# Strategies to Improve Clinical Research Staff Engagement, Retention, Career Development & Performance

**Perlmutter Cancer Center**

**NYU Langone Health** — An NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center

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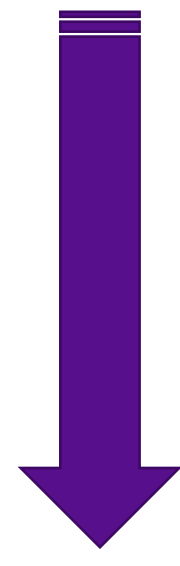
## Background 2019

- High turnover rate (34.4%)
- Low retention rate (59.3%)
- Low promotion rate (2.9%)
- Vacancy rate (13.9%)
- Low NYULH HR employee engagement survey score 59% (12/15)

## Clinical Staff Survey 2019

- Lack of support for the role (30%)
- Not feeling valued in the role (55.2%)
- Lack of formal orientation (34.5%)
- Feeling of overwork (55.2%)
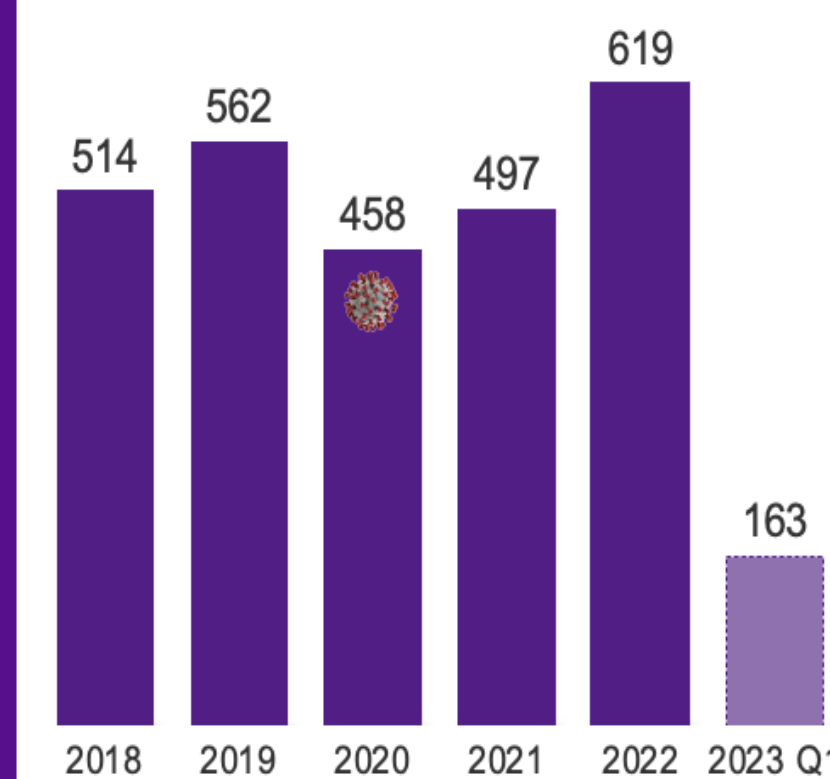- Desire for more SOPs (77.8%)

## Goals

- Incremental and multi-pronged approach
- Collaborate with NYU Human Resources
- Decrease turnover rate by > 10%
- Increase retention rate and promotion rate by > 10%
- Maintain vacancy rate (goal <15%)
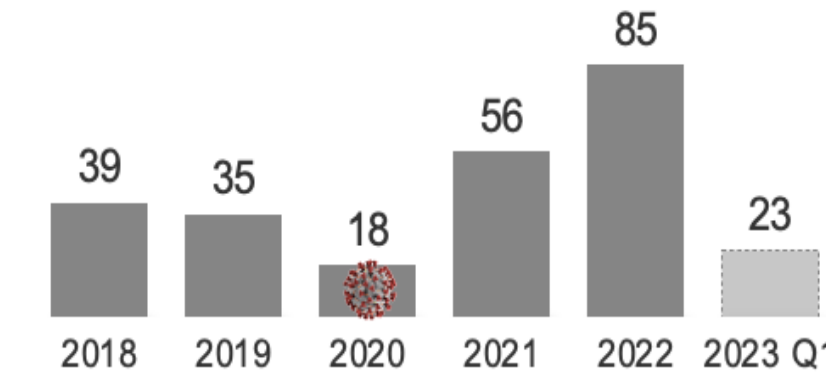- Increase employee engagement to > 70%

