

Pre-Hearing Conferences and their impact on case progression

Through the Eyes of the Child Initiative

Introduction: Front-Loading in Nebraska

- The National Council on Juvenile and Family Court Judges identified the use of facilitated pre-hearing conferences (PHCs) as one method to achieve better outcomes for children
- After PHCs were piloted by Nebraska's NCJFCJ Model Court in Omaha, several *Through the Eyes of the Child* teams implemented them.

Pre-Hearing Conference Study

- Purpose of the current study: To examine the effect of PHCs on case progression. Specifically, to determine if the use of PHCs reduces time to adjudication, disposition, and permanency.
- Counties Included: Adams, Clay, Dawson, Fillmore, Madison, Nuckolls, Scottsbluff, Seward, and Webster.

Methodology

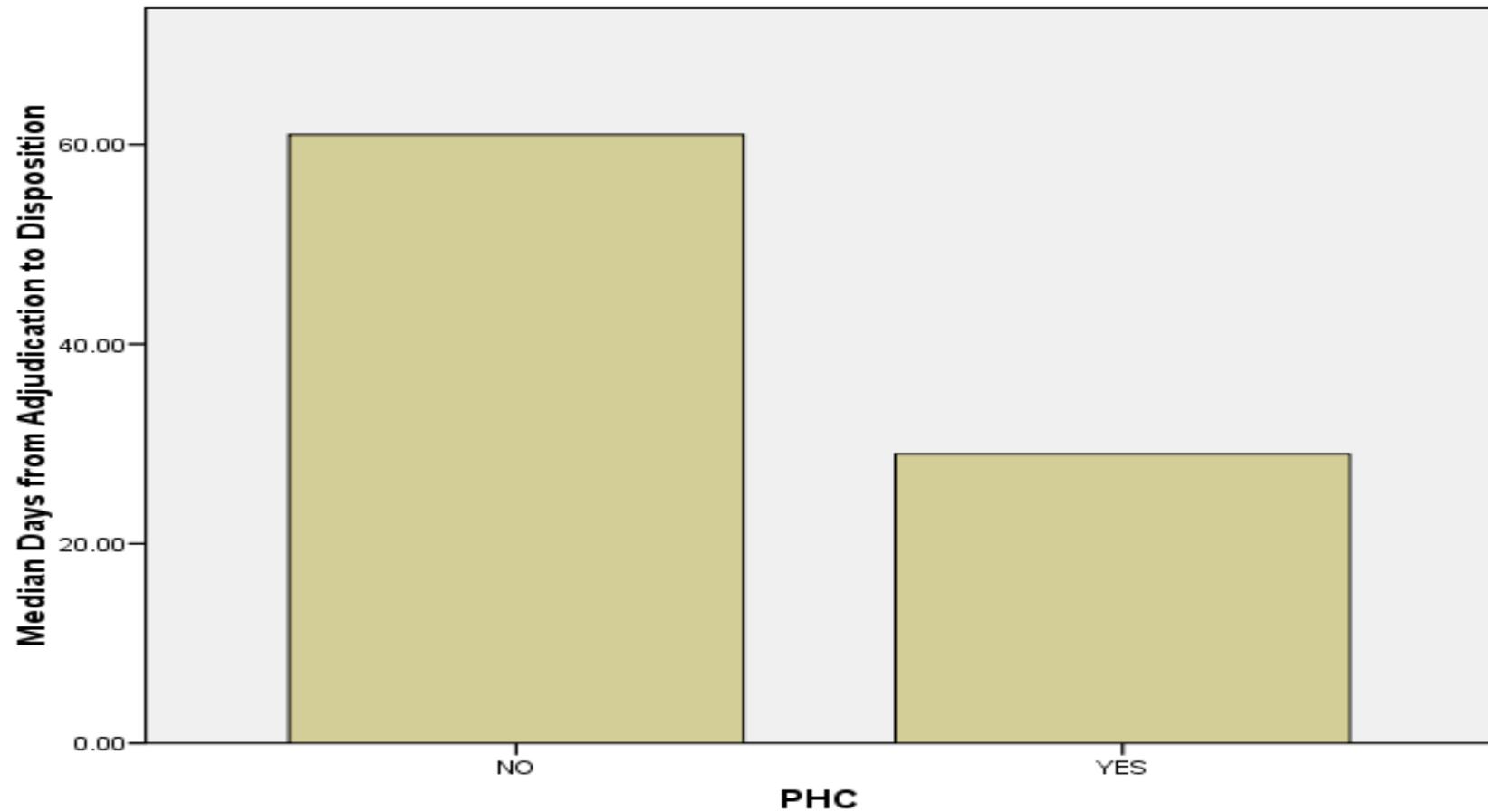
- Sample: case progression information from the following two categories of cases was collected:
 - PHC cases: cases that were identified as having had PHCs
 - Non-PHC cases: a random sample of cases that had not utilized PHCs. These cases were typically within a year before the county initiated PHCs.
- Analysis: the time (days) from petition filing to adjudication and disposition dates were measured and analyzed for differences between the above two categories of cases.

