

# A FORMAL SECTION OF ONCOLOGY NUTRITION: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT IN A MAJOR CANCER CENTER (2012-2023)

Kunal C. Kadakia MD, Michele L. Szafranski MS RDN CSO LDN, Courtney Huddle MS RDN CSO CSPCC LDN, Beth York MA LCMHC FACHE, Declan Walsh MD MSc FACP FRCP

## Introduction

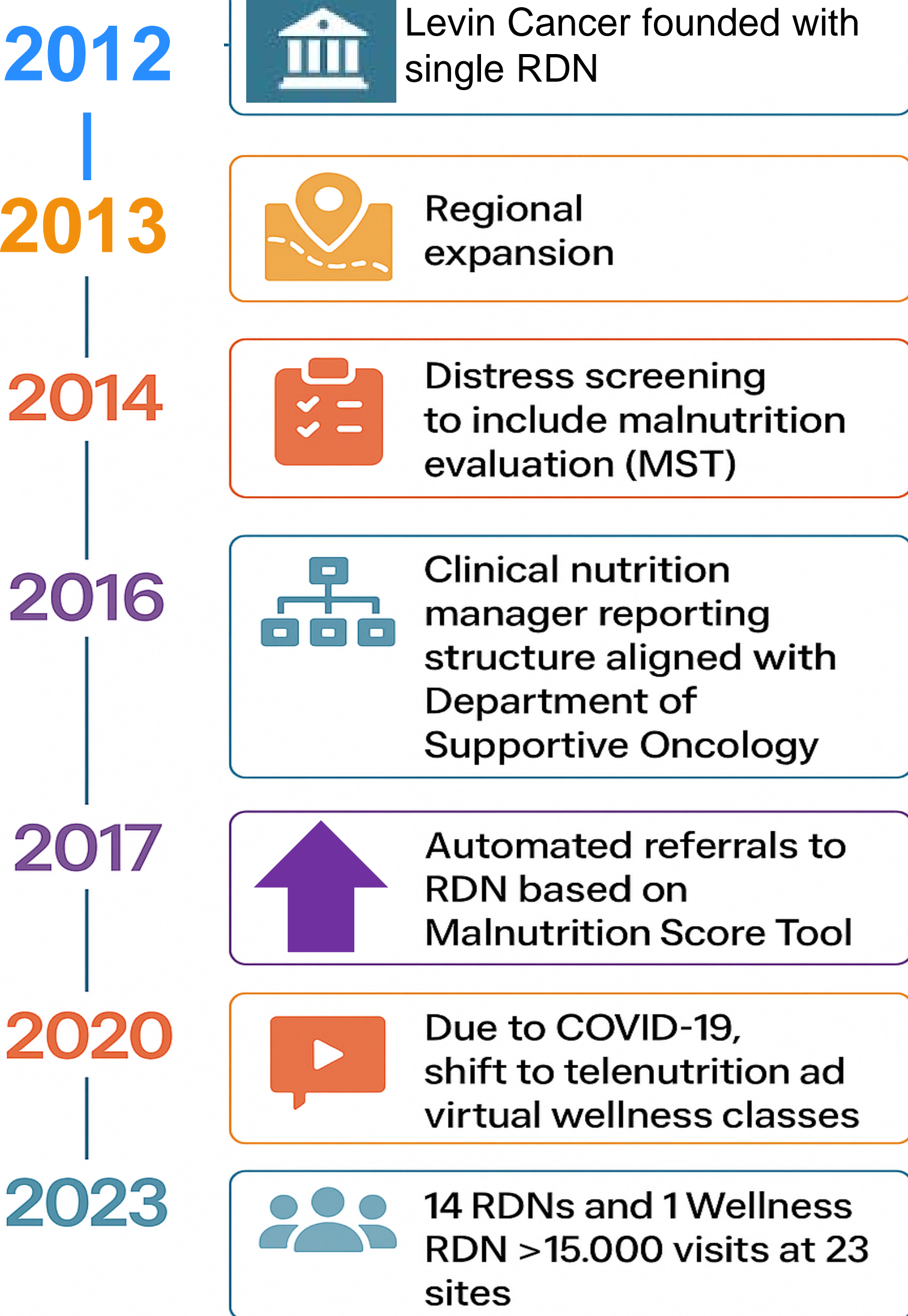
Cancer and cancer therapies dramatically impact nutritional status, leading to weight loss and malnutrition.