## The NYULH PCC Context

**Accruals to Interventional Treatment**

**ALL SITES**

| 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 Q1 |
|------|------|------|------|------|---------|
| 514 | 562 | 458 | 497 | 619 | 163 |

**Long Island**

| 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 Q1 |
|------|------|------|------|------|---------|
| 39 | 35 | 18 | 56 | 85 | 23 |

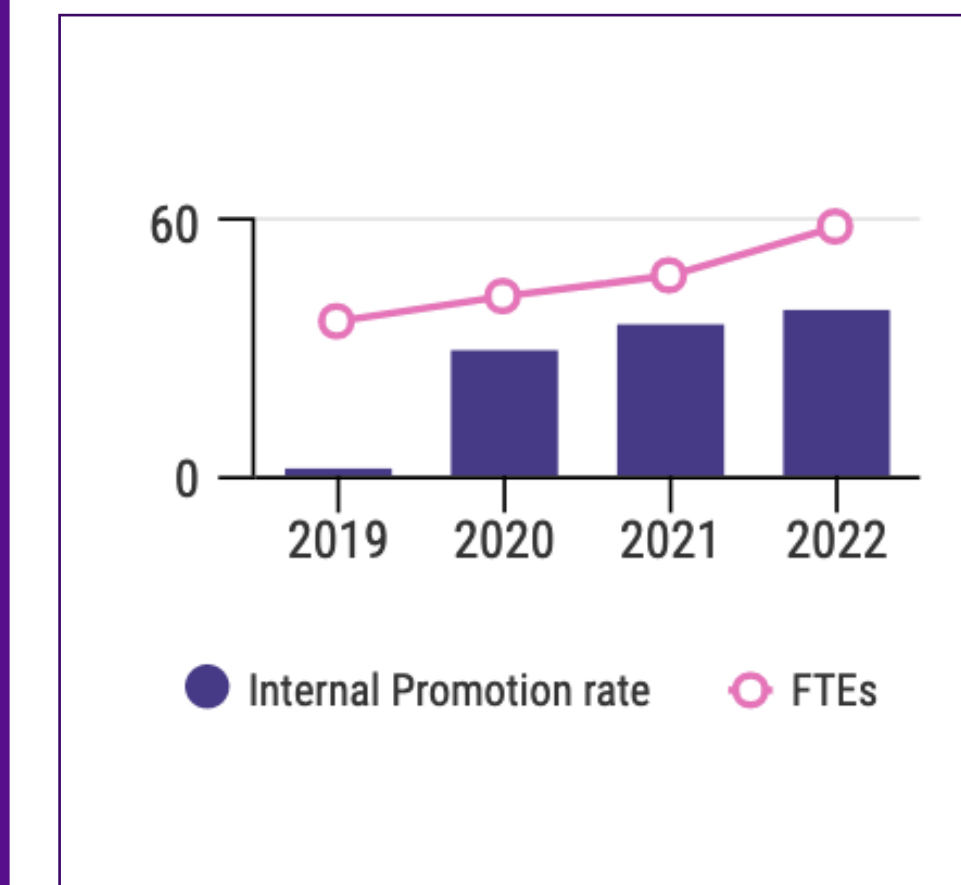**Brooklyn**
- First trial initiated July 2022
- 7 accruals to date
- Trials portfolio selected for 2023
- Prescreening in place
- 4 PCC faculty to establish clinical presence

