

EPIA: October 2026 Council Update

State Mental Health Planning Council
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The Problem EPIA Addresses

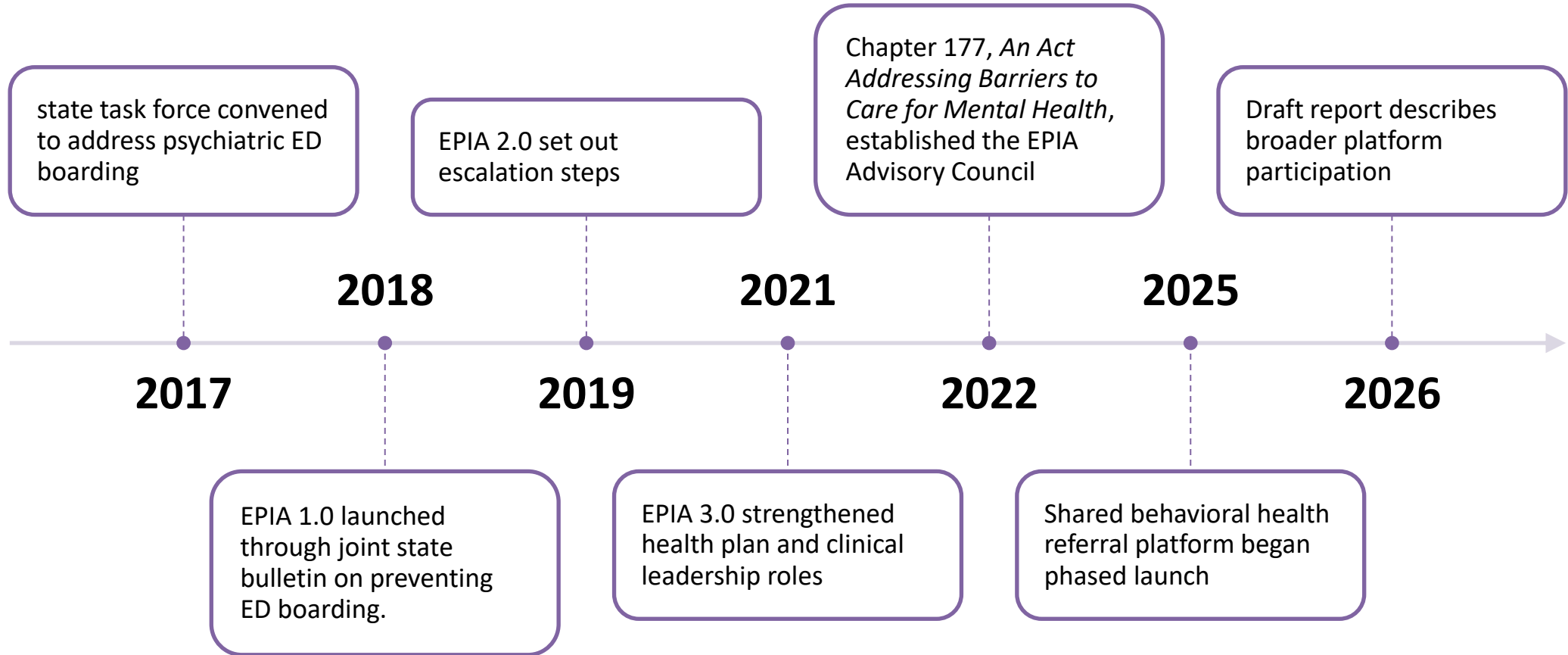


A person may need inpatient psychiatric care but have to wait in an emergency department for an appropriate place. This is called ED boarding.

