

Pathway to Excellence® Case Study: Baptist Health La Grange

Baptist Health La Grange in La Grange, KY, provides a wide range of health care services to the communities of north-central Kentucky. Opened as Tri-County Community Hospital in 1987, it joined the Baptist Health family in 1992, enlarging facilities and expanding services to meet growing needs. Today, the 120-bed hospital is a leader in multiple areas, including stroke care, rehabilitation, cardiac and infusion services, and diagnostic imaging.

Baptist Health LaGrange's intercollaborative shared governance structure is unique within the Baptist system. It includes every discipline in the hospital—nursing, pharmacy, lab, radiology, environmental services, medicine, etc.—and it addresses improvements in every area, from policies and procedures to quality, safety, and the patient experience.

By 2014, the structure was so robust, it motivated hospital leaders to pursue Pathway to Excellence® designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center. As anticipated by the organization's leadership team, the credential validated the presence of a positive practice environment, boosted recruitment and retention, affirmed the provision of health care excellence to consumers, and established the small community hospital among an elite group of Pathway-designated organizations world-wide. As an added incentive at the system level, Baptist Health administration implemented a strategic plan for nursing that supported all hospitals in the system to achieve either Pathway to Excellence or Magnet® recognition by the end of 2018.

In 2015, and in response to the plan, Baptist Health La Grange became the first hospital in the Baptist system and the second hospital in the state of Kentucky to earn Pathway designation. Through implementation of unit-based and house-wide nurse-led and interdisciplinary patient care activities supporting designation, the journey brought the hospital to a new level of excellence. Care activities include interdisciplinary Daily Safety Huddles, monthly Falls Committee Meetings, post-fall huddles conducted after each event, and nurse-conducted hourly rounding on all inpatient units. As a result, Baptist Health La Grange has demonstrated exemplary improvements in several key patient safety outcomes and nurse-sensitive indicators post-designation including, but not limited to:

- Zero CAUTI and CLABSI in critical care areas for more than three years;
- A decrease in the rate of total falls for all inpatient units from 3.7 per 1,000 patient days (CY 2014) to 3.33 (CY 2016); and
- A drop in hospital-wide readmission rates from 12% (2014) to 8% (2015).

Enculturating the Pathway standards gives all staff members a voice and encourages them to bring issues forward. For example, nursing assistants were concerned about cross-contamination when delivering water pitchers to patient rooms. Together with Infection Control, they developed a plan to address the issue. When staff sought to improve care for bariatric

patients, a shared governance committee reviewed education materials, equipment, and the latest evidence-based practice and adapted it for the hospital's and patients' needs.

An interprofessional Clinical Leadership Team, comprised of all reporting disciplines, further enhances input and decision-making. Under the leadership of the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), the team covers everything from HR concerns to surgical hand-off processes. Among its recommendations: multidisciplinary rounds in the ICU and other units, which improve care delivery, outcomes, and length of stay.

“Our hospital may be small, but we are mighty,” says Nathan Wilson, MBA, MHA, BSN, RN, Vice President and CNO. “With many hats, we must be creative in our approach to how we care for patients. The Pathway to Excellence journey brought us together, tapped into our passion and commitment, and turned us into a high-performing hospital beyond anyone’s expectations. We are proud to be first in the Baptist Health system to achieve this milestone and set the bar for others to follow.”

About Baptist Health La Grange

Serving Oldham, Henry, Trimble, Carroll, and eastern Jefferson counties in Kentucky for more than 30 years, Baptist Health La Grange offers a comprehensive line of specialized services for women’s health, cancer, heart, mother and baby care, orthopedics, neurosciences, behavioral health, and more.

The hospital has nine points of care, including Baptist Health Medical Group physician offices and Baptist Health Crestwood, providing outpatient physical therapy and diagnostic imaging. The hospital also manages The Oldham County EMS, one of such services in the state to receive the American Heart Association’s Mission: Lifeline EMS Silver Award. Baptist Health La Grange is part of the Baptist Health system, which this year received its second annual listing among the top 15 Best Places to Work in Kentucky.

About the Pathway to Excellence® Program

The Pathway to Excellence® Program recognizes a health care organization’s commitment to creating a positive nursing practice environment. The Pathway to Excellence in Long Term Care® program is the first to recognize this type of supportive work setting specifically in long-term care facilities. Pathway organizations focus on collaboration, career development, and accountable leadership to empower nurses.