

Practice Transition Accreditation Program

 American Nurses Credentialing Center

CASE STUDY: Building a Sustainable Nurse Workforce: International Medical Center's Journey with ANCC's Practice Transition Accreditation Program®

BACKGROUND

International Medical Center (IMC) is a private, tertiary, multidisciplinary hospital in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, established in 2006. Guided by a mission focused on holistic healing and excellence in healthcare, IMC integrates its core organizational values—mercy, measurement, teamwork, timeliness, and responsibility—into daily clinical practice and professional development. The organization is recognized for delivering patient-centered care that aligns with internationally recognized standards.

As IMC expanded, nursing leadership observed an increased influx of newly graduated nurses and recognized the need for a more structured, evidence-based transition to professional practice. To strengthen consistency, readiness, and long-term development for early-career nurses, IMC identified the American Nurses Credentialing Center's (ANCC) Practice Transition Accreditation Program® (PTAP) as the optimal framework for its nurse residency program.

CHALLENGE

Pursuing PTAP accreditation presented several organizational and contextual challenges:

- **Nurse retention pressures:** Retaining newly graduated nurses remained a key priority, particularly within a highly competitive healthcare labor market. Public sector organizations, especially government hospitals, are often viewed as more attractive employers, creating additional pressure on private institutions to sustain workforce stability.
- **Workforce pipeline constraints:** In Saudi Arabia, national workforce regulations require internationally recruited nurses to have a minimum of two years of clinical experience. This requirement limits access to entry-level candidates for residency programs and increases dependence on locally educated graduates, highlighting the strategic importance of strengthening local nursing talent pipelines.

- **Variation in clinical readiness:** Although nursing education in Saudi Arabia includes four years of academic preparation followed by a one-year internship, variability in practice readiness was still observed. This underscored the need for structured, unit-specific transition-to-practice support, particularly in specialized and high-acuity clinical areas, while also presenting an opportunity to further advance specialty competency development.

“We realized that although our nurses complete four years of education and one full year of internship, they still need structured support when they transition into specialty areas—especially critical care.”

— IMC Program Leadership

- **Balancing rigor with flexibility:** Ensuring residents met program and professional development requirements while allowing flexibility for individual learning pace and extension of program duration when needed.

SOLUTIONS AND STRATEGIES

IMC implemented its PTAP-aligned nurse residency program through a series of deliberate strategies:

- **Executive and committee support:** The Nursing Executive Committee endorsed the initiative, approved necessary resources, and supported the formation of a task force to design and operationalize the program based on PTAP standards.
- **Phased implementation:** The program launched in 2018, beginning with high-acuity areas (NICU and Emergency Department) before expanding across additional units.
- **Structured six-month residency model:** IMC designed a six-month residency, reflecting the country’s existing one-year nursing internship, with extensions available based on resident performance and learning needs.
- **Comprehensive learning tools:** Residents were supported through structured learning lists (referred to as blue, red, and green lists) that clearly outlined required tasks, competencies, and learning milestones

“The residency program helped bring structure and consistency across units, while still allowing flexibility based on each nurse’s learning needs.”

— IMC Program Leadership

- **Integrated support systems:** The residency program incorporated preceptorship, mentorship, wellness and well-being initiatives, and professional development courses aligned with both competency and career progression.
- **Leadership and succession planning:** Graduates were supported with individualized career consultations, succession planning, and preparation for future leadership roles.

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RESULTS

IMC became the first **PTAP-accredited private hospital in Saudi Arabia**, achieving accreditation in February 2023. The organization successfully implemented and sustained the program across six resident cohorts, expanding participation beyond initial critical care units to include medical, surgical, maternity, pediatrics, nursery, and labor and delivery areas.

Key program features included:

- Multiple cohorts successfully completed the residency program across diverse clinical areas.
- Residents who completed the program demonstrated continued employment with IMC, with retention data reflecting nurses who graduated from the program and remained employed from program start through 2026.

“When we talk about retention, we only measure nurses who completed the residency program—and many of them are still with us from the time they started.”

— IMC Program Leadership

- The program received positive feedback from accreditation appraisers, particularly for its structured organization of the learner experience.

OUTCOMES

The PTAP-accredited residency program produced several meaningful organizational and professional outcomes:

- **Improved nurse retention:** The residency program helped retain newly graduated nurses in a competitive labor market, with most participants showing strong intention and confidence to remain at IMC.
- **Enhanced transition to practice:** Residents received consistent, unit-specific support that strengthened clinical confidence and competence.
- **Pipeline for future leaders:** Graduates were actively engaged in professional development, with some nurses entering formal succession pathways such as charge nurse preparation.

“Some of our graduates are now moving into charge nurse pathways, which speaks to how the program supports long-term professional growth.”

— IMC Program Leadership

- **Organizational readiness:** The program supported IMC’s broader accreditation portfolio and reinforced its reputation for quality, patient safety, and professional excellence.

IMC is currently preparing for PTAP reaccreditation, reflecting program sustainability and continuous improvement aligned with updated standards.

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CONCLUSION

IIMC's journey with the ANCC Practice Transition Accreditation Program demonstrates how a structured, accredited nurse residency program can address workforce challenges, support early-career nurses, and strengthen organizational performance. By aligning PTAP standards with local education systems, cultural context, and organizational values, IMC successfully created a sustainable transition-to-practice model.

The program not only supported individual nurse development but also advanced the hospital's strategic goals related to quality, safety, retention, and leadership development.

LESSONS LEARNED

Key lessons emerging from IMC's experience include:



Executive leadership support is essential for successful program implementation and sustainability.



Wellness, professional development, and succession planning are critical components of effective transition-to-practice programs.



PTAP provides a flexible framework that organizations can tailor to local workforce, educational, and cultural contexts.



Accreditation serves as both a quality benchmark and a catalyst for continuous improvement.



Structured learning tools and clear expectations enhance the resident experience and program outcomes.

IMC's PTAP journey illustrates the program's value as a global standard for advancing nursing excellence, strengthening the nurse workforce, and supporting healthcare organizations within and beyond the United States.

The ANCC Practice Transition Accreditation Program® (PTAP) sets the global standard for residency or fellowship programs that transition registered nurses (RNs) into new practice settings.

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