



SHSMD26 CONNECTIONS

Health Care Marketing, Strategy & Communications

American Hospital Association Conference
September 27-29 ∙ Baltimore

From Caregivers to Brand Champions: How an Inside-Out Brand Strategy Transformed a Rural Health System's Reputation

Laura Guido, Chief Strategy Officer, Adena Health

Jennifer DeMatteis, AVP Marketing Communications, Adena Health



Welcome



Laura Guido
Chief Strategy
Officer



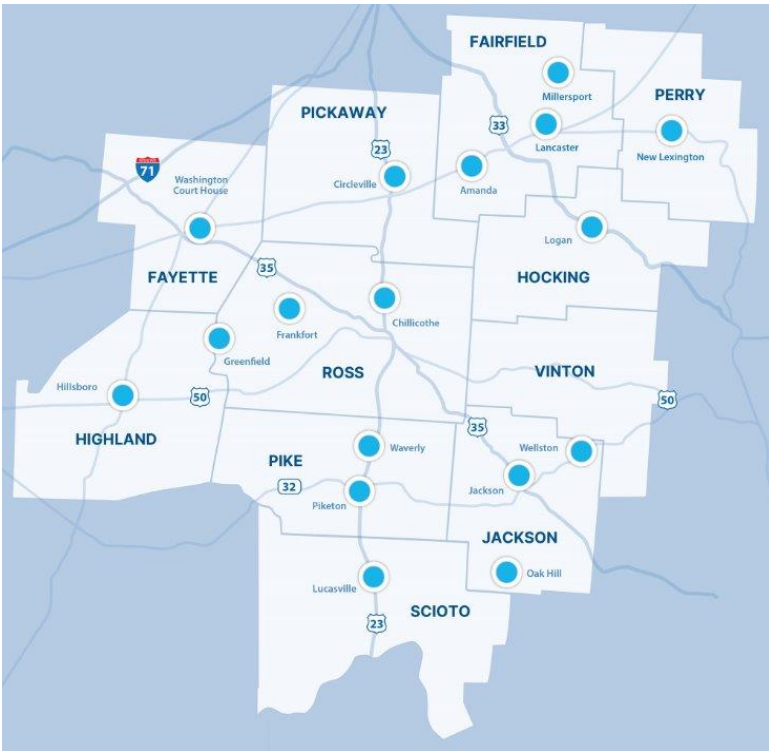
Jennifer DeMatteis
AVP Marketing
Communications

Learning objectives

1. Assess the benefits of an inside-out, enterprise-wide brand strategy is more successful than traditional marketing approaches in rebuilding trust, reputation, and employee engagement – especially in rural, community-based health systems.
2. Describe how internal alignment, leadership accountability, organizational culture, and employee engagement can elevate brand stewardship and drive measurable results in employee pride, patient experience, and brand perception.
3. Understand how omni-channel marketing, authentic storytelling approaches that elevate employee and community voices can positively impact net promoter scores, employee engagement, and community trust.

About Adena Health

- Independent, not-for-profit rural health system serving more than 600K residents throughout 11 counties in central and southern Ohio



5
hospitals



6
emergency
departments



563
inpatient
beds



60+
locations



6k+
workforce



460+
employed
physicians
and APPs



Society for Health Care
Strategy & Market
Development™

Simply put: We had a problem

In 2023:
Employee engagement scores dropped

	2022 spring		2023 spring		2023 fall
Engagement	4.03	47th	3.90	32nd	3.84
Pride and reputation	4.09	38th	3.97	24th	NA

Patients were not recommending us for care

While we led competitors in unaided awareness, patients were unlikely to recommend Adena Health for care