All Counties Time to Adjudication

- According to the mean (average) and median (midpoint) it appears that cases that utilized PHCs adjudicated about a month faster than cases that did not utilize PHCs

PHC		N	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
NO	Days to Adjudication	77	0	384	77.05	61	64.08
	Closed before Adj	25					
	Not yet Adjudicated	2					
YES	Days to Adjudication	77	1	188	47.07	29	42.82
	Closed before Adj	15					
	Not yet Adjudicated	4					

All Counties Time to Adjudication



All Counties

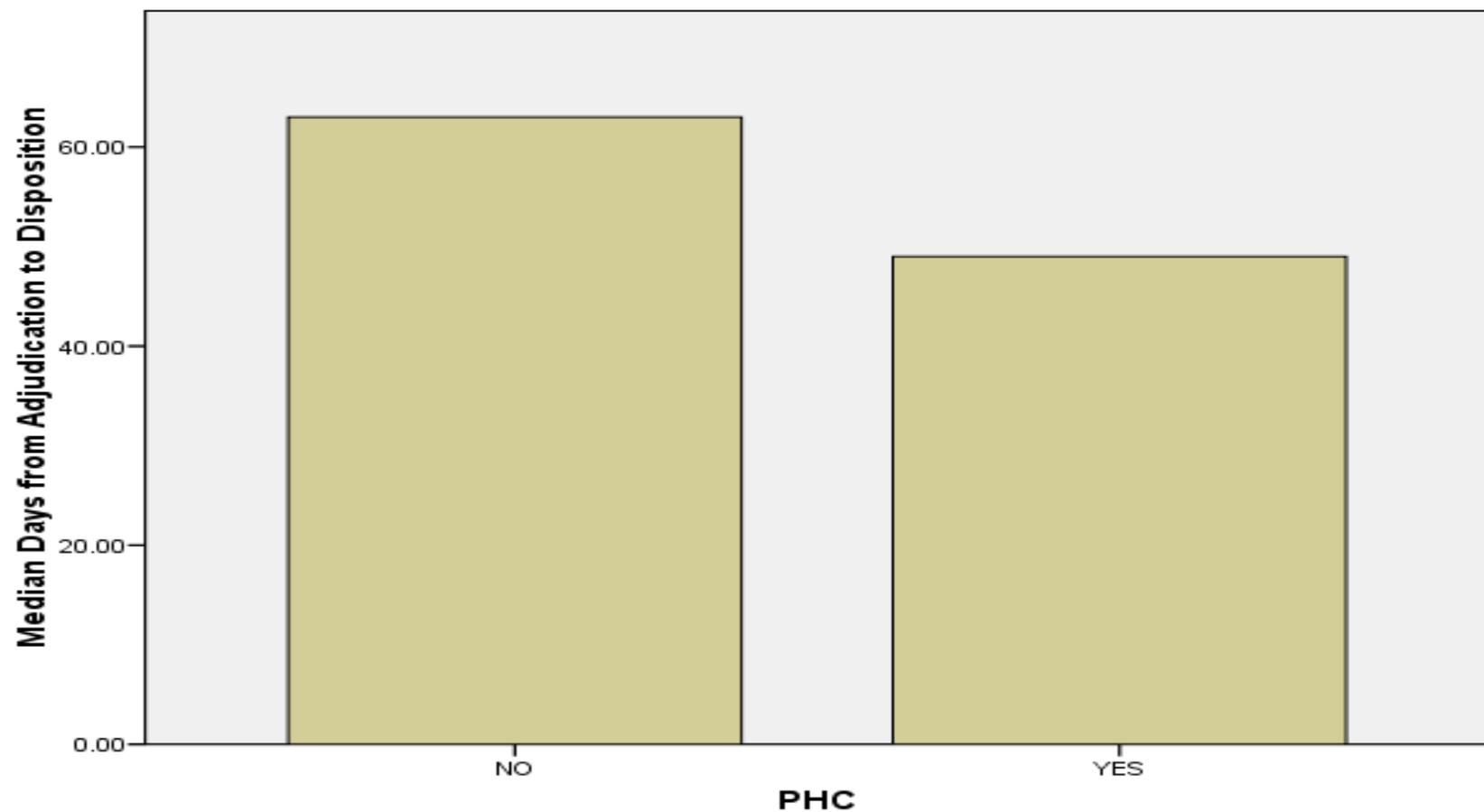
Time from Adjudication to Disposition

- According to the mean and median, it appears that cases that utilized PHCs had shorter time frames between adjudication and disposition. The time between adjudication and disposition appears to be about a week shorter, making the total time from petition filing to disposition about 5 weeks faster for cases that utilized PHCs than cases that did not.

