

## **Pathway to Excellence® Case Study: Spitalzentrum Oberwallis**

Hospitals that achieve ANCC's Pathway to Excellence designation are global models for nursing care and the world is taking notice. Numerous international healthcare organizations recognize the significant value and long-term benefits of an enriching environment that engages and inspires nurses and staff. They use the Pathway framework as a blueprint for positive transformation of their cultures.

The Pathway community recently welcomed a new international member, Spitalzentrum Oberwallis (SZO) in Switzerland. Part of the Hospital Valais health system, SZO is the first hospital in Europe to achieve Pathway designation.

The hospital's professional practice model defined its long-term strategy. Nursing leaders believed that pursuing the Pathway credential would provide the ideal framework to carry the strategy forward and achieve desired goals. Pathway's standards of quality, safety, shared decision-making, leadership, well-being, and professional development aligned perfectly with the hospital's objectives.

### **Empowering Nurses, Improving Care**

"The Pathway journey produced numerous benefits for our patients, nurses, and the workplace culture," says Kilian Ambord, CNO. "This, in turn, affects quality of care and patient safety."

Most notably, Ambord says, fluctuations in nursing care have decreased. Nurses throughout the hospital indicate they have more say in their practice, and nursing satisfaction levels have increased. Healthcare professionals across all disciplines regard nurses, and the care they provide, in higher esteem.

Shared governance gives SZO nurses a voice. Hospital leaders want to hear what nurses have to say, and actively seek caregiver input and opinions. Everyone is encouraged to share their thoughts in regularly scheduled workshops, and nurses report that Ambord and his nursing leadership team are increasingly open to their concerns. "Our CNO has been more present since the Pathway to Excellence designation and often comes to team meetings to clarify certain issues," says Nicole Zuber, RN, Rehabilitation.

Patients benefit from nurses' renewed commitment to evidence-based practice. As a result, the quality of care has improved and outcomes are better. Tamara Schwery, RN, who works in Rehabilitation, says, "Since we earned the Pathway to Excellence designation, we have been able to recruit and hire more staff. This gives us more time to provide patients with the care they need."

Interprofessional cooperation has strengthened, as well. Nurses are an integral part of the care team and feel confident about speaking up and sharing their concerns.

### **A Better Patient Experience**

In just 18 months, patient satisfaction improved significantly. The number of patients who rated the quality of their nursing treatment as "good" or "very good" more than doubled.

So did the number of patients who said nurses “always” or “often” provided clear and understandable answers to their questions. The percentage of patients who said they would return to the hospital for treatment, or recommend it to others, increased by double digits, as well.

CNO Ambord offers this advice to international organizations that are considering pursuing the Pathway credential. “Our biggest recommendation is to be sure to involve your employees early in the process. It’s important that they understand Pathway’s Practice Standards and how they are embodied in operating policies, procedures, and the organizational culture. The Pathway journey is a long one that requires hard work. But ultimately it brings benefits for everyone.”

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### **About Hospital Valais**

Hospital Valais is the leading healthcare organization in the Swiss canton (state) of Valais. With two hospitals and eight clinic sites, Hospital Valais offers patients in the region and around the world a wide range of high-quality healthcare, public health, and wellness services. The health system sees more than 40,000 inpatients per year, and records 462,000+ ambulatory visits. It is active in research and education among the many specialties and professions represented.

Learn more at <https://www.hopitalduvalais.ch/en/home.html>

### **About Pathway to Excellence®**

ANCC’s [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.