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## Pathway to Excellence in Long Term Care® Case Study:

### Sentara Nursing Center-Virginia Beach

Sentara Nursing Center-Virginia Beach (SNCVB) has provided skilled and long-term nursing care to the communities of southeastern Virginia for more than 28 years. Part of the Sentara Healthcare system, the 116-bed facility includes a specialized fracture unit, rehabilitation care and long-term care beds.

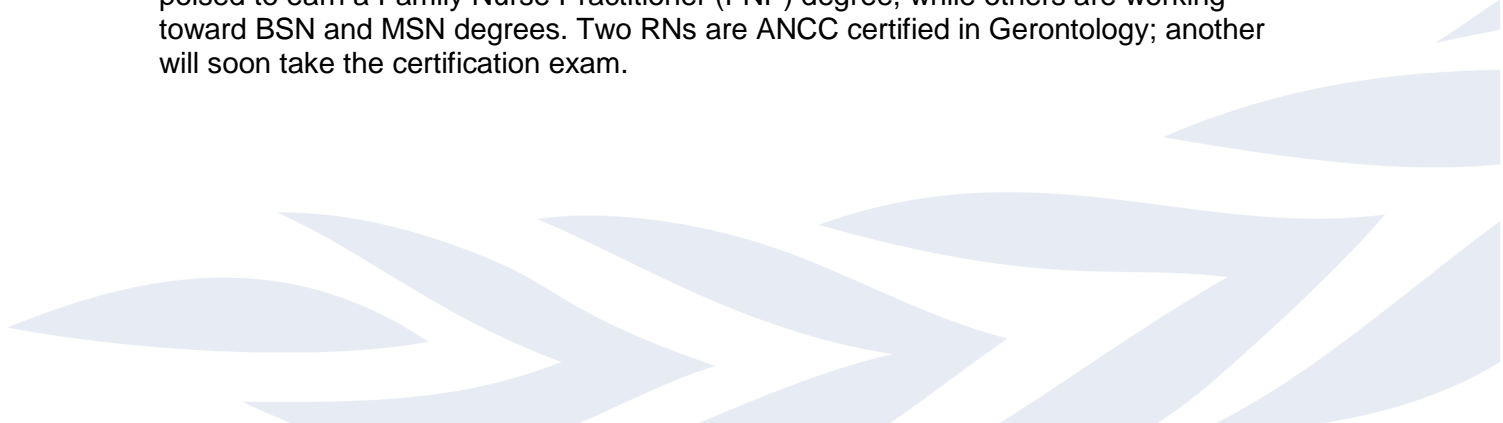
Faced with high turnover rates among its RNs, LPNs, and CNAs, SNCVB looked for a way to improve the work environment, promote evidence-based practice, and ensure it was living up to its mission to advance health every day. It found the answer in ANCC's Pathway to Excellence in Long Term Care® Program. In 2018, it became the first long-term care organization in Virginia to receive Pathway to Excellence designation.

#### Engaged Staff Boosts Retention

The Pathway Standards provided a roadmap to attain performance goals, create a healthy environment, and engage and inspire staff. The journey not only brought SNCVB's practice environment to a new level of excellence, it also led to marked improvements in several key retention and satisfaction measures.

By far the most impressive result is a dramatic reduction in staff turnover. In just over a year, RN vacancy rates were cut in half, and turnover fell from nearly 30% to under 20%. LPN turnover dropped five percentage points, while the CNA vacancy rate fell below 20% with turnover slashed by more than 11 percentage points.

Underpinning these improvements is a foundation of staff satisfaction and engagement.

- **Nurses feel empowered.** They are more likely to participate in shared governance activities, and speak up when they see an opportunity for improvement.
  - **Nurses feel valued.** More staff know about, and take advantage of, professional development, orientation, and preceptorship opportunities.
  - **Nurses feel part of the team.** The Pathway journey has made nurses more aware of their roles and responsibilities as part of the interdisciplinary healthcare team. They are more knowledgeable about the resources available, as well as who they can collaborate with and when.
  - **Nurses can achieve their goals.** Staff are motivated to pursue professional education and certification, and flexible scheduling makes it easier for them to do so. One RN is poised to earn a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) degree, while others are working toward BSN and MSN degrees. Two RNs are ANCC certified in Gerontology; another will soon take the certification exam.
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## **Safer Care, More Satisfied Patients**

Pathway benefits impact SNCVB's residents, as well. In 2017-18, 94% to 99% of residents rated their care "good" or "excellent."

With an improved preceptorship program and orientation timeline, new hires are evaluated for readiness to take on independent assignments. This makes care safer and improves quality.

"Pathway designation validates our vision and mission to improve health every day – not only the health of patients and residents, but also the health of our nursing staff," says Sarah Rose Sienes, Staff Development Coordinator, Sentara Life Care Virginia Beach. "Being the first and only Pathway-designated long-term care organization in Virginia brings prestige and honor to our patients, our staff, and our community."

## **Results (2017-2018)**

- RN turnover fell from 27.7% to 19.6%
- The RN vacancy rate plummeted from 14.7% to 7.8%
- LPN turnover dropped from 19.7% to 15.3%
- CNA turnover fell from 44.6% to 33.8%
- The CNA vacancy rate dropped from 21.5% to 17.7%
- 94-99% of patients rated their care as "good" or "excellent"

## **About Sentara Healthcare**

Sentara Nursing Care-Virginia Beach is part of Norfolk-based Sentara Healthcare, which serves Virginia and northeastern North Carolina. The healthcare system includes 12 acute hospitals, outpatient campuses, rehabilitation, home health and hospice, senior services, medical groups and ambulance services. Learn more at [www.sentara.com](http://www.sentara.com).

## **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)