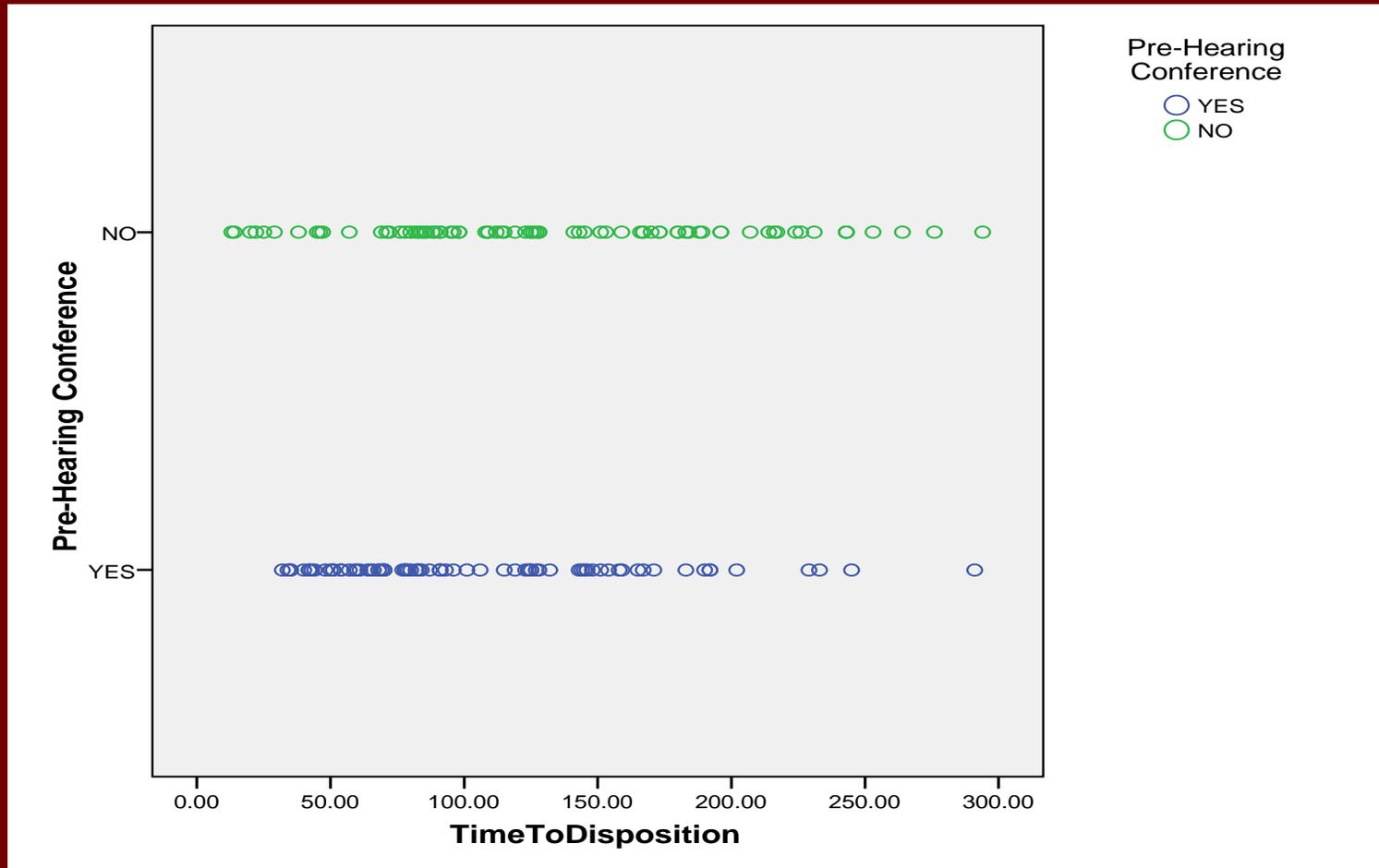
PHC		N	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
NO	Adj. to Disposition	73	0	200	65.97	63	43.05
	Closed before Disp.	27					
	Not reached Disp.	4					
YES	Adj. to Disposition	76	0	200	59.28	49	38.38
	Closed before Disp.	15					
	Not reached Disp.	5					