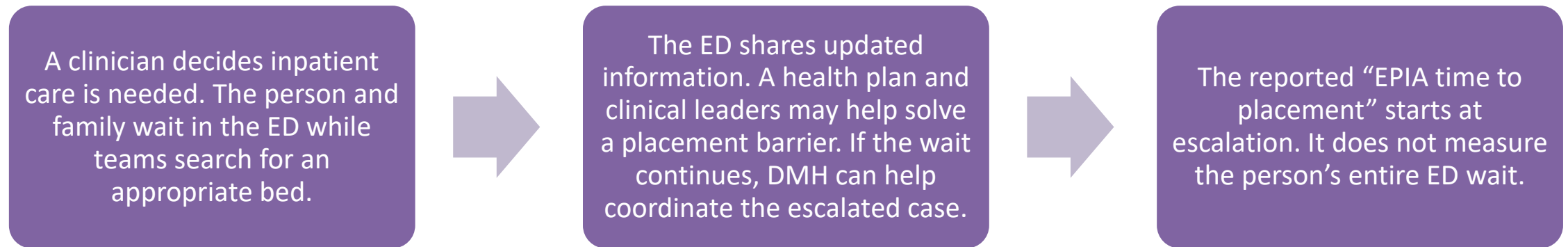


EPIA is a shared process for escalating cases when placement takes too long. The emergency team keeps looking for care while other partners help resolve barriers.

How EPIA Developed



What Waiting Can Feel Like



Who Helps When Placement Stalls

Emergency team: continues the search and shares current clinical information.

Health plan: assists with finding care and arranging needed supports.

Inpatient facility: reviews the referral and determines if it can provide appropriate care

DMH EPIA team: helps resolve escalated referrals with the partners.

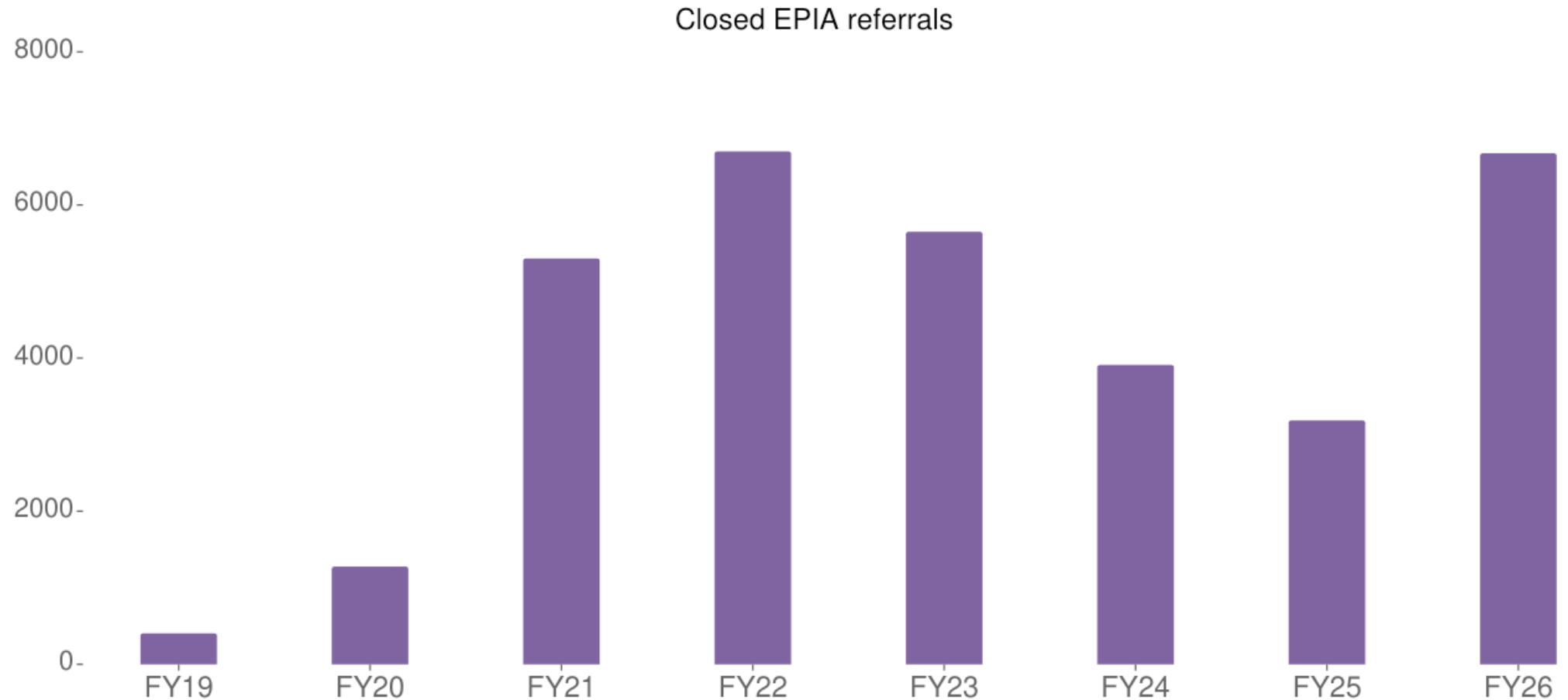
What the New Referral Platform Changes

The Behavioral Health Treatment and Referral Platform (BH TRP) lets participating organizations share and track referrals in one system.

