

Magnet Recognition

 American Nurses Credentialing Center

CASE STUDY: Advancing Nursing Excellence Through Magnet® Recognition

CLÍNICA UNIVERSIDAD DE NAVARRA

JULY 2026

BACKGROUND

Clínica Universidad de Navarra (CUN), Pamplona, is an academic hospital affiliated with the University of Navarra. Its mission emphasizes clinical excellence, patient-centered care, education, and research. Nursing at CUN is grounded in the nurse–patient–family relationship and supported by autonomy, collaboration, leadership, innovation, evidence-based practice, and teamwork.

CUN pursued Magnet Recognition to strengthen nursing professionalism, elevate nurses as patient advocates, and align its culture with an internationally recognized framework for excellence.

“We later discovered the Magnet Recognition Program, which led us to conclude that our organizational culture had a Magnet foundation that could thrive with the application of the Magnet framework.”

CHALLENGES

CUN faced several early challenges, including limited national benchmarking data in Spain, evolving education expectations for nurse managers, and the need to build shared governance and evidence-based practice across the organization.

Establishing a sustainable Magnet culture required deep awareness, leadership commitment, and time. CUN estimated that it took approximately seven years to embed the necessary cultural foundation.

SOLUTIONS AND STRATEGIES

CUN treated Magnet Recognition as a long-term transformation, not a one-time project.

- With mentorship from Massachusetts General Hospital, CUN created shared governance structures that fit its local culture. These structures empowered nurses to take part in clinical decision-making.
- Nurse directors used standardized tools to track outcomes consistently across units.
- Nurse managers received training and communication resources to support Magnet culture within their teams.
- Executive and frontline engagement remained central throughout the journey.
- Nursing leaders shared strategic plans and outcomes with the Board.
- Magnet Champions helped communicate Magnet principles across every unit.
- Education supported the transformation through evidence-based practice training, PDCA-based improvement work, mentoring, peer review, and leadership development.
- Shared governance committees helped strengthen leadership skills and sustain practice change.

RESULTS

- CUN's Magnet journey strengthened its nursing culture by expanding shared governance, increasing nurse engagement, and reinforcing professional accountability across the organization.
- Nurse satisfaction improved over time, and RN survey results helped identify units that needed additional nurse manager leadership support.
- CUN also created a transition program to prepare aspiring nurse leaders.

OUTCOMES

- Utilizing an integrated data tool for benchmarking, both internally and externally, has led to improvements in clinical indicators, particularly in the rates of falls with injury and ITU-related incidents.
- Patient experience improved, as reflected in stronger positive feedback.
- CUN's university affiliation, transition programs, and professional practice culture supported staff retention.
- Expansion to Madrid showed that the framework could be sustained and applied in another setting.
- Nurse engagement outcomes have improved, particularly regarding participation in hospital decision-making and opportunities for professional development.

Outcome	Measured Result and Significance
Nurse retention	Turnover remained low, ranging from 1.12% to 1.90% over five years, reflecting workforce stability and a supportive practice environment.
Accreditation timeline	Magnet pre-intent program in 2019, acquired accreditation in May 2025.
Nurse environment satisfaction	Relevant improvements on the RN survey between 2022 and 2025, especially about access to development, opportunities for development, and participation in hospital affairs.
Magnet culture development	CUN embedded a sustainable Magnet culture over approximately seven years, underscoring the long-term commitment required for cultural transformation.

CONCLUSION

CUN's experience demonstrates that Magnet Recognition can be successfully adapted outside the United States when organizations invest in culture, leadership, and sustained practice change.

For nurse leaders, hospital CEOs, administrators, and healthcare executives, this case demonstrates that Magnet is more than a designation. It provides a practical framework for advancing nursing excellence, quality, safety, workforce engagement, and organizational performance.

LESSONS LEARNED

“The first piece of advice is not to rush into seeking recognition. Instead, focus on driving the process of cultural change at a pace that your staff can comfortably manage to adjust their mindset.”

- Build culture at a sustainable pace.
- Adapt Magnet principles to the local context.
- Engage executive leadership with clear outcomes and metrics.
- Use shared governance to empower nurses and strengthen decision-making.
- Invest in evidence-based practice education and leadership development.
- Communicate consistently through champions, meetings, and accessible materials.
- Use mentorship or site visits to support international implementation.

Discover how ANCC Magnet® Recognition helps organizations elevate nursing excellence and outcomes. Contact magnet@ana.org to learn more.

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