

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, Seward, and Webster. Scottsbluff was also included in the study, but its data is not included in this presentation.

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

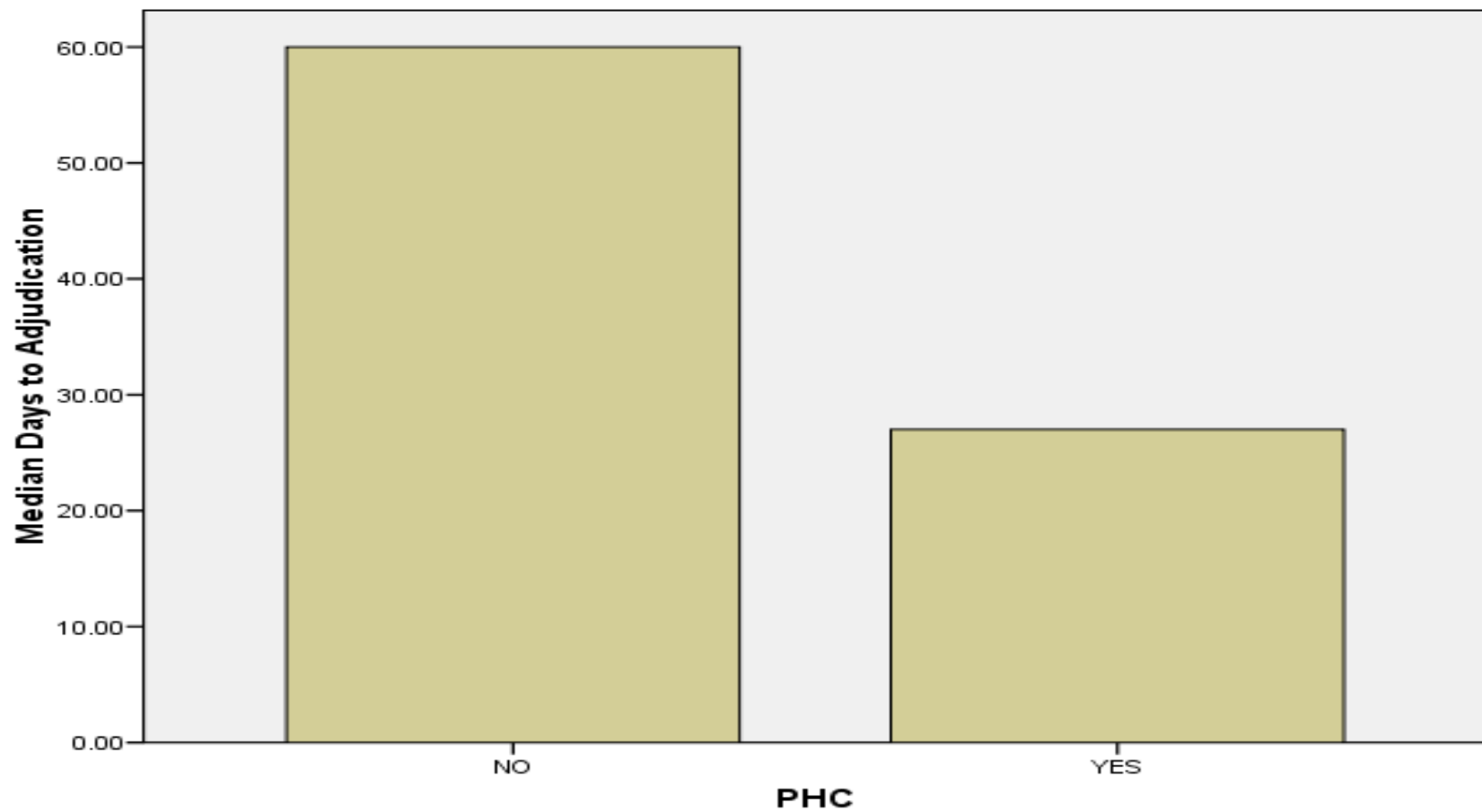
Preliminary Findings

Times to Adjudication

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

PHC		N	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
NO	Days to Adjudication	55	0	384	72.47	60	65.01
	Closed before Adj.	22					
	Not yet Adjudicated	2					
YES	Days to Adjudication	49	1	139	25.55	27	33.18
	Closed before Adj.	6					
	Not yet Adjudicated	0					