Our net promoter score was -29

The future of the organization was at risk



Consumer net promoter score

-29 NPS



Internal net promoter score

6 NPS



Market share

Dropped by
1.1% YoY



Retention

Average
turnover was at
19.44%



Contract labor costs

Highest in
history



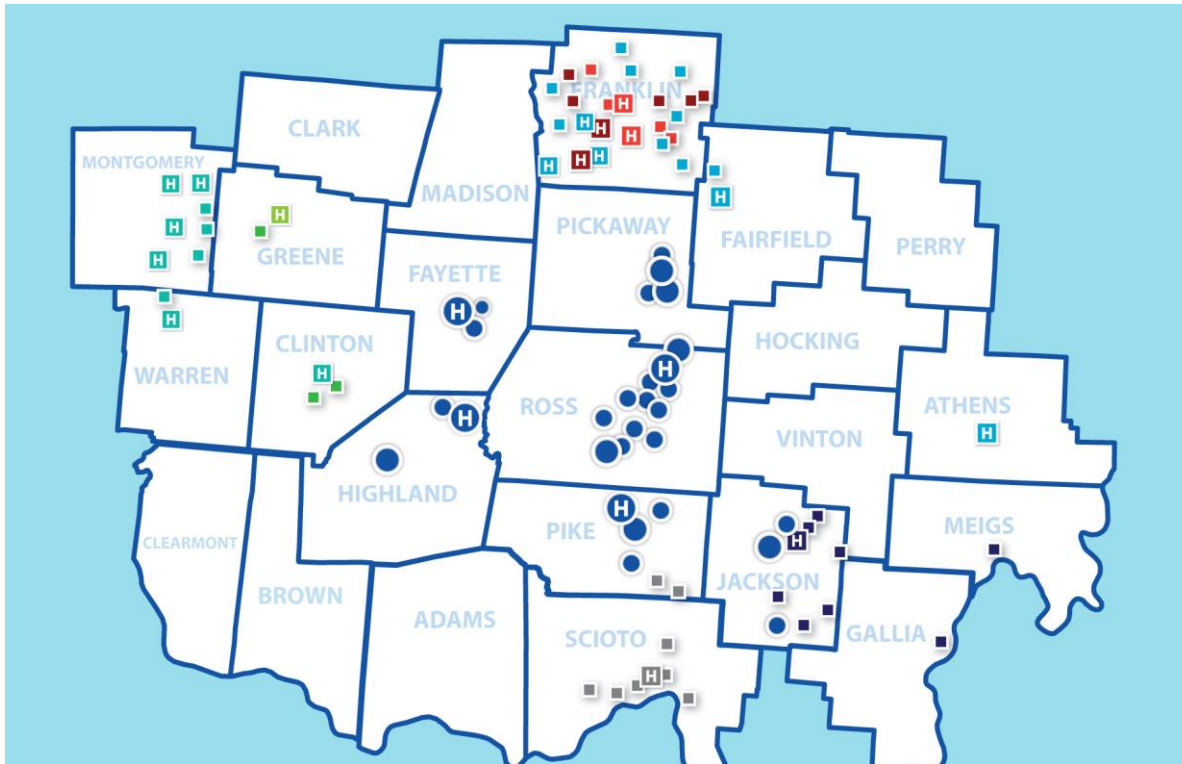
Average
openings per
recruiter

Bottom decile

The lack of trust internally and externally was impacting revenue and future growth.

The competitive landscape

Even in a rural market, patients have numerous care options within a short drive



From the center of our region:

- Columbus: <50 miles
- Cincinnati: <100 miles
- Dayton: <75 miles

Factors in patients determining where to go for care

- **In 2020, 51% of consumers had a positive view on healthcare, but only 35% had the same sentiment in 2023**, citing challenges with access, service quality, patient safety, and costs (Gallup, 2023)
- **86% of consumers** choose healthcare based on brand reputation (Press Ganey, 2024)
- **Trust increased by 19%** when hospitals shared metrics such as physician ratings, readmission rates, or surgical outcomes (*Press Ganey 2020*)

Prioritization of internal relationship skills built trust and psychological safety to help influence patient care



Enhance relationships with patients, families, and customers to deliver excellence in every interaction.



Improve teamwork - creating a culture of reliable, safe, high-quality and compassionate, connected care.



