

## Pathway to Excellence® Case Study: Union Hospital

Located in Elkton Maryland, Union Hospital provides residents of Cecil County and nearby Delaware and southern Pennsylvania with personalized, high quality care. The not-for-profit community hospital was first in the state of Maryland to achieve Pathway to Excellence® designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center in 2013. At that time, nursing leaders believed they had the processes, best practices, and outcomes in place to earn the coveted credential.

Although the initial Pathway journey was rewarding for nurses and staff, it was the redesignation process several years later that really sparked engagement. A call for stories yielded hundreds of responses documenting the great work taking place throughout the hospital. Leaders shared the stories with staff to reinforce every remarkable achievement and promote best practices. As a result, people came together in pursuit of a single goal like never before. The hospital achieved redesignation in 2016 and continues to be the only Pathway-designated hospital in Maryland.

Nurses believe there is nothing they can't do. Inspired by their Pathway environment, they work diligently to improve quality and safety outcomes every day:

- The nurse-led Fall Blitz initiative significantly reduced patient falls in the emergency department (ED). It includes special apparel and signage to identify at-risk patients; detailed patient, family, and staff education; hourly rounding; remote patient monitoring; and a falls bundle as part of the patient assessment. To engage staff, a Falls Board tracks the number of days the ED remains fall-free. All in all, new practices contributed to a 66% decrease in the fall rate in just one year.
- The hospital achieved dramatic results in its workplace injury rate, as well. The addition of mechanized equipment to help staff safely lift, move, and transfer patients helped reduce Workman's Compensation injury claims by 50%. Additionally, safety measures, education, and training lowered debilitating nurse and staff injuries from a high of 14 in FY 2014 to just one in FY 2016.

"Our hospital is committed to nursing excellence, to what nurses identify as important to safe and effective practice, and to a positive work environment – all of which translates to good patient outcomes," says Katie Boston-Leary, MBA MHA BSN CNOR NEA-BC, Chief Nursing Officer & Senior Vice President of Patient Care Services. "Everyone *inside* the hospital knows this, but the Pathway to Excellence designation assures the *outside* world that Union Hospital provides superior care. It is an indicator of excellence that attracts patients, top talent, and national recognition."

**About Union Hospital**

Union Hospital is an award-winning, full-service community hospital in Elkton, Maryland, with a mission to enhance the health and well-being of residents in Cecil County and neighboring communities. Nationally recognized for clinical excellence in the treatment and prevention of disease, the 122-bed, not-for-profit hospital provides high quality outpatient, surgical and emergency services, as well as comprehensive health education programs to neighbors, families, and friends.

**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.