

## **Pathway to Excellence® Case Study: Adirondack Health**

As a key community institution in the heart of the Adirondacks for more than a century, Adirondack Health takes pride in delivering its legacy of healing to residents and visitors who cherish the unique characteristics of the region. Adirondack Health is an ANCC Pathway to Excellence-designated organization. Research shows that a positive work environment, such as the one advanced by the Pathway standards, results in improved patient care and nurse satisfaction. Through a model of shared governance, Pathway-designated organizations seek nurses' input on issues related to patient care, safety, quality, well-being, professional development, and fostering an environment of inter-professional collaboration with the goal of empowering and engaging nurses.

"We are exceptionally proud of our nurses and the hard work they've completed over several years to achieve this designation," says Sylvia Getman, Adirondack Health's President and Chief Executive Officer. "Great nurses provide great patient care, so it is incumbent upon us – as the only full-service health system in the Adirondack Park – to ensure that our nursing professionals feel engaged, supported and, ultimately, satisfied to work here."

### **A Superior Patient Experience**

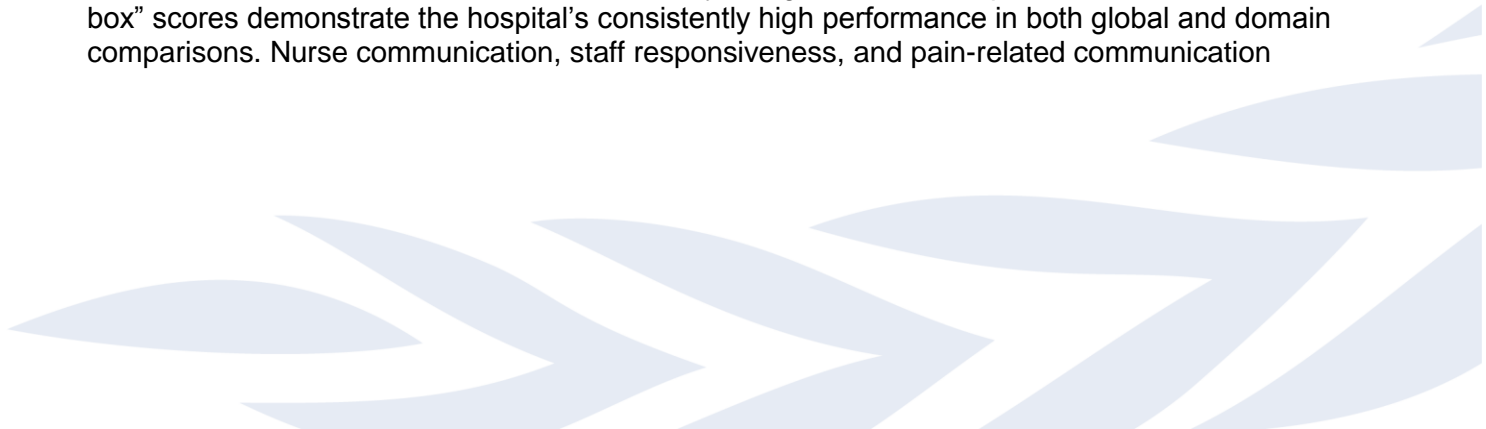
Comprehensive embrace of the six Pathway standards has led to significant improvements for patients, the organization and nurse alike. Notably, Adirondack Health recently received a CMS five-star rating for patient experience. By incorporating shared decision-making at the bedside, nurses feel empowered to speak up and advocate for their patients. They are actively involved in evidence-based research and the implementation of quality initiatives.

### **Professional Growth and Development**

Since 2015, Adirondack Health has seen a consistent increase in the number of nursing staff who hold advanced degrees, specialty certification and/or are working toward some kind of professional advancement. This number has continued to trend upward ever since. Certification rates have risen from 35% in 2015 to more than 50% in 2018. Nurses with advanced degrees now account for half the staff, and Clinical Ladder participation has more than doubled – from less than 20% in 2015 to 40% in 2018.

### **Exceptional HCAHPS Performance**

In 2018, as Adirondack Health received Pathway designation, contemporaneous HCAHPS "top-box" scores demonstrate the hospital's consistently high performance in both global and domain comparisons. Nurse communication, staff responsiveness, and pain-related communication



scored particularly high, which the hospital attributes – in no small part – to best practices derived from the six Pathway standards.

"The Pathway to Excellence journey does not end with designation," says Linda McClarigan, Adirondack Health's Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Patient Care Services. "It truly is a new way of seeing and doing things that aligns nursing and our organization with initiatives that create the very best environments for our patients to heal and for our nurses and staff to thrive."

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### **About Adirondack Health**

Adirondack Health is a family of facilities and individuals who have provided sophisticated care to the Adirondack region of northern New York and beyond for the past 100 years. Offering a full range of medical, surgical, and long-term care services, Adirondack Health is the only full-service health system in the Adirondack Park. Learn more at <https://adirondackhealth.org/>

### **About the Pathway to Excellence® Program**

The Pathway to Excellence® Program recognizes a health care 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)