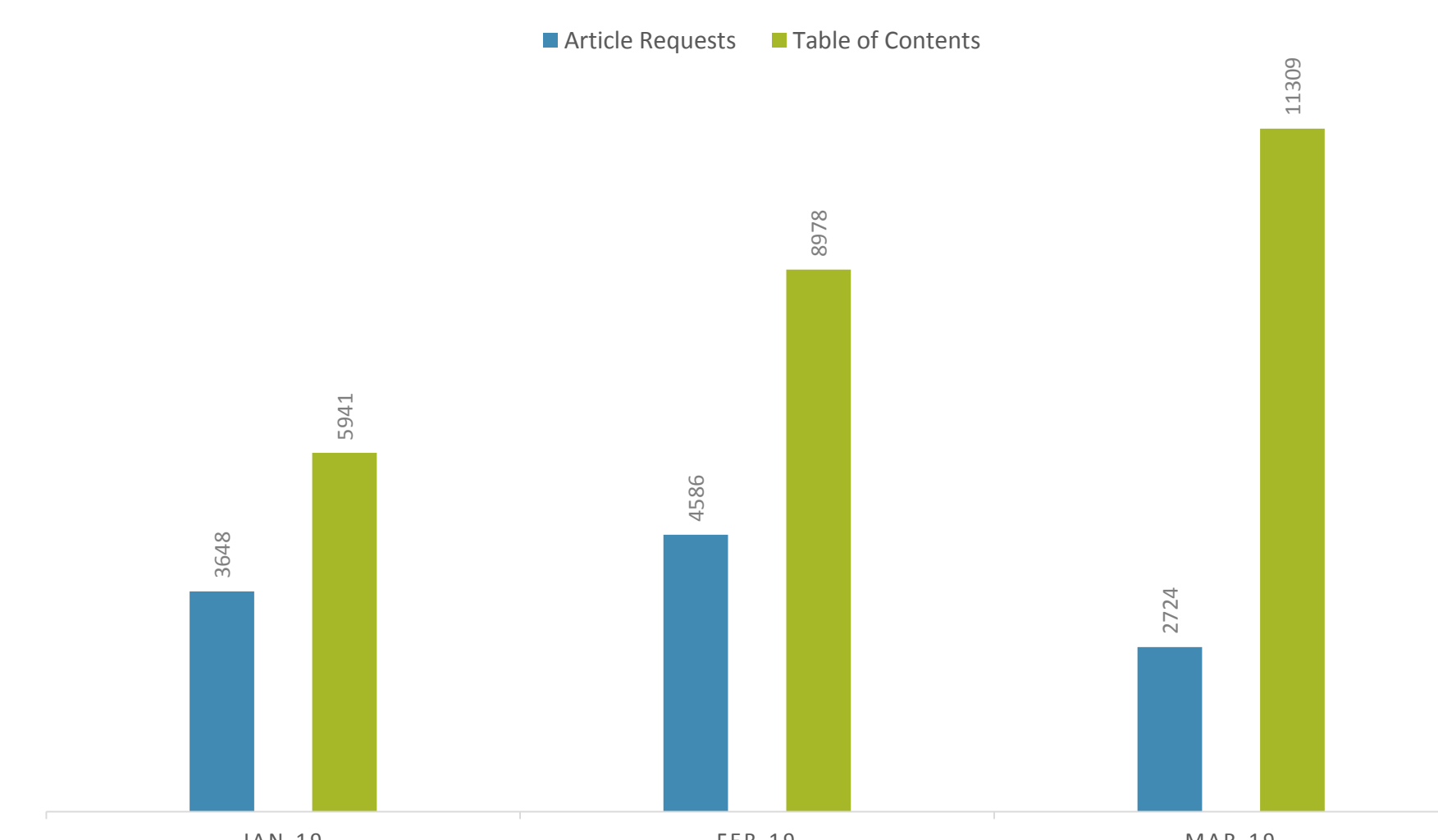
We used our form to generate or contribute to a number of reports, including:

- Monthly System-wide activity summaries
- 2018 Annual Report
- 2018 summaries, broken down by service area