All Counties

Days from Adjudication to Disposition



All Counties Days to Disposition



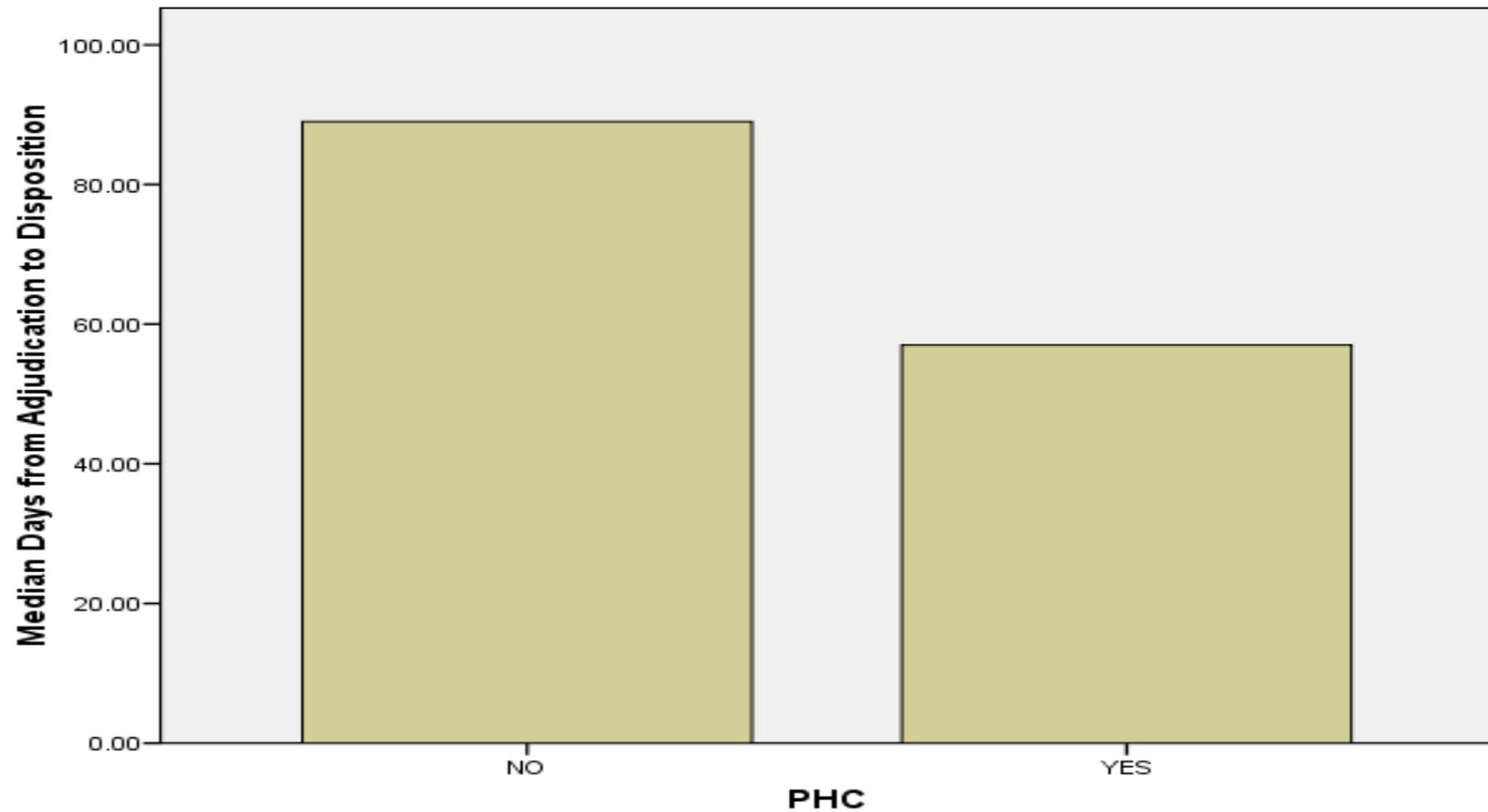
Scottsbluff

Time to Adjudication

- Cases in the Scottsbluff sample that utilized PHCs adjudicated 20-30 days faster than cases that did not utilize PHCs.

PHC		N	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
NO	Days to Adjudication	22	8	232	88.5	89	61.65
	Closed before Adj.	3					
	Not yet Adjudicated	0					
YES	Days to Adjudication	28	5	188	67.21	57	50.42
	Closed before Adj.	9					
	Not yet Adjudicated	4					