It gives DMH greater visibility into who is waiting and supports quicker communication about cases.

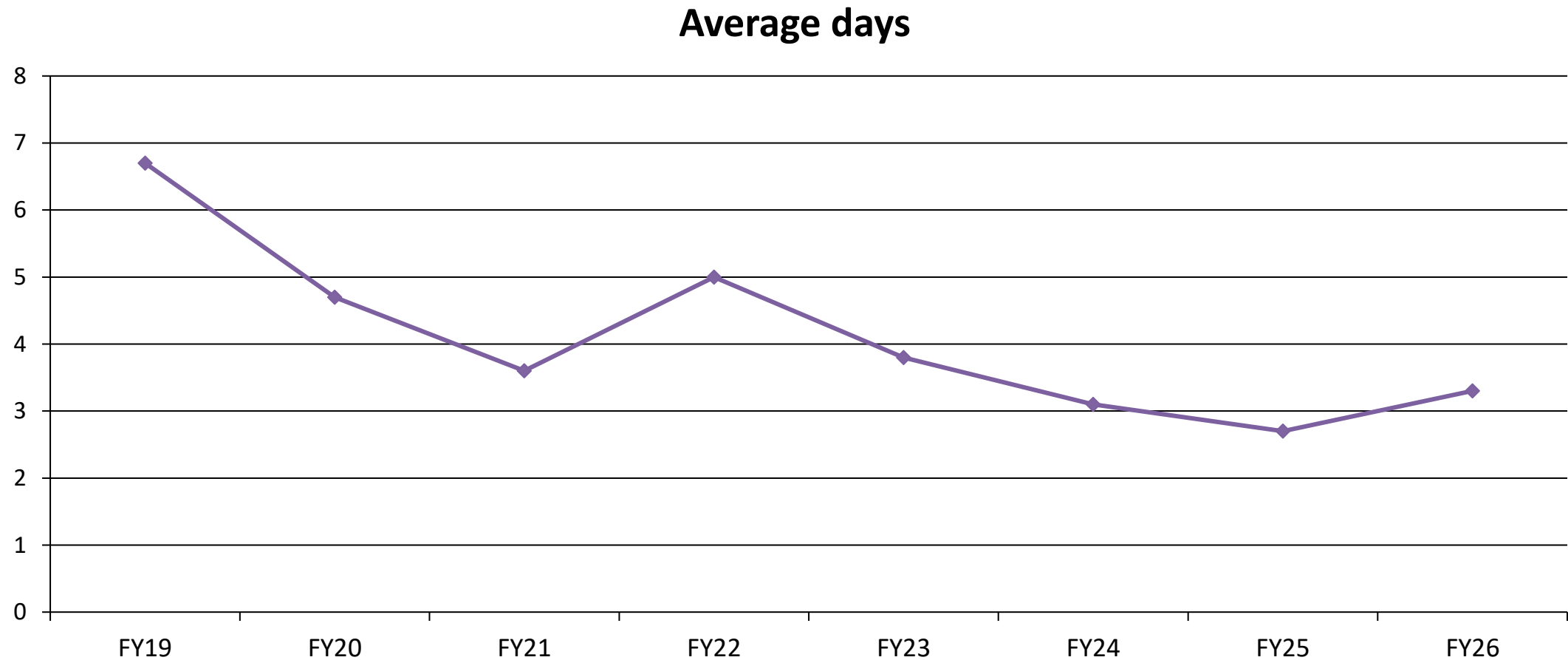
The FY2026 draft reports more escalations, likely related to automated referrals. A higher recorded count alone does not show that boarding grew.

Fiscal Trend: Closed EPIA Referrals



FY2026 increase may partly reflect automated referrals. Counts do not represent all ED boarders.

