

Pathway to Excellence® Case Study: Saint Mary's Regional Medical Center Reno, NV

For more than 110 years, Saint Mary's Regional Medical Center (SMRMC) has delivered compassionate, high-quality healthcare to the communities of northern Nevada. What began as a small hospital with just two nurses on its staff has grown to become a state-of-the-art, comprehensive medical and surgical facility able to address the region's ever-changing healthcare needs.

SMRMC's direct care nurses believed the medical center had the culture, best practices, best processes, and quality outcomes to earn ANCC's Pathway to Excellence® designation. Leaders agreed. They understood that Pathway offered the ideal framework to build on an existing culture of excellence and improve recruitment and retention, address nurse and employee well-being, and position SMRMC as not only the best acute care hospital in Nevada but also one of the leading medical centers nationwide.

Nurse Empowerment Drives Dramatic Improvements

In 2019, SMRMC became only the third hospital in Nevada to earn Pathway to Excellence designation. The journey delivered notable gains in multiple nursing measures and outcomes. Nurse-directed performance improvement initiatives helped the medical center achieve the following in just two years:

- RN turnover dropped sharply, from 18.4% to 5.38%
- Overall staff turnover also fell dramatically, from 22.8% to 7.7%
- HCAHPS scores nearly doubled, from 54% to 90%, exceeding the medical center's goal of 73%
- The number of certified nurses jumped from 167 to 217
- CLABSI dropped to zero, a rate sustained for 22 consecutive months and counting
- Retention of new graduate nurses in the Transition to Practice Program rose to 91%

A Solid Foundation Enhances Patient Care and Safety

Pathway designation has bolstered SMRMC's already rigorous commitment to patient safety and quality, raising the medical center's profile locally and nationally. Accolades include:

- The only hospital in Nevada recognized as one of America's 250 Best Hospitals by Healthgrades
- An "A" safety rating from The Leapfrog Group, 6 consecutive times
- A Leapfrog-recognized Top General Hospital, 2 years in a row
- A Top 50 Cardiovascular Hospital (Becker's)

- Primary Stroke Center (The Joint Commission)
- Accredited Chest Pain Center (Society of Cardiovascular Patient Care)

True Collaboration Sparks Engagement

Harnessing the power of collaboration helped SMRMC achieve a remarkable 83% participation rate in the Pathway Nurse Survey. Unit clerks, CNAs, and other ancillary staff joined nurses to produce the Pathway to Excellence Nurse Survey Haka video – showcasing the fire and intensity of staff in propelling SMRMC to Pathway designation. Interprofessional staff also encouraged nurses to take the survey, which led to a participation rate of 49% in the first three days, 65% on day 10, and 75% on day 17.

A focus on meaningful recognition and rewarding staff for all they do are also key elements of success. “Celebrate even the smallest victories every day and these will turn into bigger victories,” says Jimmy Lao, MSN, RN, CCRN, CEN, Nursing Supervisor Emergency Services, and Pathway to Excellence Coordinator. “Our employee recognition during daily huddles, on social media, and through other communication vehicles prove to be effective tools for us.”

###

About Saint Mary’s Regional Medical Center

Part of Saint Mary’s Health Network, Saint Mary’s Regional Medical Center is a 380-bed acute care and general medical/surgical hospital with a complete range of services. These include Women’s and Children’s services, Home Care, Hospice and Palliative Care, a nationally accredited Center for Cancer, a full-service Heart and Vascular Institute and a multispecialty Medical Group. The Medical Center was named Nevada’s first Nationally Accredited Breast Center of Excellence and is the only hospital in the state to be named one of American’s 250 Best Hospitals™ by Healthgrades in 2019. Learn more at <https://www.saintmarysreno.com/>

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 staff. www.nursecredentialing.org/pathway

About ANCC

The mission of the [American Nurses Credentialing Center](http://www.nursecredentialing.org) (ANCC), a subsidiary of the American Nurses Association, is to promote excellence in nursing and healthcare globally through credentialing programs. ANCC’s internationally renowned credentialing programs certify and recognize individual nurses in specialty practice areas. ANCC recognizes healthcare organizations that promote nursing excellence and quality patient outcomes while providing safe, positive work environments. In addition, ANCC accredits healthcare organizations that provide and approve continuing nursing education and accredits transition to practice programs and prepares nurses for new practice roles. For more information about ANCC, visit us at

nursingworld.org/ancc and follow us on [Twitter](#). ANCC is the only nurse credentialing organization to successfully achieve ISO 9001:2015 certification.