

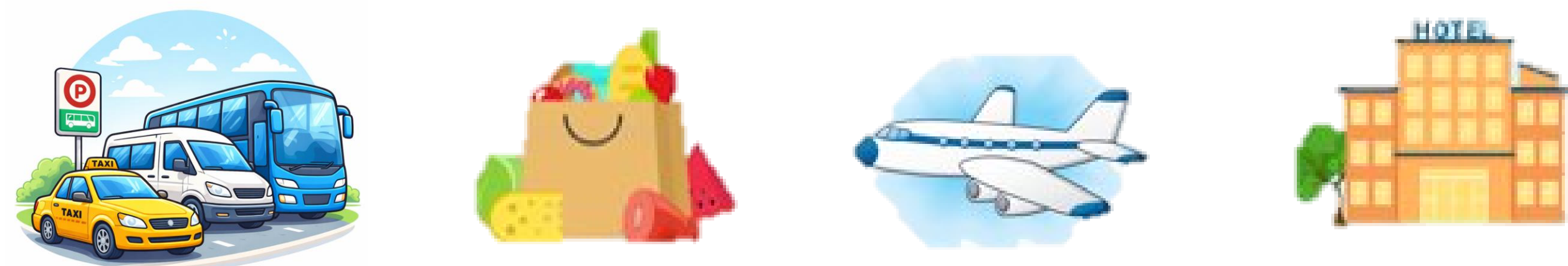
A National Expansion of the STEP-1 Pilot Initiative - Supporting Travel for Pediatric and Adolescent Patients to Access Academic Phase I/II Trials in Canada

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1. The Hospital for Sick Children 2. Advancing Childhood Cancer Experience, Science & Survivorship (ACCESS) 3. Janeway Children's Health and Rehabilitation Centre

Goal

To scale the successful STEP-1 pilot program at SickKids into a coordinated **national model**, expanding equitable access to academic early-phase pediatric oncology clinical trials across Canada by **reducing travel and financial barriers** for patients and families.