All Counties Median Days to Adjudication



All Counties

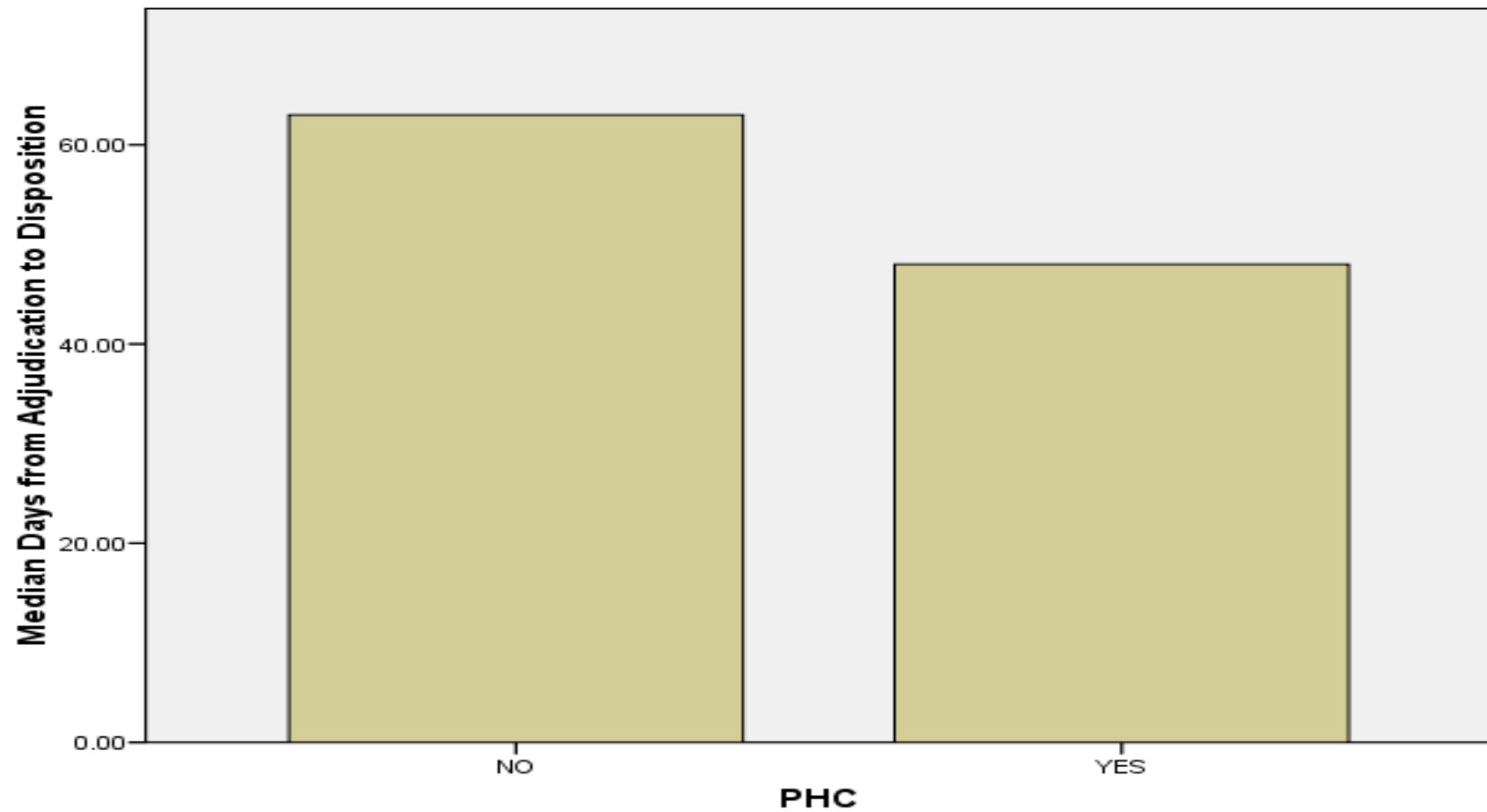
Preliminary Findings

Adjudication to Disposition

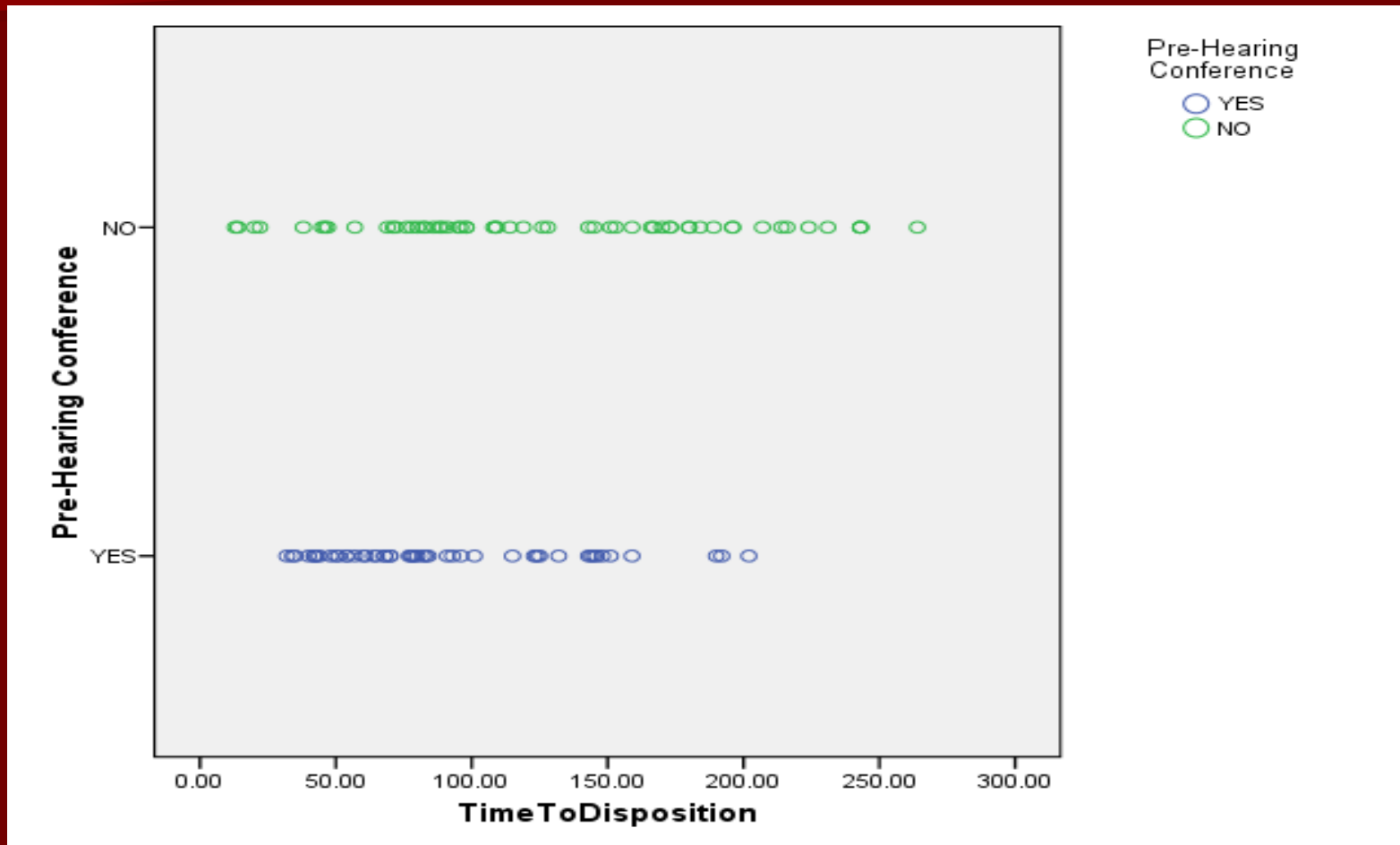
- According to the mean and median, it appears that cases that utilized PHCs had shorter time frames between adjudication and disposition. The time between adjudication and disposition appears to be about a week shorter, making the total time from petition filing to disposition more than 6 weeks faster for cases that utilized PHCs than cases that did not.

