

Pathway to Excellence® Case Study 8,300 Nurses Work as One at BayCare Health

For more than 20 years, BayCare Health System has served the residents of Tampa Bay and Central Florida with high quality, compassionate healthcare. The multi-hospital system has grown to include inpatient and outpatient services that span the medical spectrum, including acute care, primary care, imaging, laboratory, behavioral health, home care, wellness, and more.

With 8,300 nurses spread throughout 14 hospitals, BayCare's nursing leadership sought a way to align nursing services, create a positive work environment, and bring everybody together under one umbrella. The Pathway to Excellence® Program from American Nurses Credentialing Center provided the ideal framework. Chief Nursing Officer Lisa Johnson set a lofty goal: all 14 of BayCare's hospitals would be Pathway-designated by the end of 2018. Currently, eight hospitals have achieved the credential and six more are on the journey.

A Culture Transformed

Pathway's impact has transformed nursing at BayCare. With all nurses focused on a common purpose, it has boosted morale, created a sense of unity, and generated excitement around the goal of achievement. Notably, it has improved the visibility and utility of nurses and nursing care throughout the health system. "The pursuit of Pathway is an opportunity to showcase accomplishments and give our nurses the recognition they deserve," Johnson says. "We're always looking forward and running fast, but Pathway gives us a chance to hit the pause button, take a look back, and say 'Wow, we did this!'"

A positive nurse culture has produced multiple improvements:

- Among nurses, pride and confidence are palpable. The Pathway framework promotes and strengthens collegial relationships between units and leads to higher levels of employee engagement. Everyone feels the change as nurses come together as one.
- Nurses are excited and patients feel that, too. Many of the qualities that Pathway fosters, such as teamwork and a positive nurse environment, are key elements of the patient experience. As research shows, happy nurses lead to happy patients.
- With nurses working well together, the entire team works well together, improving interprofessional care. Nurses make up more than 50% of the workforce at BayCare and that positive culture spreads.



Strategic Alignment Drives Outcomes

Pathway aligns with many of BayCare's strategic initiatives. Since embarking on the Pathway journey, the health system has been named among the nation's "Top 100 Places to Work" by *Fortune Magazine*, one of "America's Best Employers" by *Forbes Magazine*, and also a *Fortune Magazine Great Place to Work* as a "Best Workplace for Women" and a "Best Workplace for Millennials."

Additionally, the positive nurse environment inspires nurses to be the best they can be in their profession. As a result, a quarter of BayCare's nurses are certified in their specialty and the health system is experiencing record BSN enrollment.

With nurses feeling supported and engaged, they can focus on outcomes. Pathway has provided the foundation to move shared governance to the next level, and empowered nurses to make suggestions to help BayCare reach its goals. Above all it's created a joyful and more unified culture.

"Pathway is our common stake in the ground," Johnson says. "It's something everybody can pedal toward: the collective cause of creating a positive nurse environment where we come to work every day. At BayCare, Pathway has allowed us to change the 'us versus them' mentality and become *we*."

About BayCare Health System

BayCare is a leading not-for-profit health care system that connects individuals and families to a wide range of services at 14 hospitals and hundreds of other convenient locations throughout the Tampa Bay and Central Florida regions. Inpatient and outpatient services include acute care, primary care, imaging, laboratory, behavioral health, home care, and wellness. Our mission is to improve the health of all we serve through community-owned health care services that set the standard for high-quality, compassionate care.

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.