Practice Excellence Through Credentialing

The mission of the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), a subsidiary of the American Nurses Association (ANA), is to promote excellence in nursing and health care globally through credentialing programs. ANCC’s internationally renowned credentialing programs certify and recognize individual nurses in specialty practice areas. It recognizes healthcare organizations that promote nursing excellence and quality patient outcomes, while providing safe, positive work environments. In addition, ANCC accredits health care organizations that provide and approve continuing nursing education. It also offers educational materials to support nurses and organizations as they work toward their credentials.

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.

Visit www.nursecredentialing.com/Pathway.aspx for more information about the ANCC Pathway to Excellence Program.

You may also contact the Pathway office at pathwayinfo@ana.org.
The Pathway to Excellence Practice Standards

1. Nurses Control the Practice of Nursing
2. The Work Environment is Safe and Healthy
3. Systems are in Place to Address Patient Care and Practice Concerns
4. Orientation Prepares Nurses for the Work Environment
5. The Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) is Qualified and Participates at all Levels of the Organization
6. Professional Development is Provided and Used
7. Equitable Compensation is Provided
8. Nurses are Recognized for Achievements
9. A Balanced Lifestyle is Encouraged
10. Collaborative Relationships are Valued and Supported
11. Nurse Managers are Competent and Accountable
12. A Quality Program and Evidence-Based Practices are Used

Positive Practice Environments and Enhancing Patient Care Through Pathway to Excellence

The American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Pathway to Excellence® Program recognizes a healthcare organization’s commitment to creating a positive nursing practice environment. The progressive structure of a Pathway-designated organization can play a key role in the successful recruitment of top candidates and staff retention through high job satisfaction. It also provides a framework for enhancing patient care and safety.

The standards of the ideal practice environment required for Pathway to Excellence designation benefit organizations of all sizes and settings as well as the nurses, patients, and communities they serve.

Excellence Through Practice Standards

Applicants seeking Pathway to Excellence designation must demonstrate that they successfully meet the 12 practice standards. Each standard reflects the foundational elements for safe patient care and a positive environment for delivering quality nursing services. Organizations that commit to these standards also convey that nurses are valued and respected members of the healthcare team.

Development and Integration of Practice Standards

Organizations applying for Pathway designation benefit from the information gathering process, in which they demonstrate through written documentation how the 12 practice standards are embodied in their operating policies, procedures, and organizational culture.

A unique feature of Pathway designation is the Nurse Survey. It provides nurses the opportunity to validate that the information in the application document is integrated throughout the organization, and gives each nurse a voice in the process. Intrinsic to the Pathway program, the Nurse Survey is a critical element that exemplifies how nurses are valued. Because the Pathway credential must be renewed every three years, nurses can be assured that a Pathway organization will maintain a supportive atmosphere that continually helps them achieve their professional best.

Person-Centered Environments Through Pathway to Excellence in Long Term Care™

The Pathway to Excellence in Long Term Care™ (PTE-LTC) program is the first to recognize supportive work settings specifically in long-term care organizations. Exceptional practice environments translate into a positive experience for residents of long-term care organizations as well as their families.

Based on the Pathway to Excellence Program and its emphasis on the standards of the ideal practice environment, the PTE-LTC program has been adapted to address the unique needs of long-term care organizations and their nursing staff. Examples of key differences include:

- Addressing important policies and protocols that are specific to long-term care settings, such as zero tolerance of resident abuse and neglect, the use of restraints, and fall prevention
- Incorporating Certified Nurse Assistants (CNAs) as part of the nursing community
- Recognizing a person-centered model of care