Fiscal Trend: Days After EPIA Escalation



This measure starts at EPIA escalation, not ED arrival.

Reading the FY2026 Change



Closed EPIA referrals rose from 3,187 in FY2025 to 6,673 in FY2026.



Average time from EPIA escalation to closure rose from 2.7 to 3.3 days.



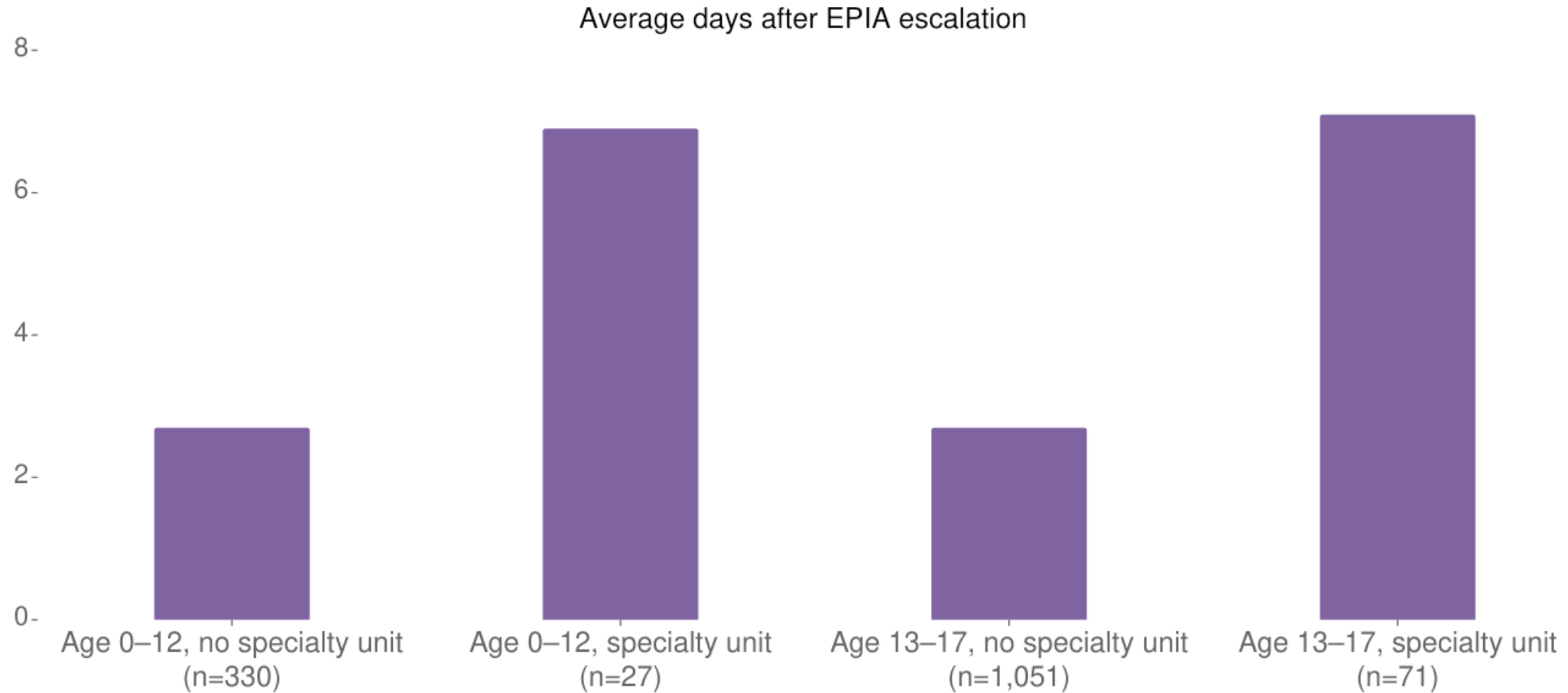
The draft report says automation likely contributed to the higher number of escalations. More complete reporting can change the trend, so it does not by itself establish a change in overall ED boarding.

FY2026: Closed Referrals by Age



Average days after escalation: 3.0, 3.0, 3.4, 3.1 and 3.9, respectively.

Youth: Specialized Care Can Take Longer



These are averages after escalation, not total ED boarding time. The association does not establish cause.