

Pathway to Excellence® Case Study: Bon Secours St. Francis Medical Center

Bon Secours St. Francis Medical Center in Midlothian Virginia offers state-of-the-art healing in a peaceful, contemplative environment. Since it opened its doors in 2005, the 130-bed, acute care facility has grown to include the full range of advanced healthcare services including neonatology, cardiology, oncology and emergency care. To ensure continued success, hospital leaders sought new ways to gain market share, enhance efficiencies, increase customer satisfaction, and improve outcomes.

Pathway to Excellence® offered a roadmap to meet these goals. Leadership understood that creating an engaging work environment for nurses would directly impact everything from satisfaction and retention to patient safety and outcomes. St. Francis launched its Pathway Journey in 2010 and one year later became the first hospital in Virginia to earn the prestigious Pathway designation. The hospital was re-designated in 2014.

Pathway achievement led to significant quality and safety improvements throughout the organization. Specifically, patient falls decreased by 51%, central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI) dropped 70%, and medication errors plunged a remarkable 90%. The hospital's spinal surgical site infection (SSI) rate is zero.

To address long-term staffing issues, nursing leaders established a "New to Practice" float pool comprised of new graduate nurses. The training program focuses on clinical practice needs and prepares new graduates to transition to RN roles. In addition, the hospital increased its nursing school affiliations from two to eight, enhancing the recruitment pipeline. Strategies to meet the goal of an 80% BSN-prepared nursing workforce by 2020 resulted in a 28% increase in the number of nurses with a BSN degree or higher, and a 106% increase in national nursing certification rates.

These initiatives and others helped cut the nursing vacancy rate in half, from 12% to 5.9%, and reduce nursing turnover by more than two-thirds, from 34% to 9.5%. Gallup RN engagement scores improved by .21, which puts the medical center in the 87th percentile.

The Pathway journey promoted a culture of sustainability and paved the way for another milestone. In 2015, St. Francis achieved Magnet® Recognition, making it one of just three hospitals worldwide to earn both the coveted Pathway and Magnet credentials.

The designations complement one another. Pathway provides the framework to create a practice environment that fosters engagement and empowerment, while Magnet offers a blueprint to deliver optimum patient care, generate and disseminate new knowledge, and measure outcomes against national benchmarks.



“Pathway to Excellence and Magnet are two prestigious recognitions that are worthy in their own right and build upon each other,” says Dr. Shelly Buck, former Chief Nursing Officer at St. Francis Medical Center and now Chief Nursing Officer/Chief Operating Officer for Bon Secours Baltimore Health System. “Pathway to Excellence recognizes organizations where the focus and support of nursing allows creation of structures and processes that lead to professional development, engagement, and improved patient outcomes. An infrastructure that embeds key components such as shared governance, safe work environments, healthy cultures, and standards of professional practice leads to designation and organizational success.”

At a Glance

St. Francis Medical Center is a 130-bed, acute care facility located in Midlothian, VA. It is part of Bon Secours Richmond Health System, ranked among the finest health systems in the nation for nursing, clinical excellence, emergency care, stroke treatment, and other services.

Results

- Reduced patient falls by 51%
- Reduced CLABSI rates by 70%
- Reduced medication errors by 90%
- Achieved zero spinal SSIs
- Lowered the nursing vacancy rate from 12% to 5.9%
- Lowered the nursing turnover rate from 34% to 9.48%
- Improved Gallup RN engagement scores by .21 (87th percentile)
- Increased the number of BSN-prepared nurses by 28%
- Increased the number of nationally certified nurses by 106%

About the Pathway to Excellence® Program

The Pathway to Excellence® Program recognizes a healthcare 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.