

## **Pathway to Excellence® Case Study: Hardin Memorial Hospital Elizabethtown, KY**

Facing dual challenges of increased nurse turnover and decreased quality outcomes, Hardin Memorial Hospital (HMH) needed a way to improve its practice environment and restore its nursing culture. The 300-bed hospital in Central Kentucky began by restructuring its shared governance model to improve collaboration and engagement. When presented with the idea of pursuing ANCC's Pathway to Excellence® credential, council members voted unanimously to move forward. They believed the journey would be a good way to share and promote the hospital's positive workplace culture with all nurses, the organization, and the community.

### **Nursing Transformed**

HMH earned Pathway designation in 2018. The process has transformed nursing – raising morale and generating excitement around common goals. “Our culture stands out because we are really living our mission every day,” says Sharon Wright, CNO/VP, Patient Care Services. “Pathway designation is fuel to continue pushing ourselves to do what is best for our patients and our staff.”

The credential has increased the credibility of the nursing profession among nurses, within the hospital, and across the region. Sustaining the Pathway standards fosters a practice environment centered on high-quality, safe, patient-centered care, staff decision-making, and professional growth. “This is a real win-win for nurse retention and patient outcomes,” Wright says.

In addition, interprofessional collaboration is at an all-time high. The Quality Practice Council of Shared Governance includes members from across the organization, and nurses are always looking for ways to partner with key stakeholders to improve processes.

### **An Engaged Workforce Drives Outcomes**

The cohesive work of all shared governance councils and the patient care leadership team has improved patient outcomes. Most notably, HMH achieved a significant decrease in hospital-acquired infections. Since 2017, CAUTI rates have dropped 75% and CLABSI rates have declined 65%.

Staff engagement is rising. In the latest Press Ganey Employee Engagement survey, the organization-wide response was 85%, ranking HMH in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile. RN engagement rose from 4.21 to 4.34 in one year. Of the 65 indicators measured in 2019, no items scored low enough to be a concern. Noted strengths included: *nurses provide safe, error-free care; units work well together; the organization provides career development opportunities; and the organization cares about quality improvement.*

“When we began our journey to pursue Pathway designation, we were confident we already had the Pathway culture,” says Aimee Wentz, MSN, RN, CNOR, HMH Pathway to Excellence Coordinator. “We didn’t change who we were to achieve the credential. Now that we are a Pathway-designated hospital, we feel pride that we can put the ‘official stamp’ on our hard work and show the world what we are all about.”

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### **About Hardin Memorial Hospital**

HMH is an integrated system of providers and facilities serving approximately 400,000 residents in Central Kentucky. The 300-bed hospital includes 270 acute care, 15 psychiatric, and 15 skilled nursing beds. Additionally, HMH includes 50+ outpatient facilities across the service area including a Cancer Care Center and Outpatient Surgical Center. There are more than 500 physicians and advanced practice clinicians in over 40 specialties and primary care. With 2,800 employees and an active volunteer corps of 140, Hardin Memorial Hospital is the third largest employer in Hardin County. For more information, visit <https://www.hmh.net/>

### **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 staff. [www.nursecredentialing.org/pathway](http://www.nursecredentialing.org/pathway)

### **About ANCC**

The mission of the [American Nurses Credentialing Center](http://www.nursecredentialing.org) (ANCC), a subsidiary of the American Nurses Association, is to promote excellence in nursing and healthcare globally through credentialing programs. ANCC’s internationally renowned credentialing programs certify and recognize individual nurses in specialty practice areas. ANCC recognizes healthcare organizations that promote nursing excellence and quality patient outcomes while providing safe, positive work environments. In addition, ANCC accredits healthcare organizations that provide and approve continuing nursing education, accredits transition-to-practice programs, and prepares nurses for new practice roles. For more information about ANCC, visit us at [nursingworld.org/ancc](http://nursingworld.org/ancc) and follow us on [Twitter](#). ANCC is the only nurse credentialing organization to successfully achieve ISO 9001:2015 certification.