

## **Pathway to Excellence® Case Study: Baptist Health Hardin Elizabethtown, KY**

Baptist Health Hardin (formerly Hardin Memorial Hospital) earned its initial Pathway to Excellence® designation in 2018 as a stand-alone, community-owned hospital. At that time, the house-wide shared governance councils voted unanimously to pursue the credential as a way to showcase the hospital's positive workplace culture. Shared governance members and nursing leaders believed the Pathway designation would inspire pride among nurses, confidence among patients, and a desire among future nurses to join the organization.

Fast forward five years, and the hospital has a new owner and a new name. The acquisition came just as the world was turned upside down by COVID-19, challenging health care organizations everywhere. As the newly named Baptist Health Hardin, the hospital had to navigate both a change in ownership and the challenge of a global pandemic, while keeping its nursing culture resilient. Thanks to a highly engaged workforce, robust nursing leadership, and support from the Baptist Health system, Baptist Health Hardin was able to preserve its extraordinary culture and earn Pathway redesignation in 2022.

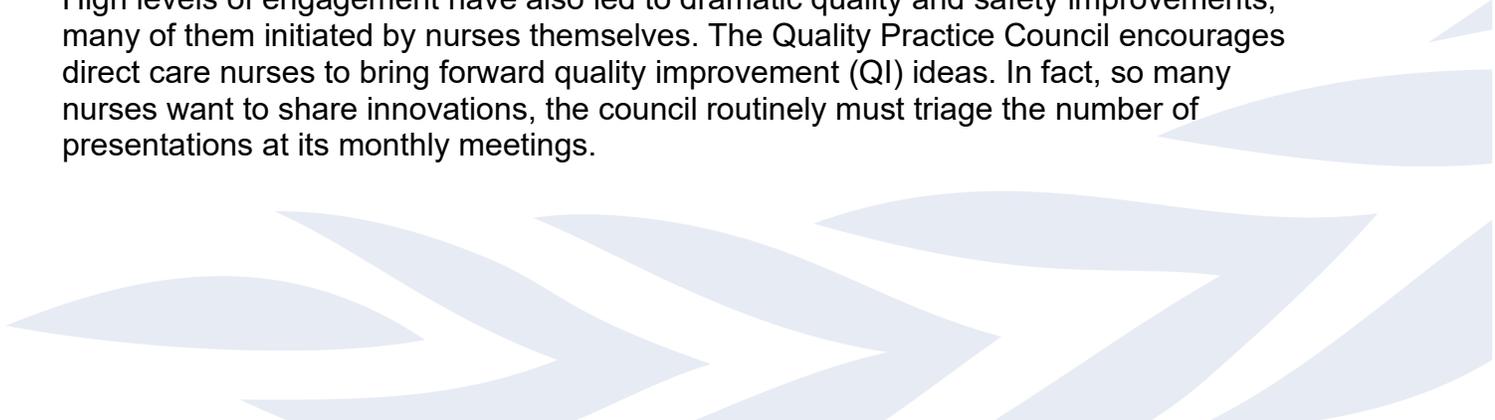
### **Prioritizing Pathway Standards**

The Pathway framework proved invaluable in navigating the COVID crisis, especially the program's emphasis on well-being. "We always had great reasons to focus on nurse well-being, and with COVID we put a lot of effort into assessing and providing interventions to ensure the well-being of all staff," says Aimee Wentz, MSN, RN, CNOR, Pathway to Excellence Program Director. "Senior leadership makes well-being a priority in strategic planning and sends a consistent message to our nurses that they are valued."

That support has produced engaged and satisfied nurses, with a strong desire to maintain the Pathway culture. The hospital's participation rate for the Pathway survey was 84%, and the hospital met or exceeded criteria for all 28 questions.

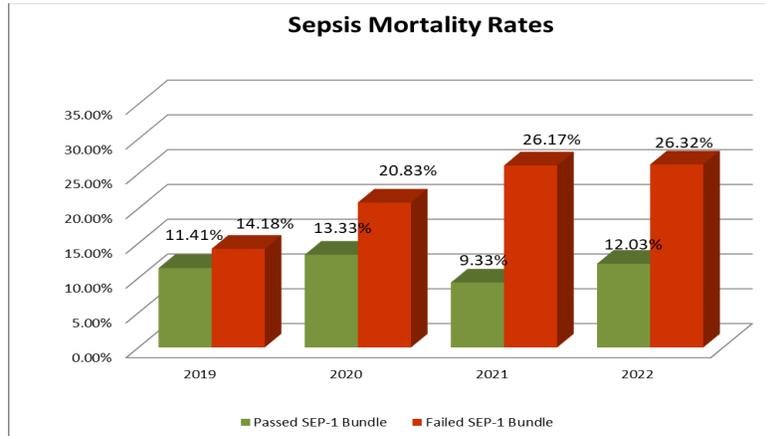
### **A Focus on Quality Yields Results**

High levels of engagement have also led to dramatic quality and safety improvements, many of them initiated by nurses themselves. The Quality Practice Council encourages direct care nurses to bring forward quality improvement (QI) ideas. In fact, so many nurses want to share innovations, the council routinely must triage the number of presentations at its monthly meetings.



Two recent examples of nurse-led QI initiatives include:

- Sepsis process of care and mortality.** To promote early identification and timely treatment of patients with septic shock, nurse triage screening processes and nurse-driven protocols were developed and taught to Emergency Department (ED) nursing staff. As a result, sepsis bundle compliance in the ED improved from 50% in 2021 to 61% in 2022, exceeding the national average of 57%.



Mortality Observed vs Expected Trend



- Foley catheter utilization and CAUTI reduction.** Another nurse-led quality initiative addressed increased rates of catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI) among critical care patients during COVID. Strategies included daily rounds with critical care nurses to reduce the use of indwelling catheters, and collaboration with the interdisciplinary team to remove all unnecessary devices. These tactics reduced Foley device days by 41% and lowered the standardized infection ratio (SIR) from 5.68 to 0.87.

Dates	Foley Device Days	Number of Infections	Number of Infections Predicted	SIR
2021Q4 – 2022Q1	1,805	11	1,938	5.676

2022Q2 – 2022Q3	1,059	1	1.146	0.873
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“When we applied for Pathway redesignation, we worried if our pre-COVID culture was strong enough to survive the trauma and chaos of the past three years,” Wentz says. “It was quickly apparent that our culture was alive and well. By keeping Pathway’s standards of Shared Decision-making, Leadership, Safety, Quality, Well-being, and Professional Development a priority in our day-to-day duties, nurses were able to hold tightly to our mission and prove they can do anything.”

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### About Baptist Health Hardin

[Baptist Health Hardin](#), formerly Hardin Memorial Hospital, is an integrated system of providers and facilities serving approximately 400,000 residents in Central Kentucky. The 300-bed hospital includes 270 acute care, 15 psychiatric, and 15 skilled nursing beds, as well as 50 outpatient facilities across the service area. The hospital is part of Baptist Health, a full-spectrum health system that includes nine hospitals, employed and independent physicians, and more than 400 points of care. For more information, visit <https://www.baptisthealth.com/>

### 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.

### About ANCC

The mission of the [American Nurses Credentialing Center](#) (ANCC), a subsidiary of the American Nurses Association, 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. ANCC recognizes health care 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, accredits transition-to-practice programs, and prepares nurses for new practice roles. For more information about ANCC, visit us at [nursingworld.org/ancc](https://nursingworld.org/ancc) and follow us on [Twitter](#). ANCC is the only nurse credentialing organization to successfully achieve ISO 9001:2015 certification.