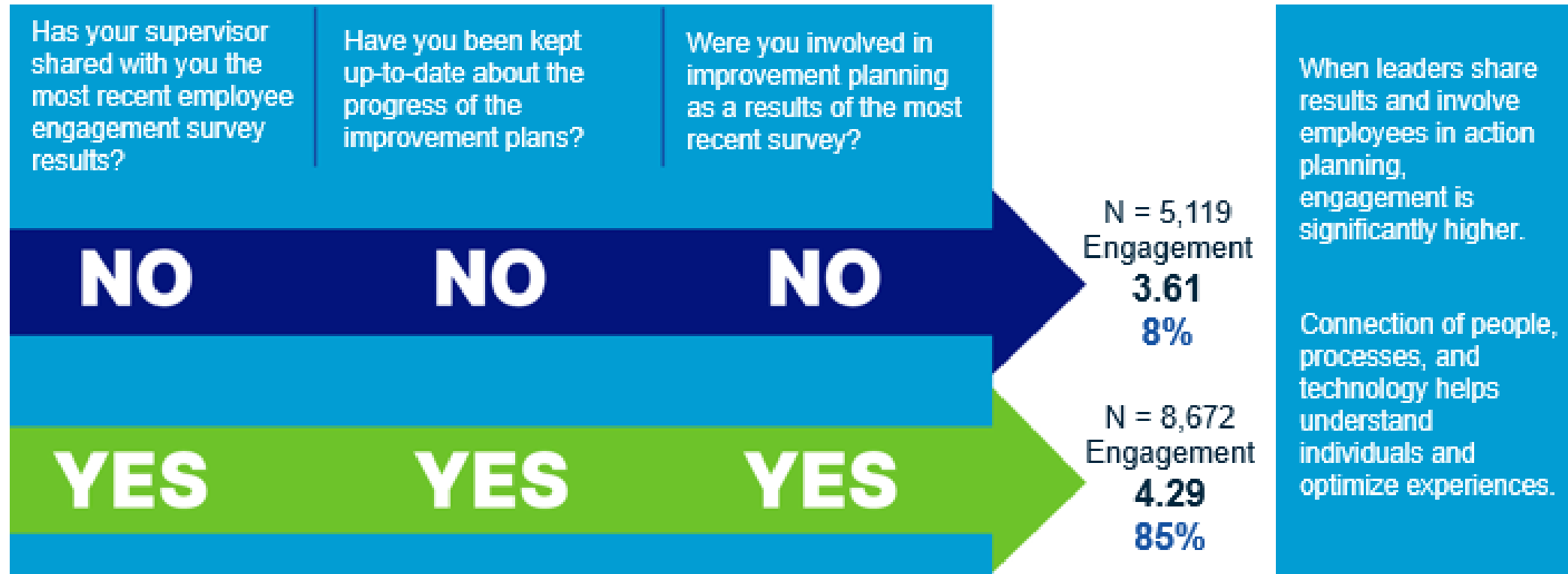
Use for caregiver / provider to patient / family



Use same skills among care team(s)

Connection with internal engagement survey

- Partnering with HR, there was an opportunity to connect reputation building strategy with the internal caregiver engagement survey
- In 2023, 52% of our organization was not involved in action planning



Leaders were held accountable

Implementation of a biweekly human experience meeting ensured leaders were engaging with teams

Meetings allowed for:

- Transparency on current state
- Sharing of metrics
- Leader accountability
- Shared learning
- Connecting initiatives to system goals
- Cross-sharing and leader development

New survey questions provided more visibility to leader engagement

Example: Were you involved in reviewing and/or adjusting action plans as a result of the survey?

52% of caregivers indicated they were involved in action planning in 2023.

By 2024, 80% were involved.