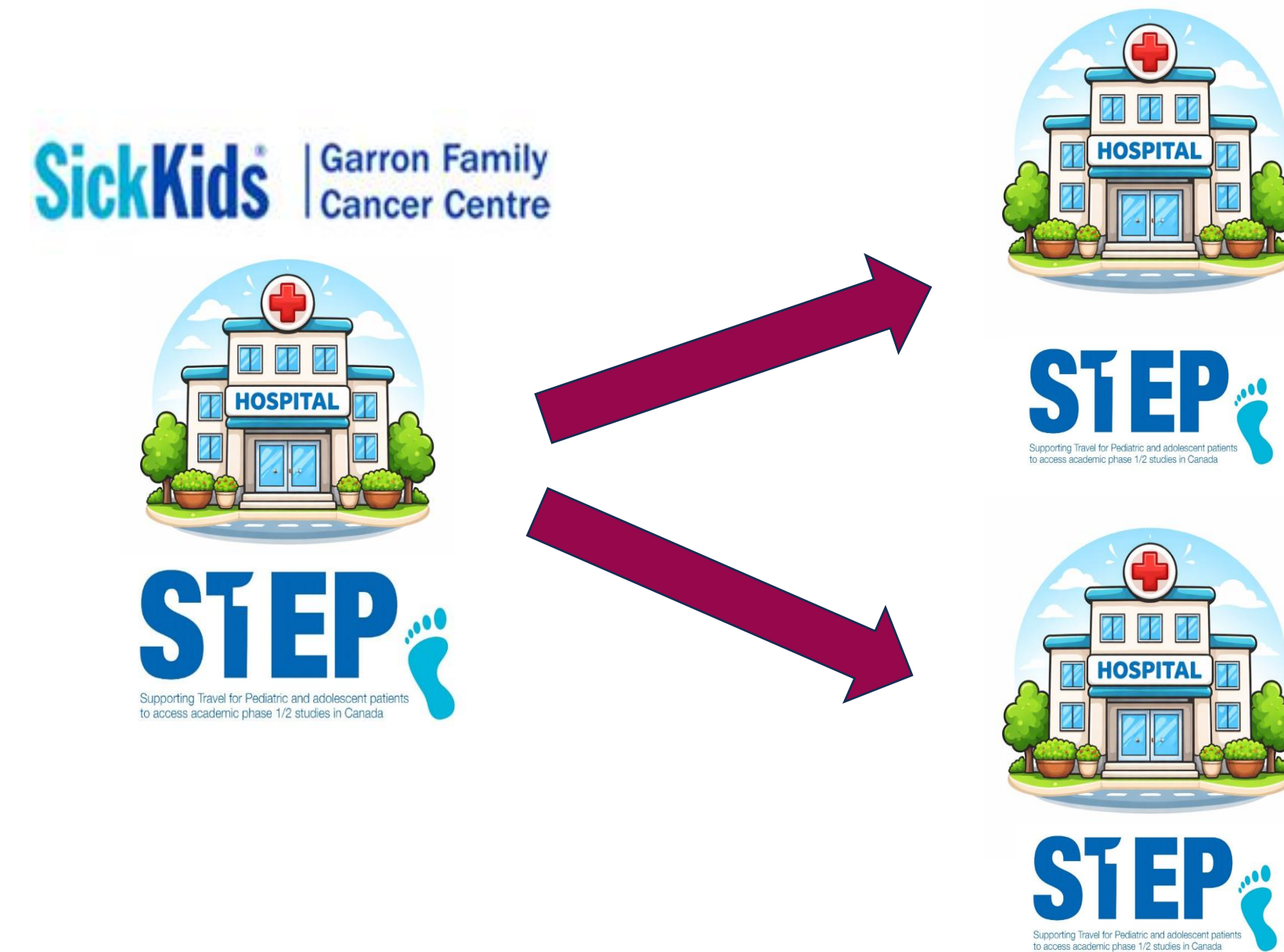


Objective

- **Alleviate** out-of-pocket travel, accommodation, and meal costs for families
- **Improve** equitable access to early-phase academic clinical trials for pediatric and adolescent cancer patients
- **Establish** a scalable, national model for centralized travel coordination

Study Method

- National implementation of the STEP-1 program to **CHU Sainte-Justine (CHU-SJ)** and **BC Children's Hospital (BCCH)**
- Eligibility: Pediatric patients enrolled in academic phase I/II trials without existing travel funding
- Provision of **upfront** funding and logistical coordination for **travel, accommodation, meals, and ground transportation**
- Centralized travel coordination in collaboration with a national philanthropic partner, **HopeAir**
- **Quality Improvement initiative** using bilingual (English/French) surveys to capture family and care team feedback, identify social determinants of health, and guide ongoing national program optimization.



Results

STEP-1 National Expansion Program (April 2025 – Present)