Scottsbluff Time to Adjudication



Scottsbluff

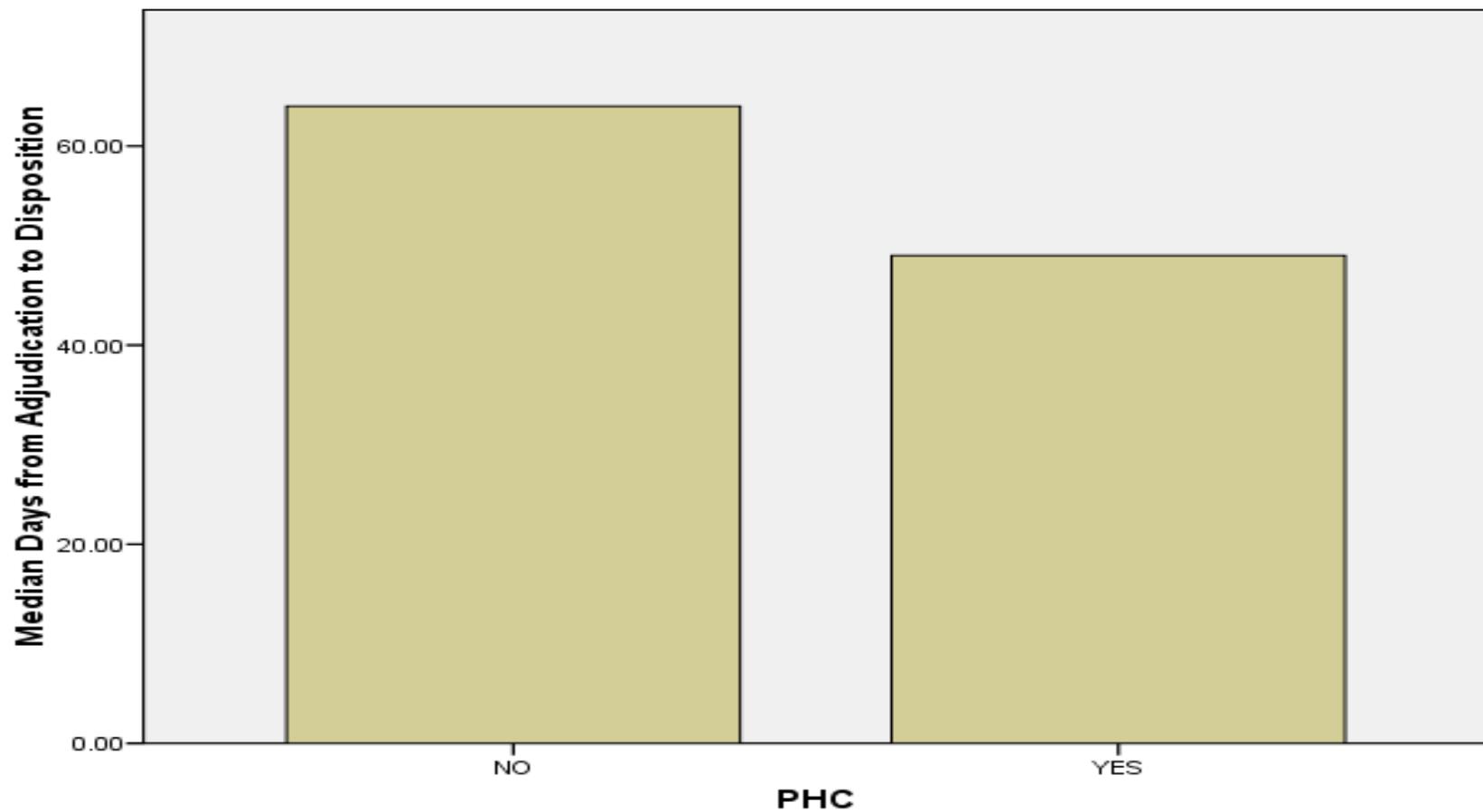
Time from Adjudication to Disposition

- Cases in the Scottsbluff sample that utilized PHCs even had slightly shorter time frames between adjudication and disposition, making the total time from petition filing to disposition more than a month faster for cases that utilized PHCs than cases that did not.

PHC		N	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
NO	Adj. to Disposition	21	0	200	62.91	64	45.12
	Closed before Disp.	3					
	Not reached Disp.	1					
YES	Adj. to Disposition	27	14	200	67.93	49	46.73
	Closed before Disp.	9					
	Not reached Disp.	5					