PHC		N	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
NO	Adj. to Disposition	52	0	182	67.25	63	42.57
	Closed before Disp.	24					
	Not reached Disp.	3					
YES	Adj. to Disposition	49	0	140	54.51	48	32.45
	Closed before Disp.	6					
	Not reached Disp.	0					

All Counties Median Days from Adjudication to Disposition



All Counties Days to Disposition

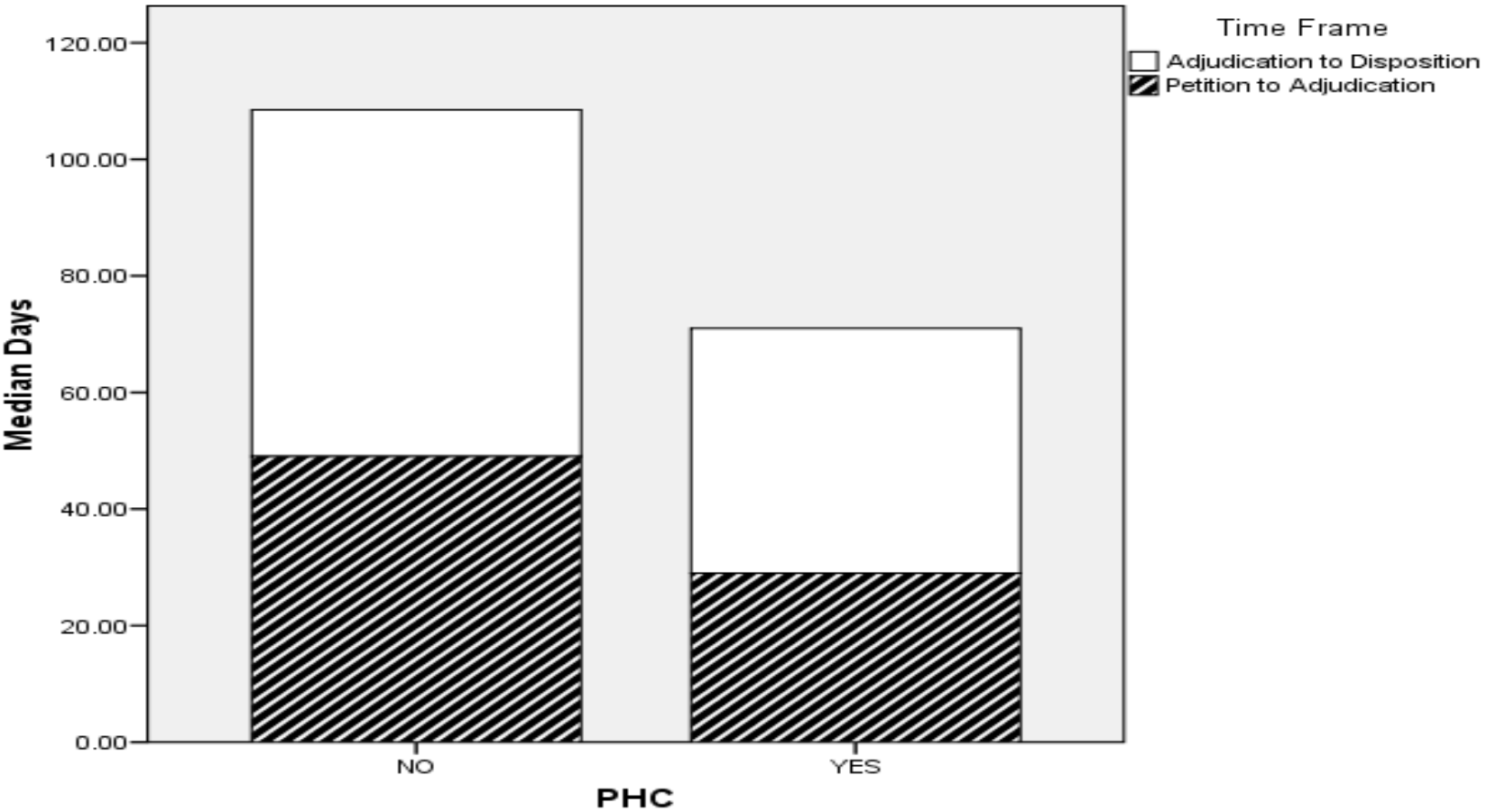


Dawson County

- The cases from Dawson County demonstrated shorter times to adjudication (about 20 days) for PHC cases and also shorter times (again, about 20 days) for adjudication to disposition.

PHC		N	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
NO	Days to Adjudication	10	16	110	53.6	49	27.68
YES	Days to Adjudication	9	9	65	27.68	29	11.72
NO	Adj. to Disposition	10	14	126	62.2	59.5	32.48
YES	Adj. to Disposition	8	28	63	41.89	42	10.42

