

### **Pathway to Excellence® Appraiser Applicant Formal Essay**

The formal essay is an opportunity to showcase your ability to communicate in a clear, concise and *grammatically correct* manner.

Included below are three Pathway to Excellence Standards. Narratives from submitted documents are provided that address a specific Element of Performance (EOP) within each of those standards. Please describe how each of the three (3) narratives written by the organization meets or does not meet the EOP associated with the identified standard.

#### **Example One:**

##### ***Practice Standard 1: Nurses Control the Practice of Nursing***

*Overview of Standard:* Organizations receiving Pathway to Excellence designation have a defined shared governance model in place that actively supports collective decision-making among nurses at all levels. Through shared governance, direct care nurses are integrally involved in every aspect of their practice. They use new knowledge and evidence-based findings to develop and implement initiatives that improve nursing practice throughout the organization.

*Excerpt from EOP 1.1 describing the organization's shared governance structure:*

The structure of shared governance utilizes a councilor model designated to develop, coordinate and implement the shared tenets of nursing to promote professionalism. Five interrelated governing councils, guided by the Coordinating Council, assume responsibility for the coordination, operation and integration of professional nursing practice.

The Shared Decision Making Councils are as follows:

- 1) Professional Practice Council (PDC)
- 2) Professional Development Council (PDC)
- 3) Clinical Quality Council (CQC)
- 4) Evidence Based Nurse Research Council
- 5) Nursing Leadership Council

The Coordinating Council led by the CNO ensures for the overall coordination of the activities of all councils and is accountable for the integration of services and decisions that affect the nursing department and other clinical departments. The shared governance structure has evolved over the past three years to include 9 unit based councils as well.

#### ***Element of Performance 1.2:***

Provide one example of a direct care nurse presenting an idea to the shared governance structure described in 1.1 (see EOP 1.1 above). Explain:

- What was presented by the direct care nurse
- How it was evaluated by the shared governance structure
- The end result

**Organization’s narrative response for EOP 1.2:**

The third floor Med-Surg unit has been an active participant in the care transition process for their patients. It is extremely important that any patient discharged from the hospital should clearly understand the purpose for taking each of their medications. Frequently, patients are discharged with multiple medications with differing dosages, administration times and side effects.

Understanding that the incidence of drug induced injury in the geriatric population increases during the transition from hospital to home, the staff brainstormed different ideas to improve the patient education process. A direct care nurse on the team reviewed the education process and realized that the accessibility of education materials was a barrier to ensuring compliance with the process. The team created an “Education Grab and Go” area in the documentation room to ensure quick access to materials for the most commonly prescribed discharge medications.

To measure the outcomes, the shared governance team agreed to monitor the following:

- Patients' perception that they strongly agree with the following statement. “When I left the hospital, I clearly understood the purpose for taking each of my medications”.
- Staff perception of a value-added process through a reduction in time to prepare educational materials.

As a result of the implementation of this idea by a direct care nurse, data has revealed that the patients’ understanding of the purpose for taking each of their medications has improved by 16% and staff time to prepare materials has decreased by 60%.

**Appraiser Applicant Response to EOP 1.2:** *(In the field below, insert rationale as to why the above narrative met or did not meet the EOP).*

**Example Two:**

**Pathway to Excellence Practice Standard 8: Nurses Are Recognized for Achievements**

*Overview of Standard:* Organizations that receive Pathway to Excellence designation value the professional development and accomplishments of their nurses. Recognition programs keep these accomplishments front and center and let nurses know their contributions are important. Nurse-driven activities that directly benefit patients, families, or community are recognized in special ways. Incentives and opportunities exist for nurses who provide exemplary service, achieve quality outcomes, and meet or exceed benchmarks.

***Element of Performance 8.2:***

Describe the organization's recognition program(s) for nurse-driven activity(ies) that benefit patients, families, or community.

***Organization's narrative response for EOP 8.2:***

Employees who have gone the extra mile in service towards patients and their families are recognized through a Shining Super Star Award. Directors and Leaders recognize Super Star employees with a gift certificate. Directors and leaders can recognize an employee that has made a definite impact and exceeds service standards by nominating them for a Super Star Award. The Consumer Experience Committee reviews the nominations and selects Super Star Award winners who are presented with a gift card at the monthly Directors meeting. Constellation Awards are awarded to departments that demonstrate the most outstanding and sustained service excellence. A "Night out with the Stars" is held once a year to honor the Super Star Award winners. Additionally, nurses are nominated for the Florence Nightingale award annually. The Nightingale Award Program honors registered nurses and licensed practical nurses involved in direct patient care who exemplify the highest standards of nursing practice.

***Appraiser Applicant Response to EOP 8.2***

***Practice Standard 12: A Quality Program and Evidence-Based Practices are Used***

*Overview of Standard:* Evidence-based practices and quality improvement programs lead to better patient outcomes. A Pathway to Excellence organization uses internal and external benchmarks to determine quality initiatives and improvements. Research findings and evidence-based practices are systematically evaluated and implemented to improve patient care.

***Element of Performance 12.2***

Provide one example of a quality initiative that has been implemented based on a benchmark. Include the reference for the benchmark(s).

***Organization's narrative response for EOP 12.2:***

The restraint rate in the Critical Care areas was not meeting the NDNQI benchmark in 2010. In Q3 2010 the nursing leaders of the ICU's created an initiative to drive down restraint rates in the critical care areas.

With the engagement of physicians and nurses, the team implemented daily restraint surveillance, rounding each shift with a focus on individualizing patient assessment, and advocating for the use of safe alternatives to restraints. It was found that many patients who were restraint could be kept safe with alternative devices or with appropriate sedation. The team implemented education of safe alternatives to restraints, worked with the medical staff to employ these alternatives, and successfully implemented an individualized patient assessment before applying restraints. The leaders of the ICUs led the project which involved all the staff members from each unit, as well as the attending and resident physicians. The nursing leaders included the Administrative Director of Nursing, Neuro ICU/IMU and Director of Nursing for the Trauma ICU/IMU.

Within 6 months of implementing the restraint reduction initiative, the median restraint rate for the critical care areas was outperforming the NDNQI benchmark and has continued to do so for the past 5 quarters.

***Appraiser Applicant Response to EOP 12.2:***