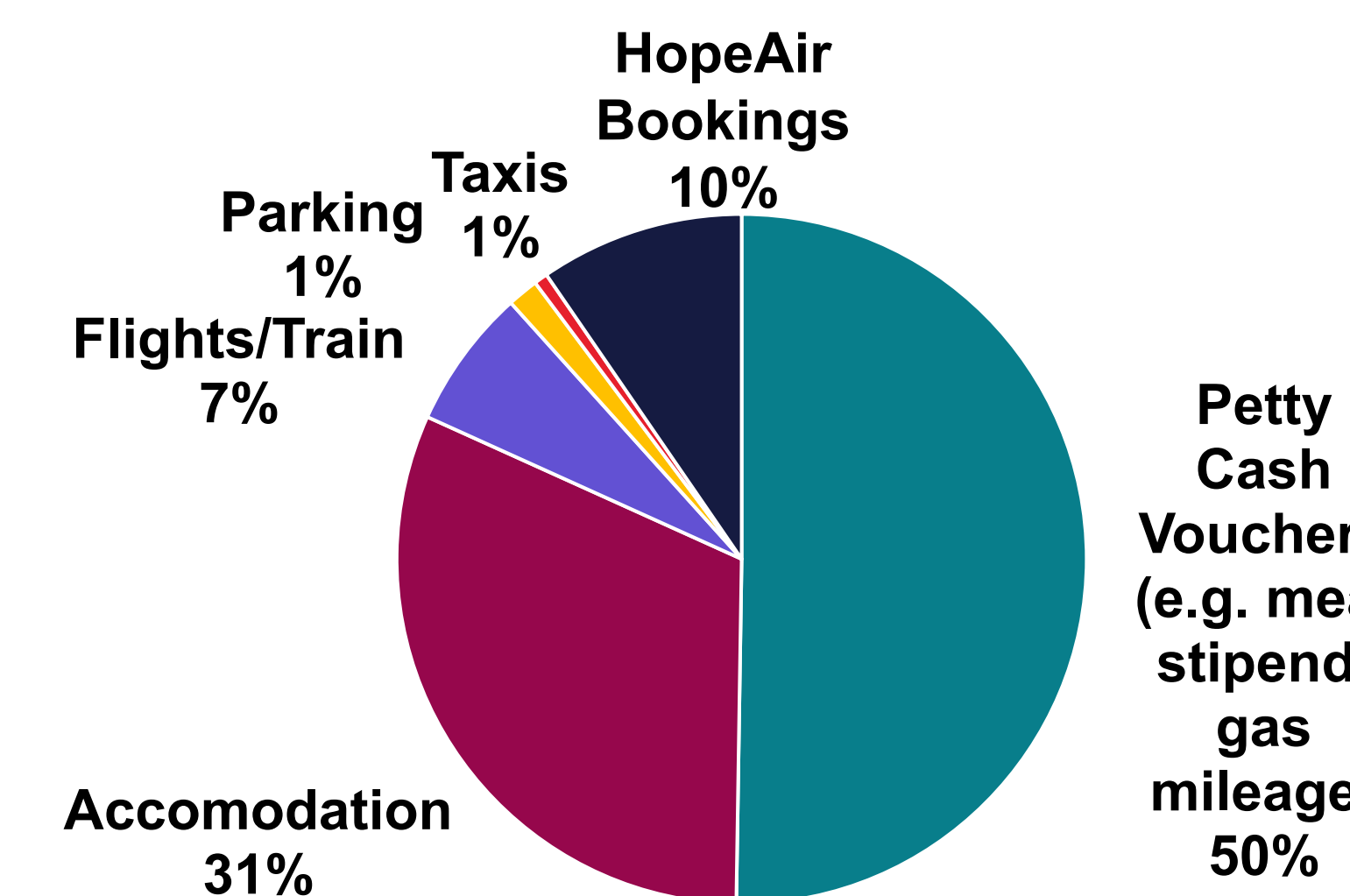
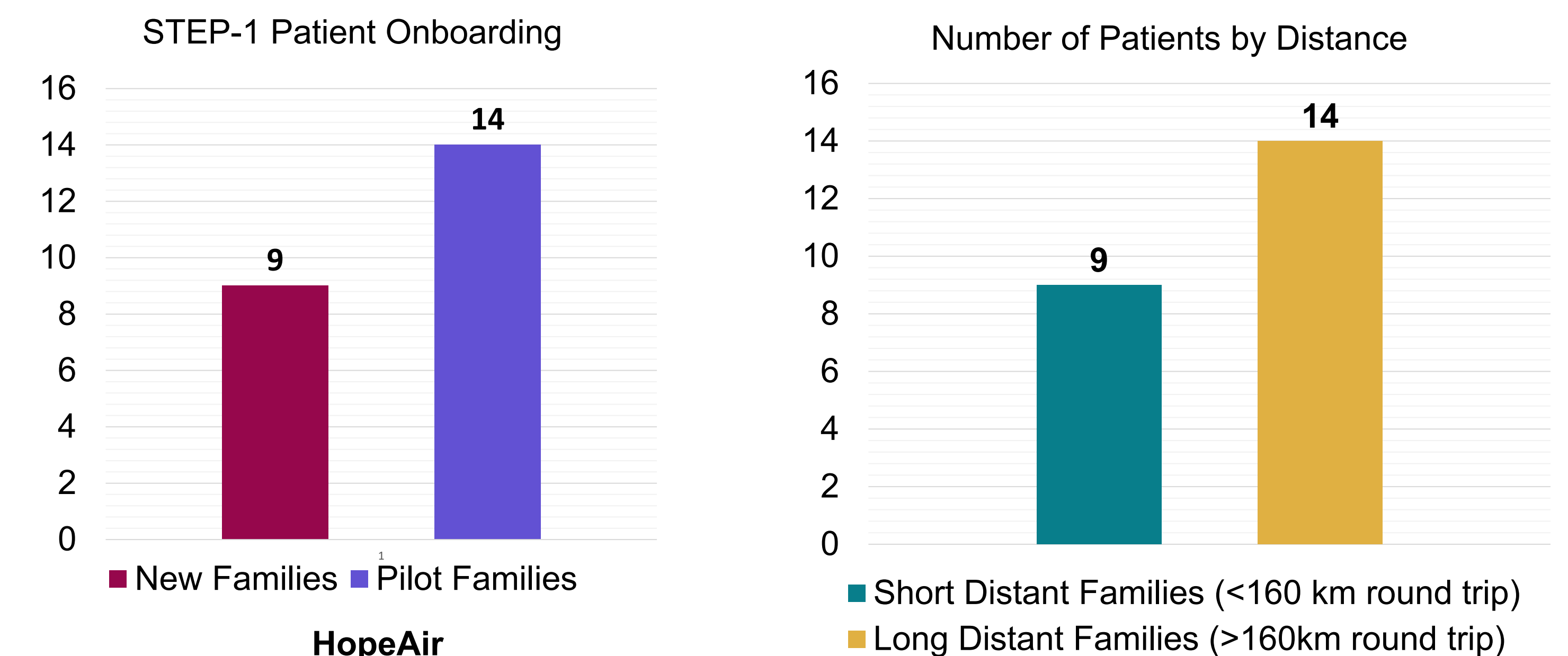
Centralized travel coordination partnership with HopeAir launched on June 23, 2025