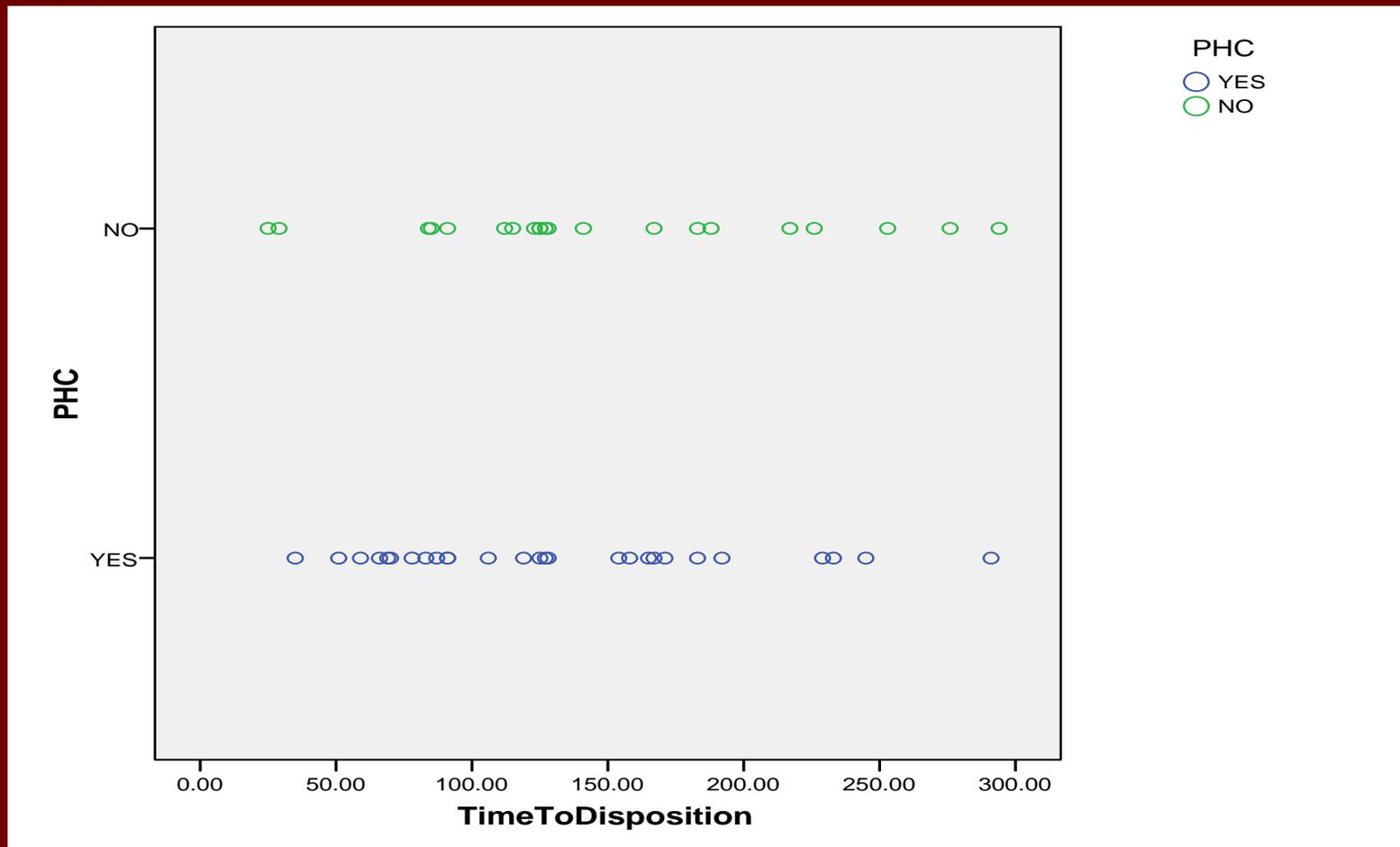
Scottsbluff

Time from Adjudication to Disposition



Scottsbluff

Time (days) to Disposition



Completion of Study

This study is still in progress and this is a preliminary analysis of the data. We will continue to update the data as time passes and ultimately will compare times to permanency for PHC vs non-PHC cases.

Discussion Questions

- Any other reason for this effect?
- What about PHCs in Scottsbluff has been most effective?
- Reason for long time frames between adjudications and dispositions?