Outpatient oncology centers often lack adequate Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN), limiting quality care.

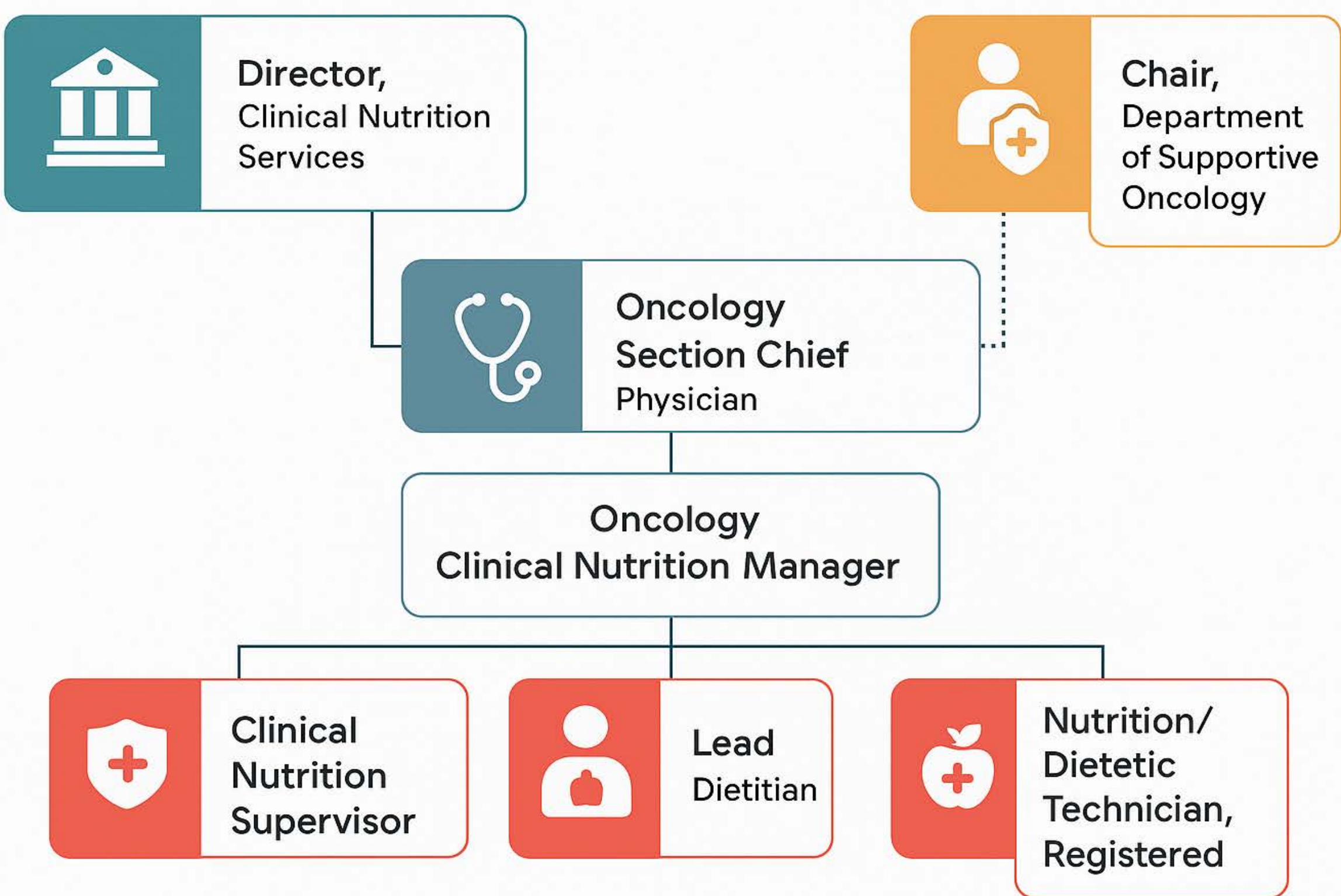
RDN staffing in ambulatory cancer centers is poorly studied.