Launch of STEP-1 at CHU Sainte-Justine & BC Children's Hospital in October 2025



Transition From Pilot to National Program: Families Supported (April 2025 – December 2025)



Total Onboarding Metrics (April 2025 to December 2025):
23 families
6 Provinces
\$125,142 in Patient Expenses

Results

STEP-1 Pilot Program at SickKids (March 2024 – March 2025)

Demonstrating National Reach: STEP-1 Pilot Support for 17 Families Across Canada



Quality Improvement Findings: Reduced Family Burden and Efficient Program Delivery

Among Survey Respondents¹:

- 43% of families previously participated in a trial without any financial support
- 85% of families and 100% of health care providers (HCP) declared that the decision to participate would have been the same without STEP-1
- All families and HCP rated communication with STEP-1 as excellent
- All HCP declared minimum support was required once pts were enrolled and supported

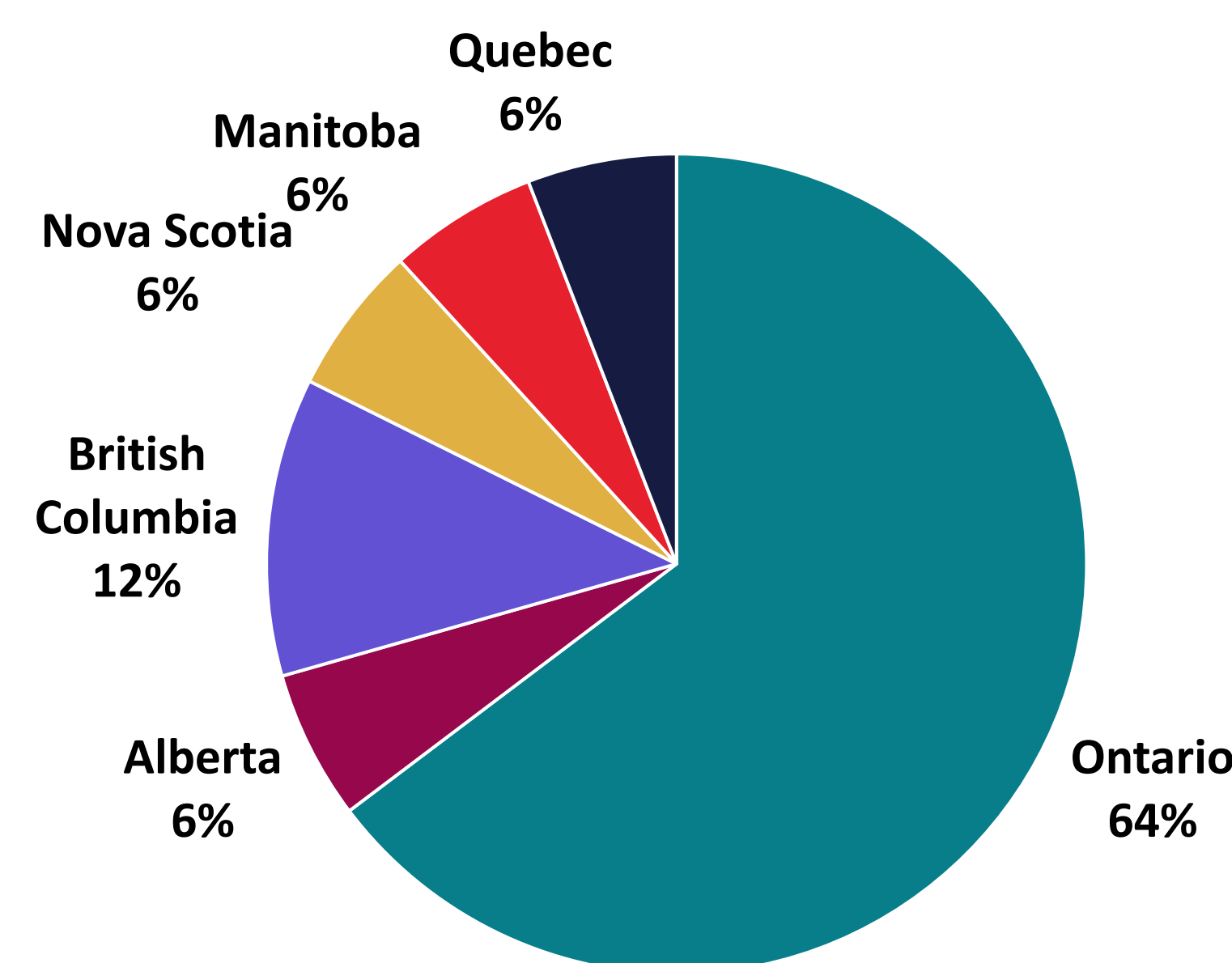


*I am very thankful for the step-1 program. As a single mother who has not been able to work this year because my son has lived in and out of the hospital because of his tumour and his treatment, **this program has supported my son and I in the most difficult times.** Thank you very much from the bottom of my heart.*

*It's helped relieve some of the financial burden. Food, parking, accommodation and gas are just an added expense when we're already down financially and **this program has been wonderful. I'm able to focus more on her care and less on shifting money around to make ends meet.***

1. Cohen-Gogo et al., ASCO Annual Meeting 2025

Total Onboarding Metrics (March 2024 to March 2025):
17 families
6 Provinces
\$208,000 in Patient Expenses



Impact/Outcomes

- Improved clinical trial access for geographically remote and resource-limited families
- Increased operational efficiency through national coordination and standardized processes
- Positioning STEP-1 as a scalable national model for trial access equity
- Sustainable funding secured through a \$750,000, three-year Hyundai Hope on Wheels partnership supporting program personnel

Project Timelines

- **March 2024:** STEP-1 Pilot Program Launch at SickKids
- **March 2025:** STEP-1 National Expansion Program initiated through ACCESS funding
- **June 2025:** HopeAir travel coordination partnership launched
- **October 2025:** CHU Sainte-Justine and BC Children's Hospital sites open
- **March 2026 (Anticipated):** Launch of national quality improvement initiative (surveys in English & French)
- **2026 – March 2027:** National Program Evaluation, Sustainability Planning