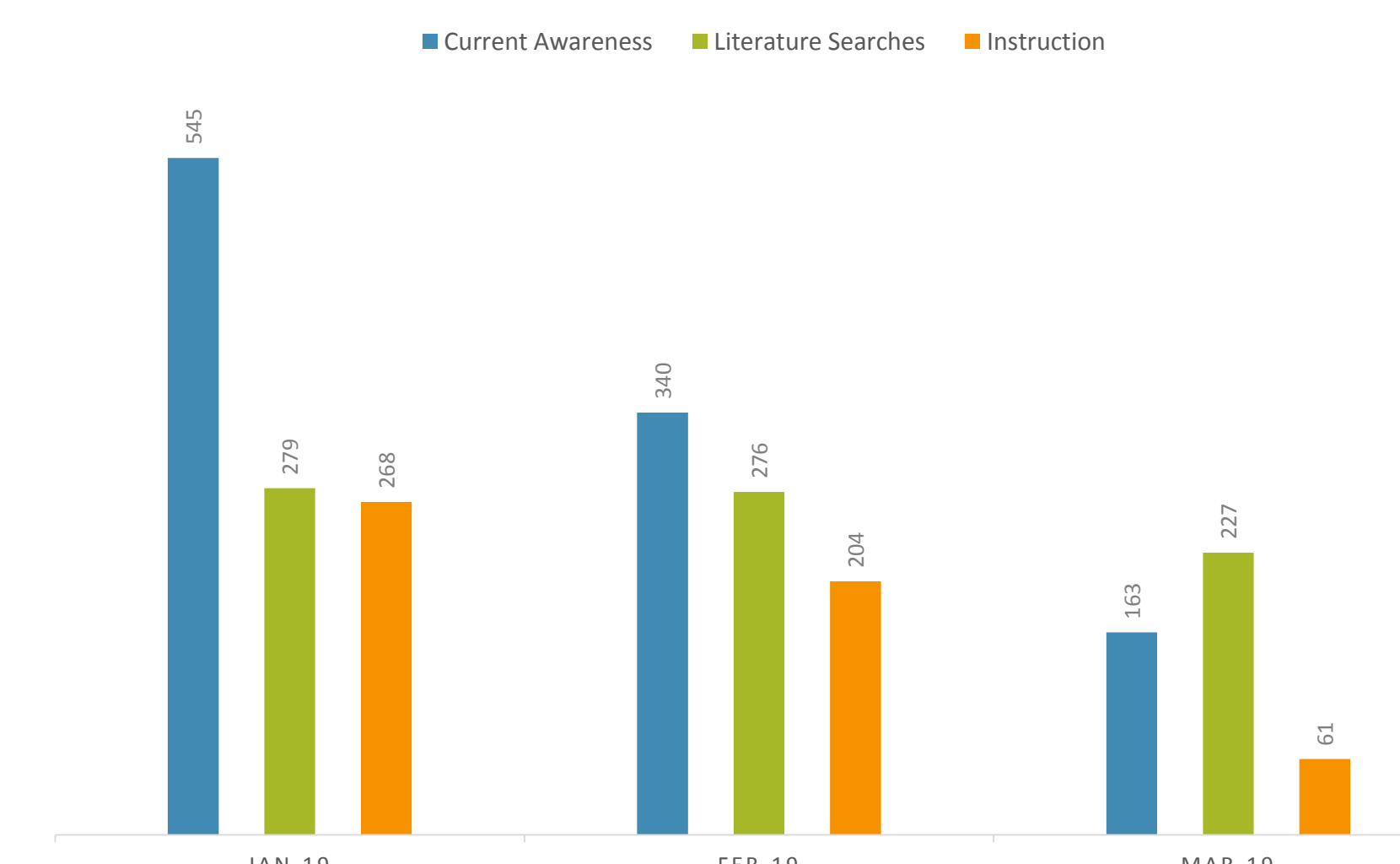
We are investigating ways to further demonstrate our value using service statistics, and will likely begin to document hours spent on services, as recommended by the NNLM (3).



QUICK REQUESTS



IN-DEPTH REQUESTS



Contact

Email: Carrie.Grinstead@providence.org

Phone: 818-847-3881

Health Science Library at PSJMC
 501 S. Buena Vista St.
 Burbank, CA 91505

References

1. Abels EG, Cogdill KW, Zach L. Identifying and communicating the contributions of library and information services in hospitals and academic health sciences centers. *J Med Libr Assoc.* 2004 Jan;92(1):46-55.
2. REDCap [Internet]. [cited 2019 Mar 22]. Available from: <https://www.project-redcap.org/>
3. Working with library statistics [Internet]. Salt Lake City (UT): NNLM MidContinental Region; [cited 2019 Apr 25]. Available from: <https://nmlm.gov/mcr/training/advocacy/working-library-statistics>