The development and structure of the Oncology Nutrition Section at Atrium Health Levine Cancer Institute as a model

## History of Oncology Nutrition

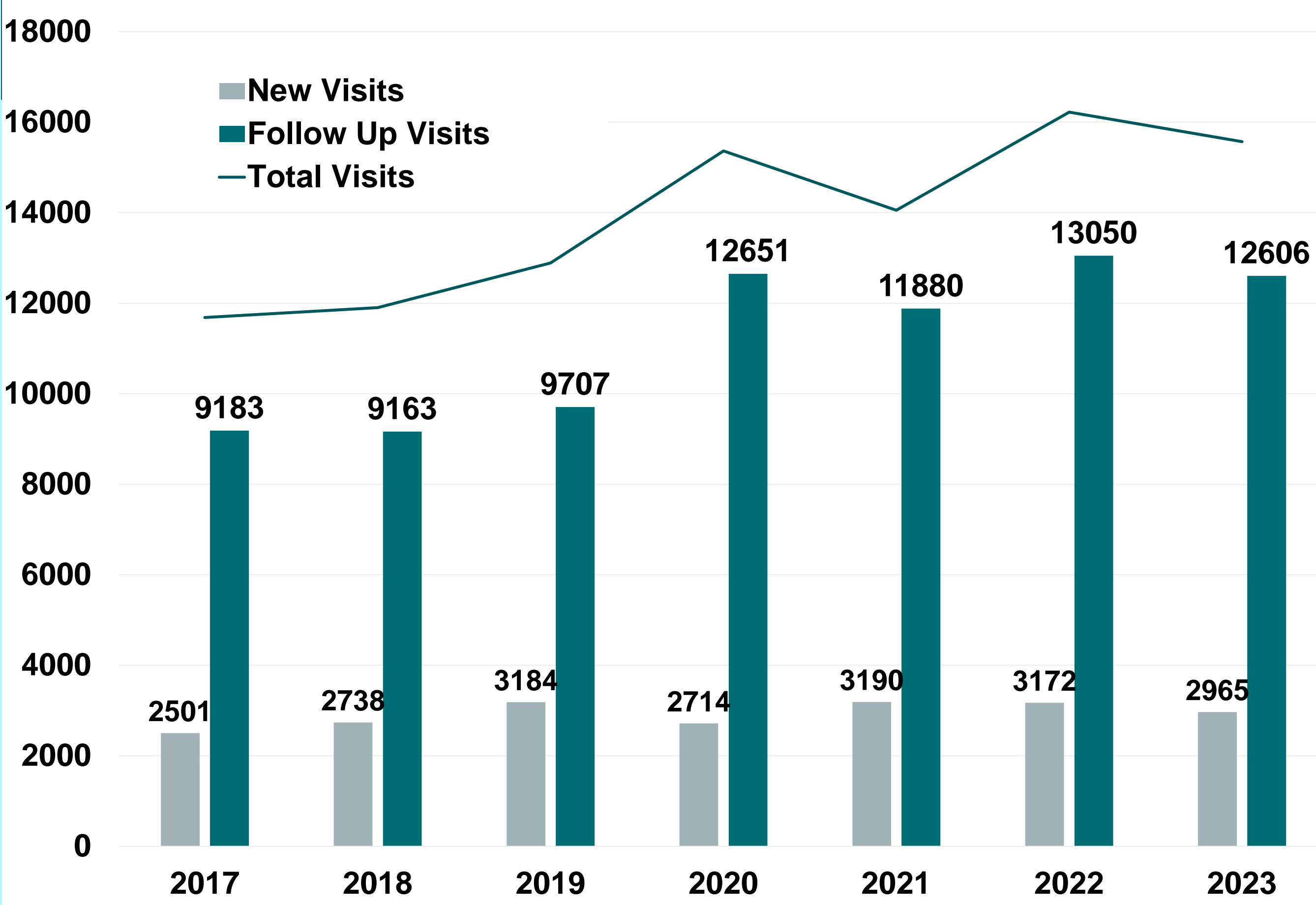


## Structure of Oncology Nutrition



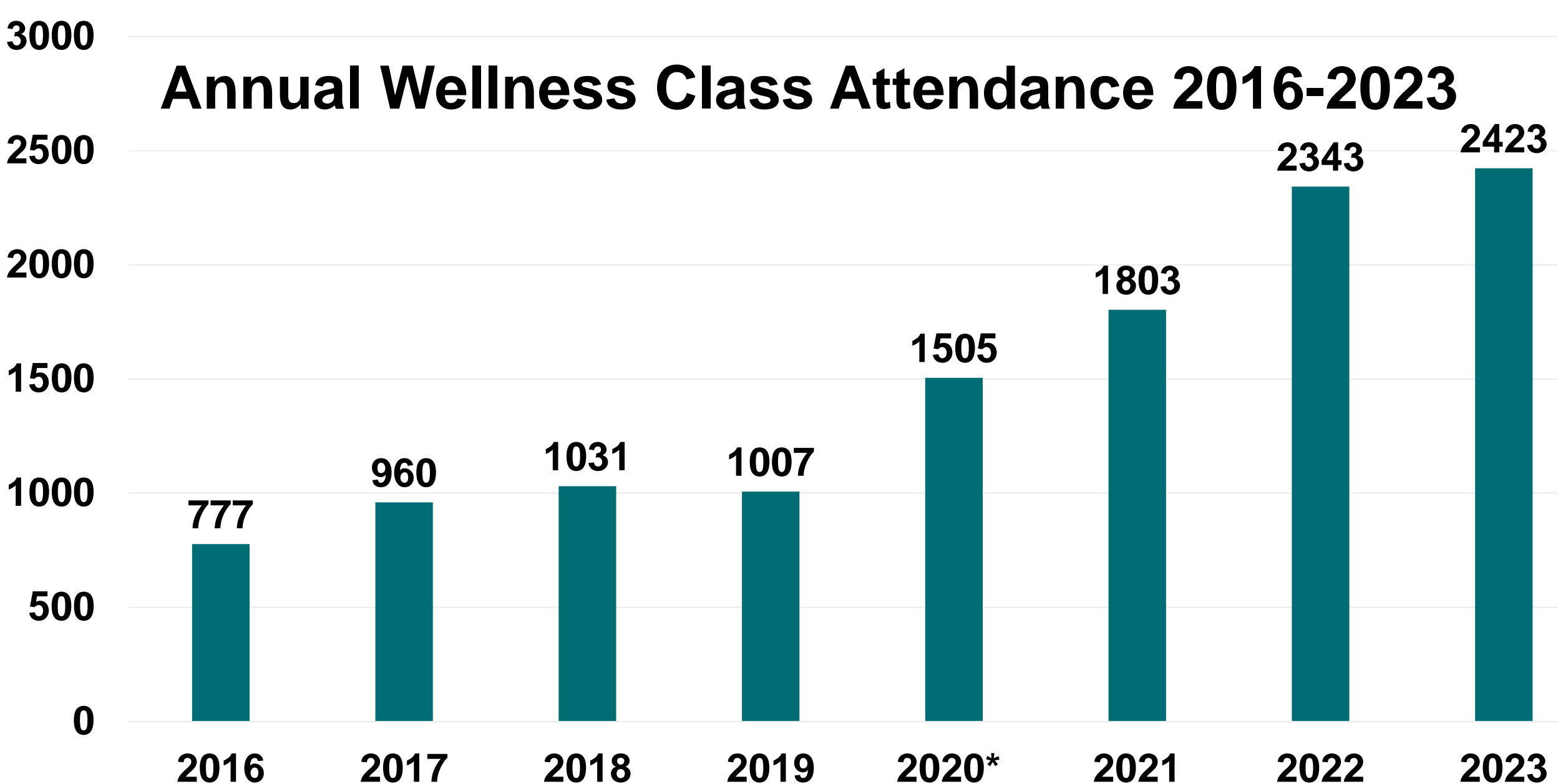
Standardized tools and workflows improve efficiency without added staffing  
In 2023, 14 RDNs: 15,500+ visits—including 3,000 new —across 23 sites.

## Annual RDN Visits: 2017-2023






## Nutrition and Wellness Education

Class	Description
Breast Cancer Nutrition	Healthy eating before, during, and after breast cancer treatment
Healthy Cooking Club	Delicious and quick recipes focused on using seasonal produce
Heart Healthy Nutrition	Heart healthy shopping, cooking, and eating out
Hot Topics in Nutrition	Accurate, reliable information on topics you hear
Meal Planning Workshop	Easy meal planning tips, templates, and plant-based options
Nine Nutrition Steps for Survivors	Tips to apply the latest research to help reduce risk post treatment



## Opportunities and Challenges

-  **Lack of a standardized definition of malnutrition** hampers identification, documentation, and referral across oncology settings.
  -  **Personalized RDN-led wellness services** can support growing survivorship needs, especially for complex comorbidities.
  -  **Research on RDN interventions** can help define best practices and justify staffing models for oncology nutrition programs.
- Email: [Kunal.Kadakia@AdvocateHealth.org](mailto:Kunal.Kadakia@AdvocateHealth.org)