Adjusted scorecard to drive accountability

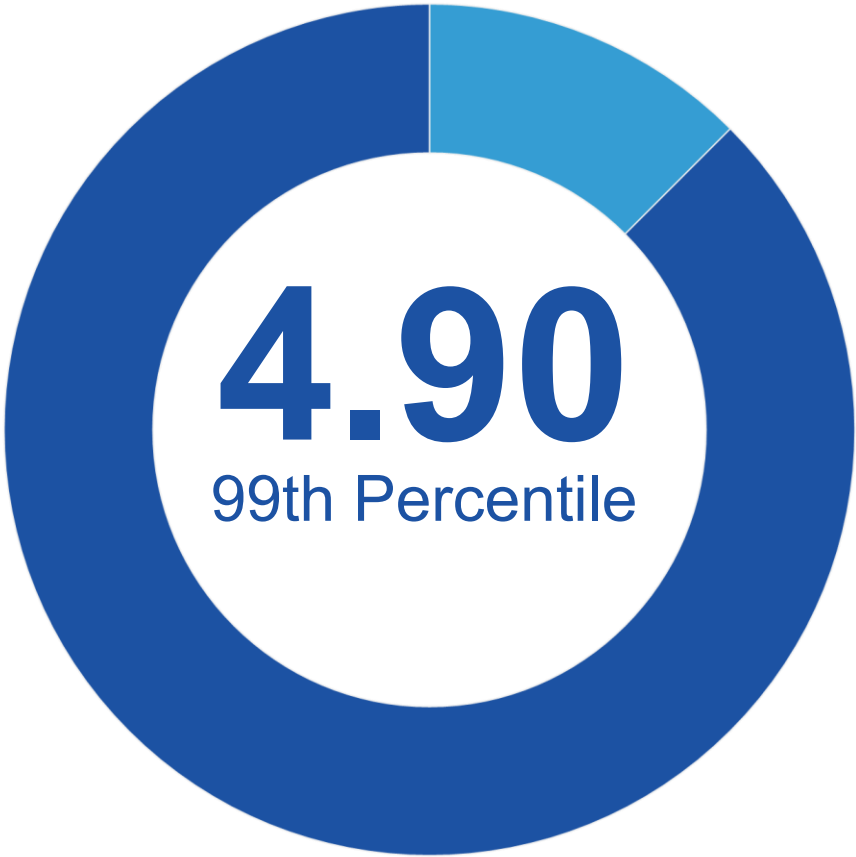
Engagement	Stewardship
Safety & Quality	Service



Human experience	Stewardship
Safety & Quality	Growth

Internal engagement impacts the patient experience

Mean Score and Distribution



Comparisons

Benchmark	Difference
vs. Overall Org Avg	+0.72
vs . Nat'l Healthcare (Employee) Avg 2025	+0.93

We shifted our marketing strategy

Intentional shift from a focus on services and providers to brand and reputation.

A strong brand can influence nearly every area of the business from perception and volume to experience and retention

Brand Building

Proactive: it's about deliberately shaping how people perceive Adena Health through messaging, visuals, and experiences



Reputation

Reactive: based on public perceptions, it's the outcome of a strong brand and personal experiences changing overtime

Brand also influences a patient's decision

- **Transparency:** Information about services, quality measures, pricing, and patient outcomes to build trust and demonstrate a commitment to patient-centered care.
- **Patient testimonials and success stories:** Highlight positive experiences and outcomes. Authentic stories from satisfied patients can counteract negative perceptions.
- **Community outreach:** Engage in community outreach initiatives to demonstrate a genuine commitment to the community's well-being.
- **Campaigns:** Omni-channel approaches to connect with the target audience, share relevant information.

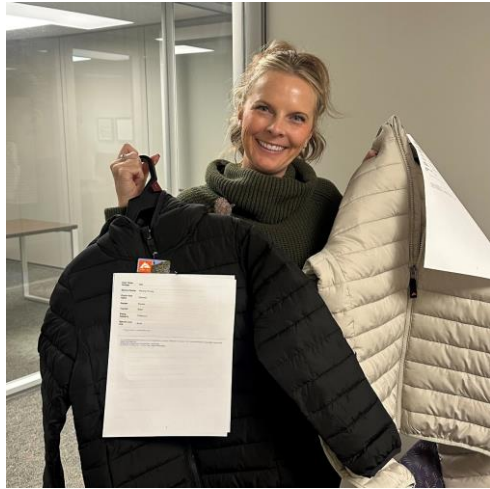
Harnessing internal pride

Created the **Adena Ambassador** program focused on amplifying enthusiasm and positive messaging

Complete a quarterly challenge + **Agree to the Ambassador principles of advocacy, engagement, and role modeling** = **Become an Adena Ambassador and receive perks**