## Solutions

- Create and maintain an evidence-based, competency driven orientation program for clinical research staff (2019)
- Create clinical research career ladders and perform market analysis (2019 & 2022)
- Develop career promotional tracks to clinical management (2021)
- Institute an employee-lead mentorship program (2021)
- Establish a High Reliability Organization (HRO) program (2021)
- Form unit practice counsels (2022)
- Evaluate and address need for internal clinical research SOPs (2019-2022)
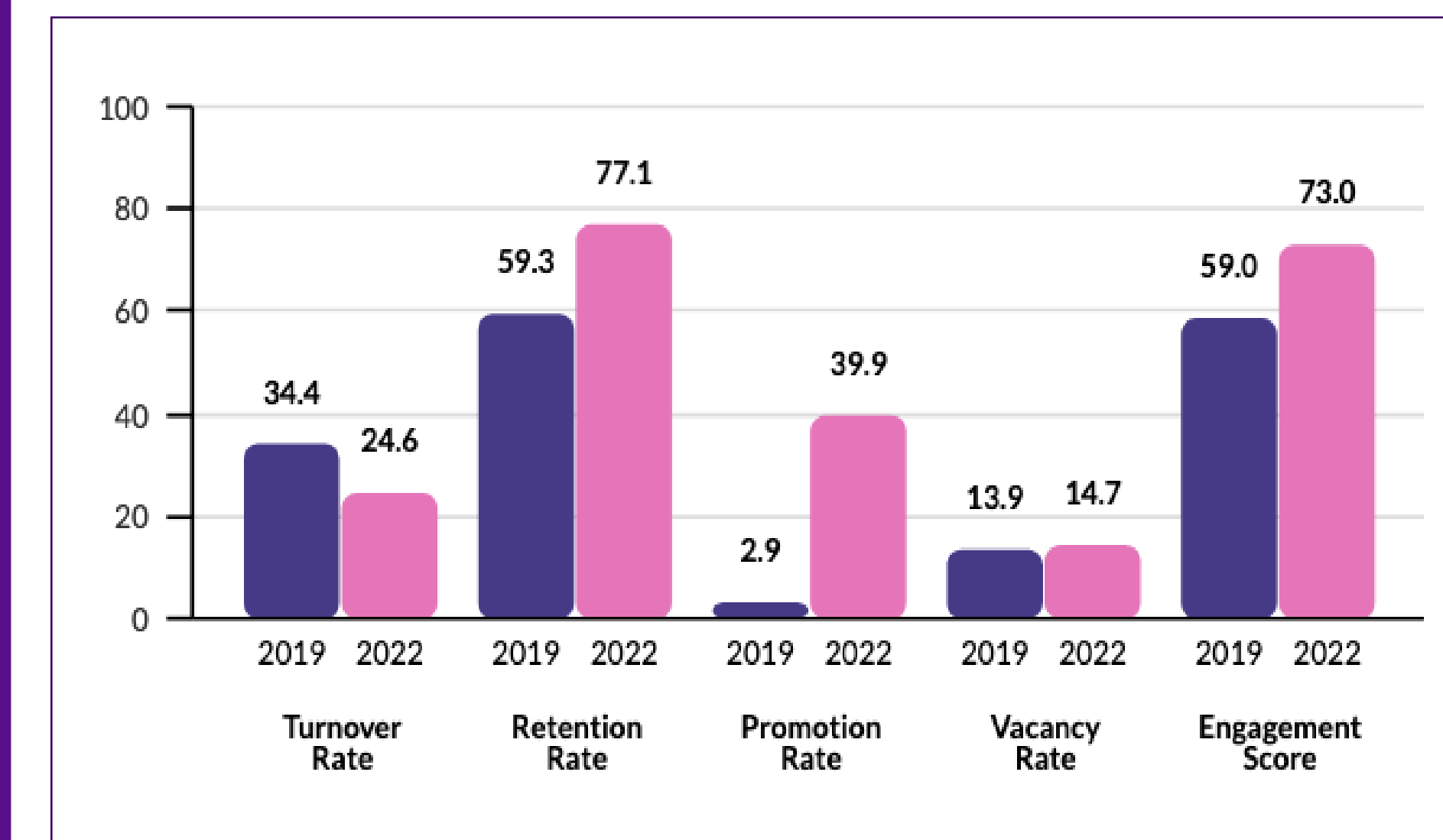
## Outcomes

- Turnover rate decreased 9.8% (p = 0.15)
- Retention rate increased 17.8% (p = 0.03)
- Promotion rate increased 37% (p = 0.00003)
- Vacancy rate maintained at 14.7% with FTE increase from 40 (2019) to 65 (2022) (63% increase)
- NYULH HR engagement results increased to 73% (goal >70%) (p = 0.17) (89% response rate 58/65)
- All internal and external audits passed 2020-2022
- Internal audit findings decreased by 80% 2020 to 2022
- Central review of reportable events showed a 30% decrease in 2022
- SOPs increased from 14 to 33 (2018 to 2022)

Chart legend: ● Internal Promotion rate   ○ FTEs (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022)

## Outcome Measures

| | Turnover Rate | Retention Rate | Promotion Rate | Vacancy Rate | Engagement Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2019 | 34.4 | 59.3 | 2.9 | 13.9 | 59.0 |
| 2022 | 24.6 | 77.1 | 39.9 | 14.7 | 73.0 |

**Next Steps?**
- Partner with NYU Rory Meyers College of Nursing Research MSN to establish a training pathway
- Create additional licensed management positions
- Add a project management steps to the clinical research ladder