Dawson County

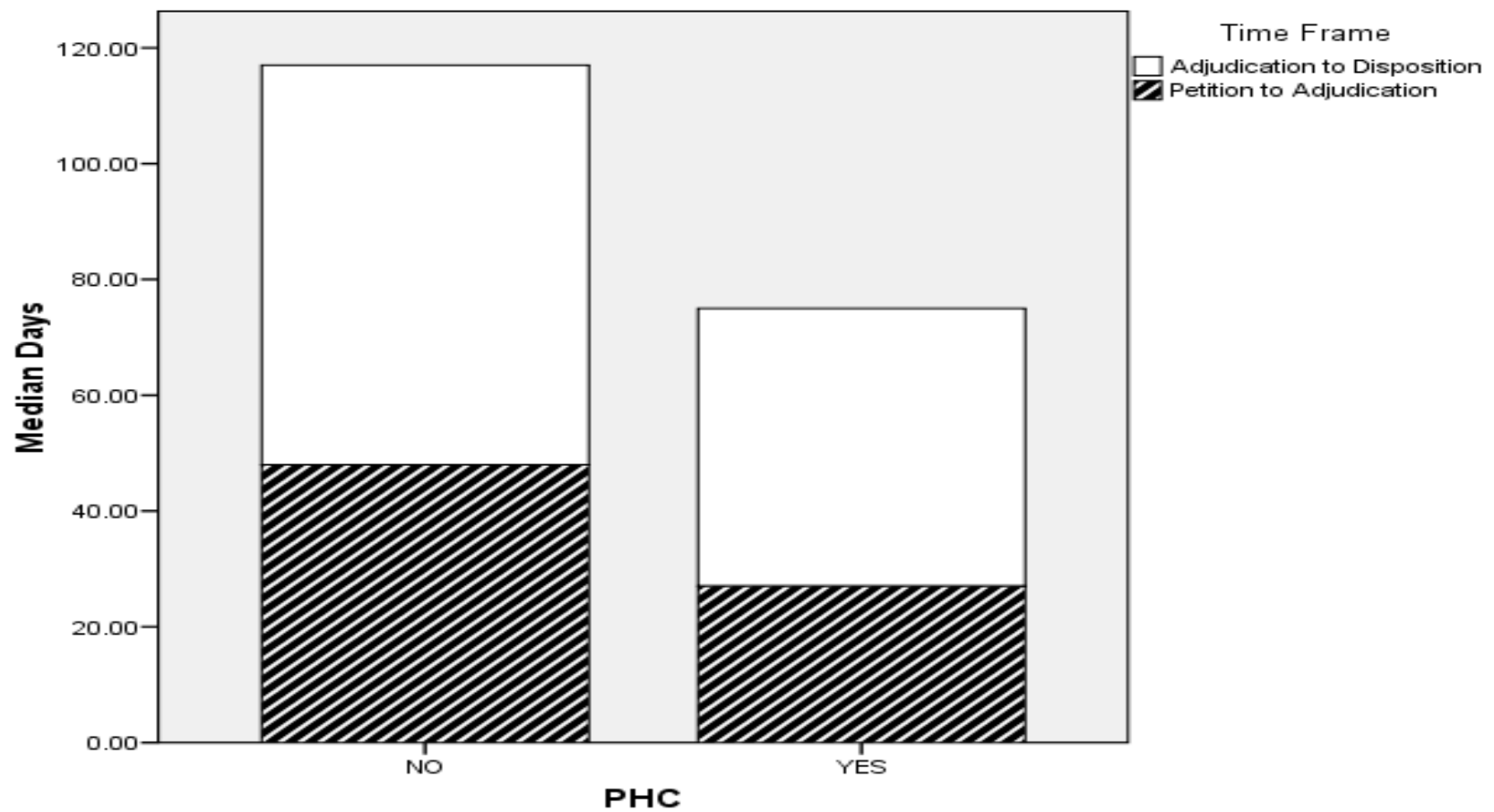


Madison County

- The cases from Madison County demonstrated shorter times to adjudication (20+ days) for PHC cases and slightly shorter times for adjudication to disposition as well.

PHC		N	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
NO	Days to Adjudication	11	3	202	69	48	58.54
YES	Days to Adjudication	11	1	73	32.36	27	24.54
NO	Adj. to Disposition	11	0	139	59.73	69	40.27
YES	Adj. to Disposition	10	19	140	60.55	48	40.74