Adena Ambassador program

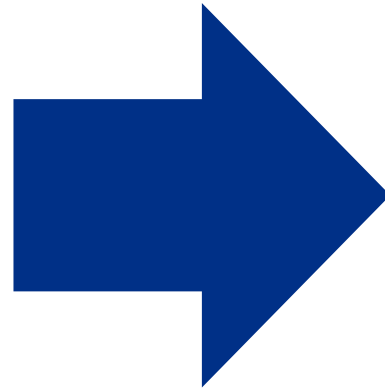
- FY25 goal: 20% participation
- FY26 goal: 35% participation



Faces of Adena

The use of storytelling and personal connections shifts focus on Adena as a business to the stories of everyday caregivers and community members.

- Shows the commitment and compassion to organization by sharing intimate stories of patients, caregivers and community members
- Naturally incorporates business opportunities through provider and service awareness
- Omni-channel campaign generates pride internally and externally



Paid Social engagement is 285% higher than our paid average of 23%

Organic social engagement is 400% higher than our organic average of 12%

70+ participants captured in year one

Danny knows community is built on people who care.

DANNY L.
Patient



ADENA HEALTH

As a retired educator, Danny spent decades teaching and mentoring generations of students. But after suffering a mini-stroke, it was Danny who needed support. At Adena Greenfield Medical Center, he received advanced rehabilitative care — relearning how to talk, eat, and walk. Today, he's back where he belongs: cheering on his grandchildren at performances and sporting events with his wife, Susan, by his side. Danny is one of the many faces of our patients in the community we call home.

See Danny's story and more at Adena.org/Faces.

Patient

Dr. Hassan is globally recognized. And locally trusted.

HAFEEZ HASSAN, MD
Interventional cardiologist



ADENA HEALTH

As an interventional cardiologist, Dr. Hafeez Hassan specializes in advanced treatments for serious heart and vascular conditions — and he chose to bring his expertise to Adena Health. He was recently named one of only 30 physicians to receive the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography & Interventions' "30 in Their 30s" award — honoring leadership, clinical excellence, and commitment. When he's not in the catheterization laboratory, he loves to travel and play soccer. Dr. Hassan is one of the many faces of our providers in the community we call home.

See Dr. Hassan's story and more at Adena.org/Faces.

Provider

Jennifer's next chapter is about giving back.

JENNIFER THOMPSON McKELL
Community member



ADENA HEALTH

Jennifer grew up on a farm in Fayette County. The first in her family to go to college, she went on to serve as a library director in Chillicothe for 30 years. After retiring, she chose to stay active in her community, helping to bring the new Adena Fayette Medical Center to life. It was her way of making sure her hometown has the care it deserves — now and for generations to come. Jennifer is one of the faces of a healthier tomorrow in the community we call home.

See Jennifer's story and more at Adena.org/Faces.

Community member

Video examples



Beth Harper

Chemo infusion nurse

Adena Fayette Medical Center

Beth's Story



Matthew Shelton

Principal

Edward Lee McClain High
School

Matthew's Story

Community impact

Faces content led to positive engagement and strengthened our reputation by showing the human side of healthcare.

“So glad he has been recognized for all he does. When COVID started - even through the mask and craziness, he was smiling and asking people how they are doing – making them smile.”

“Beth is truly the most caring lady with a beautiful soul. So blessed to know her.”

