

Pathway to Excellence® Case Study: TIRR Memorial Hermann Improves Quality Outcomes With Pathway to Excellence

TIRR Memorial Hermann offers help and hope to people whose lives are significantly altered by a disabling injury or illness. Although the organization is routinely recognized as a national leader in medical rehabilitation and research, it continually seeks ways to improve patient care and outcomes.

The Pathway to Excellence Program's Practice Standards provide the framework to create a positive practice environment that supports ongoing pursuit of excellence. As a result, TIRR Memorial Hermann's quality outcomes continually exceed expectations:

- **Below-average fall rate.** Falls are a particular concern for rehabilitation patients. The organization used its front-line nurse expertise to create focused interventions to prevent falls. The fall rate has decreased to fewer than 5.5 per 1,000 patient days, considerably below the industry average.
- **No ventilator-associated pneumonia (VAP) for five years.** Nurses assessed ventilator-associated infections, taking into account their patient population. Modifications were made to the VAP bundles based on their assessment. Nurses' engagement and continued dedication led to completely eliminating VAP and maintaining a zero infection rate for more than five years.
- **Fewer CAUTIs.** Nurse leaders and educators played a key role on the hospital's catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI) task force. Through education and care improvements, the hospital significantly reduced infections from 9.5 to 2 per 1,000 device days.
- **Fewer pressure ulcers.** Spinal cord injury patients are at high risk for pressure ulcers. The hospital initiated a multidisciplinary prevention program in which certified wound care nurses collaborated with physicians and direct-care nurses to educate patients on wheelchair and bed repositioning techniques. Hospital-acquired pressure ulcers (HAPU) dropped from 20+ to fewer than 2 per year.

"Nurses are driving process change for the good of patients and staff," says Mary Ann Euliarte, RN, CRRN, chief nursing officer/chief operating officer. "The Pathway journey definitely helps us raise the bar."



At a Glance

TIRR Memorial Hermann is a 119-bed nonprofit rehabilitation hospital, a network of outpatient therapy clinics, a rehabilitation medical home, and a network of inpatient rehabilitation units. Founded in 1959, the Texas Medical Center facility has been named one of America's Best Hospitals by *US News & World Report* for 24 consecutive years. Rehabilitation teams at the hospital provide services for individuals with strokes, brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, amputations, and neurodegenerative diseases. Cutting-edge, quality patient care, and research is the focus of all healthcare professionals in this progressive organization. TIRR is part of the not-for-profit Memorial Hermann Healthcare System providing care for patients throughout the world.

Results

- Maintained a fall rate between 4 and 5.5 per 1,000 patient days
- Completely eliminated VAP for more than 5 years
- Reduced CAUTI rates from 9.5 per 1,000 device days to fewer than 2
- Reduced HAPU from more than 20 per year to fewer than 2
- Increased nurse certification from 4% to 68%

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 nurses.