

Pathway to Excellence® Case Study: Pentec Health

For more than 30 years, Pentec Health has been an industry leader in the provision of specialty infusion services to patients. With a commitment to innovation and quality, nurses at Pentec work collaboratively with physicians and pharmacists in a variety of settings, including the home, office, skilled care facility, and hospital. Pentec's Intrathecal Nurse Training Program is the only program in the nation accredited by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).

When nursing leaders sought a way to validate the nurses who provide outstanding patient care at Pentec Health, they turned to ANCC's Pathway to Excellence Program. The Pathway Standards provided a roadmap to attain an ideal practice environment, engage and inspire staff, and enhance patient care and safety. In 2016, Pentec Health became the first home health organization in the United States to receive Pathway to Excellence designation from ANCC.

The Pathway journey brought Pentec's nursing practice to a new level of excellence and led to marked improvements in several key safety measures. Highlights include:

- **Interprofessional teamwork.** For some organizations, the Pathway journey impacts interprofessional teamwork. In Pentec's case, interprofessional teamwork impacted the decision to seek designation. With Pentec's team of nurses, pharmacists, and physicians working closely together, the Pathway standards were easily met. In fact, many standards were already part of everyday practice when the journey began.
- **Employee engagement.** "We thought our staff was engaged, but the Pathway journey brought engagement levels through the roof," says Karen McHenry, RN, MSN, Senior Vice President, Nursing Services. Deb Huff, Pathway Coordinator, adds, "Everybody got onboard. The effect was amazing. It was like that snowball going down the mountain. It kept getting bigger and bigger, gaining support and becoming more powerful along the way."
- **Improved outcomes.** Patient falls decreased by 4% in two years. This is especially significant because home care nurses are not with patients all the time. In addition, medication errors dropped 29% in one year, coupled with a 36% increase in refills. This remarkable improvement of increased refills fixed with a tremendous decrease in medication errors truly defines the improved outcomes Pentec achieved in the last year. Nursing certification rates rose 6%. In 2015, Pentec was named one of the Best Places to Work in Pennsylvania, with 96% nurse satisfaction.

As the first home health organization to achieve the Pathway credential, Pentec faced some challenges along the way. Most critically, leaders had to "translate" language written for the acute care environment into terms and concepts that related to home health and could be

understood by all staff. For example, most of Pentec's nurses were unfamiliar with the title CNO, in reference to Karen McHenry, recognizing VP instead. In addition, because nurses are located all over the country, teamwork, supervision, quality care, and competency are much bigger challenges than they are for organizations under one roof.

Pentec's advice for other home health organizations considering the Pathway journey? It may seem unfamiliar at first and you might think you don't fit the mold, but be persistent! With a little work, you can find examples that meet the standards from your perspective.

The result is worth it, McHenry says. "Pathway to Excellence designation validates that the nurses who practice professional nursing at Pentec Health thrive in an environment that provides the ingredients for excellence in what they do. Their voice is not only heard, but also matters. This creates a positive culture that makes everybody want to do their very best. Our patients benefit from their passion and satisfaction, resulting in outstanding, progressive, evidence-based care."

About Pentec Health

Pentec Health provides physician-prescribed, patient-specific, compounded sterile medications that are intended for patient administration in the home as well as various alternate administration sites. For more information, visit <http://www.pentechhealth.com>.

About Pathway to Excellence[®]

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.