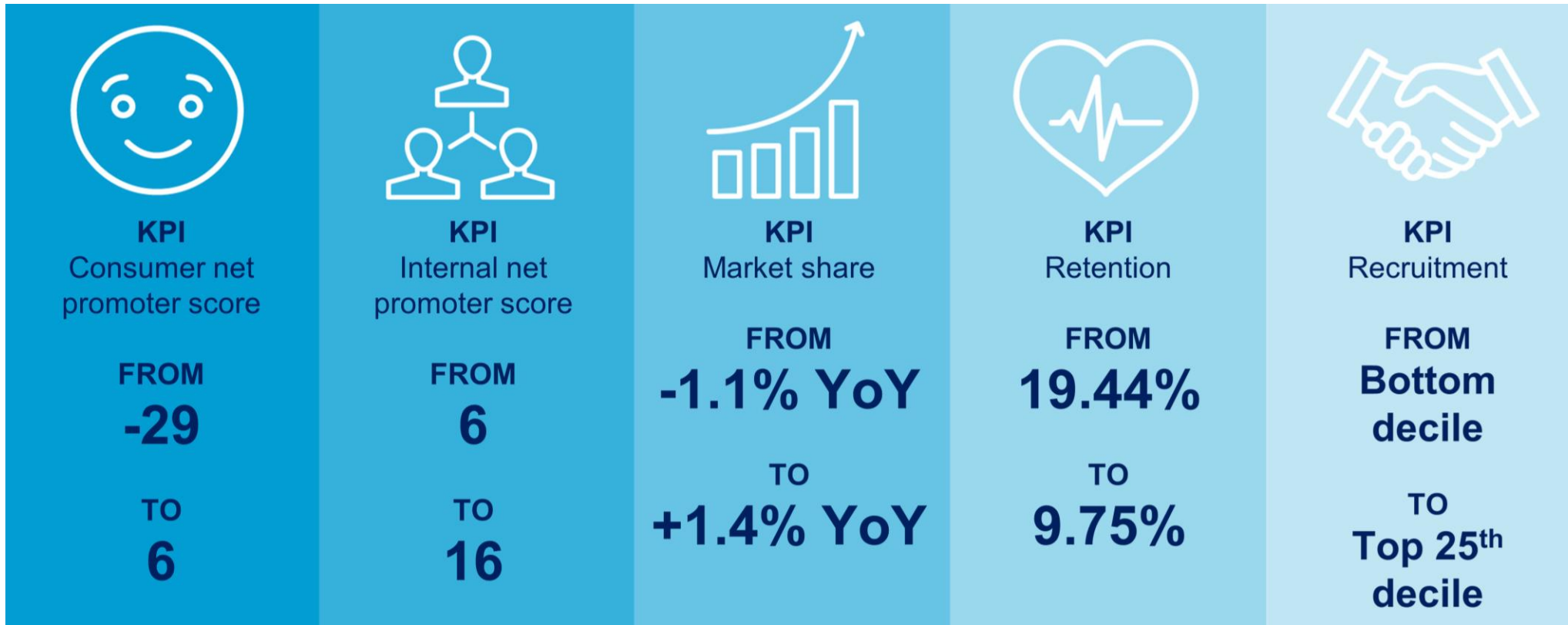
“I just had an MRI at Adena Pike Medical Center a few days ago! She was wonderful!”

“She is a very nice and sweet lady.” We’ve talked a lot when my husband was going through radiation. She took our picture with him when he rang the bell after his last treatment. You can tell she cares about them.”

“Amber’s story speaks truth. Our ICU family cares for our community, so you can get back to your family.”

Improvement across all areas

Internal and external efforts led to positive engagement and strengthened our reputation



What's next



Adena 2030: A clear system-wide strategy



ACCESS

Be the easiest system
in the region to access
and navigate



EXCELLENCE

Deliver nationally
recognized rural
health care



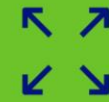
CULTURE

Celebrate an engaged,
accountable, mission-
driven workforce



STEWARDSHIP

Achieve financial
and operational
sustainability



ADVANCEMENT

Grow our
reach and expand
our impact



Society for Health Care
Strategy & Market
Development™

Three Key Take-Aways

1. **Human-centered storytelling** builds brand awareness and strengthens the organization's reputation – influencing key areas including employee engagement and patient experience.
2. **Brand advocacy starts with employees** and within the walls of an organization.
3. **Data measures impact**, but also informs the organization's strategy, and holds employees accountable in achieving goals

Thank you!



Laura Guido
Chief Strategy
Officer



Jennifer DeMatteis
AVP Marketing
Communications



SHSMD26 CONNECTIONS

Health Care Marketing, Strategy & Communications

American Hospital Association Conference
September 27-29 ⚓ Baltimore

Questions?

- Please be sure to complete the session evaluation on the mobile app!