

Rebuilding a Nursing Division By Achieving ANCC Magnet Designation: *The Story of Georgetown University Hospital*

The Challenge:

Reverse nurse-sensitive Joint Commission [JC] Core Measure & Safety trends while improving patient experience scores as measured by CMS.

The Goal:

Implement a patient safety game-changer program focused on JC targets – and improve Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) patient experience scores – while supporting a high-performing clinical magnet nursing team at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, DC.

An Innovative Solution:

Equip nurses at all levels with a multi-faceted, data-driven program specific to outcome improvement targets and embed key concepts into the fabric of nursing practice and individual performance at the hospital.

What It Is

- ANCC Magnet designation acknowledges hospitals that act as “magnets” for excellence by creating a work environment that recognizes, rewards, and promotes professional nursing. It is the “Baldrige Award” for nursing – symbolic of leadership in establishing a standard of excellence and the highest possible accolade for a nursing system.
- Magnet criteria include an administrative commitment to:
 - A clinically excellent nursing workforce.
 - Good RN/MD relationships.
 - Nurse autonomy.
 - Supportive managers.
 - RN control over nursing practice.
 - Continuous educational support.
 - Adequate nurse staffing.
 - Paramount concern for the patient.
- Georgetown’s program includes, but is not limited to:
 - *Data Transparency*: Nursing unit/department-specific dashboard data addressing each nurse-sensitive core measure, patient safety indicator and patient experience CMS results is provided and updated quarterly.
 - *Improvement Action Plans*: Developed via two routes – central core Patient Safety Committee[s] and unit-based Patient Safety Improvement councils – enabling consistency across all clinical nursing units and specificity in addressing targeted patient population nuances and differences.

Where To Learn More

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- Specific requirements for advancement – embedded into the GUH Clinical Ladder – that support and acculturate the program. Comprised of four levels, with Level III & Level IV requiring completion of at least one Performance Improvement Project and/or IRB-approved research study. Participants are limited to selecting projects that are *directly* tied to improving JC core measure performance, CMS patient experience scores, and patient safety targets. Projects outside these parameters do not contribute to Ladder advancement.
- Annual individual and team targets for nursing division personnel tied *directly* to dashboard targets – again, embedding into daily performance the importance of critical patient safety and experience improvement targets.

What It Does

- Lowers nursing vacancy, turnover and burnout rates.
- Increases retention rates.
- Enhances recruitment advantage, particularly for highly educated nurses.
- Attracts high achieving nurses
 - Performance improvement activities and nursing research considered part of the job description
 - Increases nurse satisfaction.
 - Increases patient satisfaction.
- Based on the CNO's belief that alignment of institutional goals, objectives and targets are achievable only if all remain similarly focused, this program aligns GUH Magnet nurses at all levels with critical outcome initiatives directly tied to ensuring a safe environment for GUH patients and their families.

How It Stands Out

- Since program inception, more than 150 performance improvement and 35 IRB-approved research studies have enabled nursing to achieve 97% of identified nurse-sensitive patient safety and experience targets.
- Outcomes after seven years include:
 - Number of open beds at Georgetown increased by nearly 300.
 - Vacancy and turnover rates steadily declined.
 - Filled positions increased by nearly 300%.
 - More than 85% of bedside nurses are baccalaureate or masters prepared.
 - Patient satisfaction with nursing increased from 20th to 80th percentile.
 - Nursing satisfaction consistently and significantly above national norms.
 - Nurses perceive level of care delivery significantly higher than national norms.
 - Clinical complication rates below national norms.
 - Scholarly activity of nursing staff among highest in the nation.