Madison County

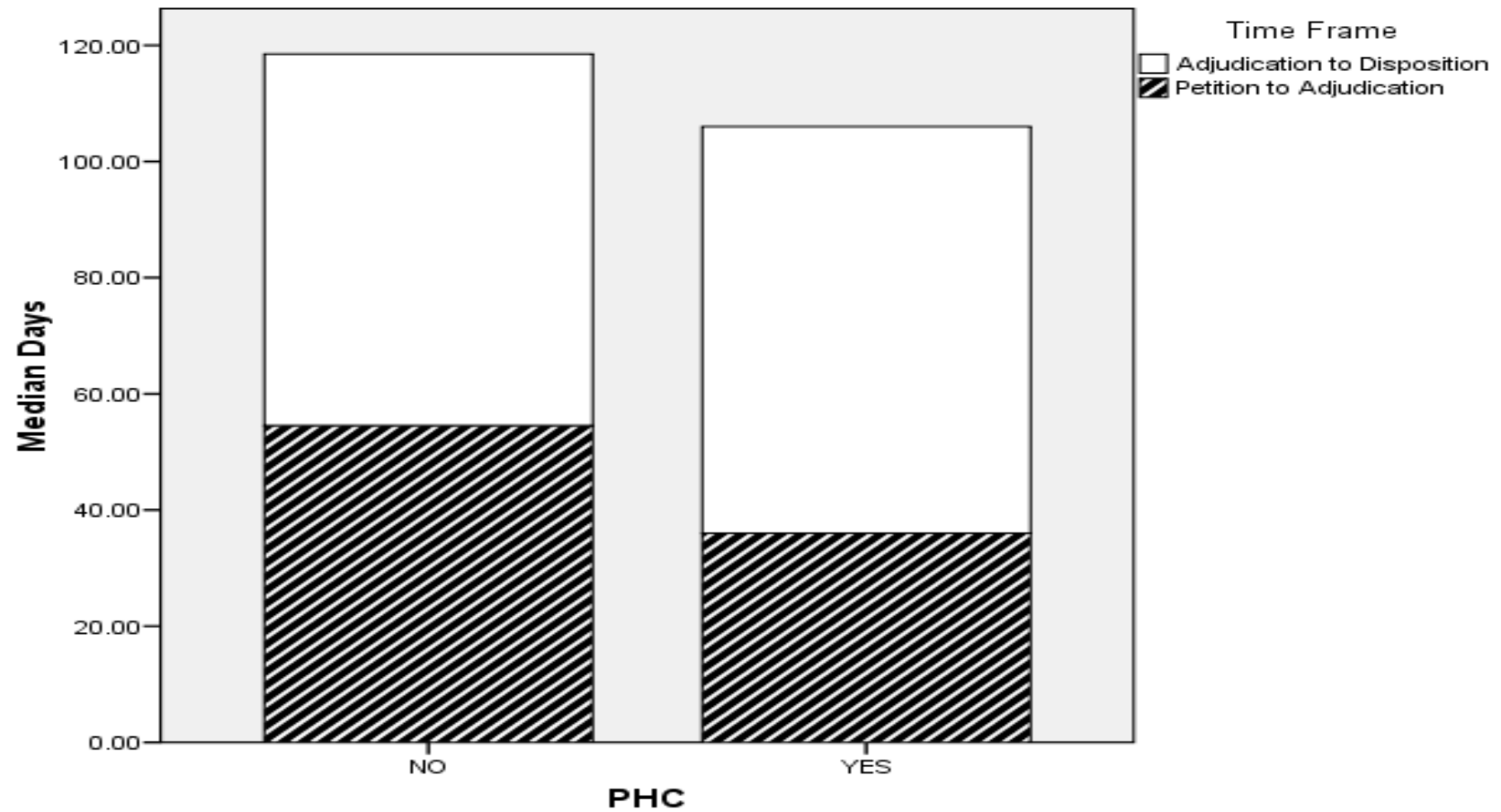


Adams County

- The cases from Adams County demonstrated shorter times to adjudication (about 20 days) for PHC cases, but a possible slight *increase* in time from adjudication to disposition.

PHC		N	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
NO	Days to Adjudication	14	0	384	83.92	54.5	101.39
YES	Days to Adjudication	12	8	139	48.39	36	44.18
NO	Adj. to Disposition	13	1	97	57.42	64	29.99
YES	Adj. to Disposition	10	0	112	63	70	45.51

Adams County



Smaller Counties Times to Adjudication

The counties listed to the right all show shorter times to adjudication for cases that utilized PHCs.

Note that because there are so few PHC cases for each county, these numbers do not reliably indicate trends for these counties.

Count	PHC	N	Median
Clay	NO	3	61
	YES	3	5
Fillmore	NO	10	122.5
	YES	3	90
Nuckolls	NO	2	16.5
	YES	1	15
Seward	NO	5	24
	YES	5	29
Webster	NO	1	95
	YES	4	19.5

Smaller Counties

Times from Adjudication to Disposition

The counties listed to the right all show shorter times from adjudication to disposition for cases that utilized PHCs.

Again, note that because there are so few PHC cases for each county, these numbers do not reliably indicate trends for these counties.

Count	PHC	N	Median
Clay	NO	3	182
	YES	3	56
Fillmore	NO	8	63
	YES	3	42
Nuckolls	NO	2	45.5
	YES	1	35
Seward	NO	5	47
	YES	5	31
Webster	NO	1	129
	YES	4	58

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 your county has been most effective?
- Reason for long time frames between adjudications and dispositions?