

Pathway to Excellence®

ANCC International

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BACKGROUND

The American Nurses Credentialing Center's (ANCC) Pathway to Excellence® Program is a framework designed to cultivate a thriving work environment and elevate nursing practice. By keeping its employees at the forefront, the framework offers an evidence-based solution to the most pressing challenges such as increasing clinician burnout, turnover and shortage that healthcare organizations are facing. By embarking on this nursing excellence journey, organizations demonstrate their commitment to creating a workplace that values the contribution and safeguards the well-being of nurses and their healthcare team. Creating this type of environment increases job satisfaction, organization loyalty, employee engagement, fulfillment in work, translating into enhanced care quality, operational excellence and organizational outcomes.

Pathway is NOT just a nursing credential: It's a CULTURE STRATEGY that results in organization-wide transformation. Nursing Leaders of Pathway accredited organizations have reported that their nursing excellence journey has significantly enhanced their work culture, collaborative practices and elevated nursing professional competence and job satisfaction.



VALUE PROPOSITION

Beneficiaries	Competitive Advantage	Value
Organizations	Leader in Nursing and Midwifery Workplace Excellence	Demonstrate dedication to nursing and midwifery excellence and fostering a healthy work environment that puts people, the most important asset of the organization, first. Achieving the designation is validation from ANCC and the nursing workforce that they work in an organization that's a great place to work.
	Recruitment and Retention	Foster an environment that values nurses and midwives contributions and prioritizes their well-being, helping them identify their professional home and choose to stay, thereby enhancing staff retention.[1,2]
	Quality of Care	Implement an evidence-based model that actively engages the nurses and midwives in continuous improvement to achieve higher standards of care and sustained superior organizational outcomes.
	Operational Excellence	Enhance teamwork and operational efficiency through interprofessional shared decision-making and principles of leadership development.
Nurses	Professional Development	Provide nurses and midwives with opportunities for lifelong learning, mentoring, and career advancement to enhance their skills and job satisfaction.
	Work Environment	Cultivate a respectful, safe, and inclusive workplace free from incivility and violence.[3] Fosters an environment that gives nurses and midwives a voice, invites their input, celebrates their contributions, nurtures their professional development and well-being. Given the pivotal role nurse managers play in creating supportive work environments, strategies to strengthen their leadership competencies are essential, along with measures to support their well-being, enabling them to effectively care for their teams.
	Empowerment & Engagement	Give nurses and midwives a voice by involving them in the decision-making process, which enhances their engagement 4 and commitment to their roles.
	Well-being	# 1 priority for improving nurse/clinician well-being is to create positive practice environments (PPE) – Pathway to Excellence® provides an evidence-based framework for creating PPE – effectiveness demonstrated in various settings across the globe. Standards are applicable, relevant, and attainable in all settings.
Patients	Quality of Care	Enhanced interprofessional collaboration, teamwork, and job satisfaction, along with a sense of fulfillment in their roles, lead to an improved patient experience and higher quality of care.5
	Safety and Well-being	Nurses and midwives have input into decisions that impact their practice which improve patient safety, minimize errors, boost overall patient satisfaction, quality of care and outcomes.

FIND PATHWAY-ACCREDITED US AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Find a Pathway Organization | Pathway to Excellence® | ANCC (nursingworld.org)
https://www.nursingworld.org/organizational-programs/pathway/find-a-pathway-organization

GETTING STARTED:

• Conduct self-assessment to determine whether your organization meets requirements:
Before You Apply | Pathway to Excellence® | ANCC | ANA (nursingworld.org)
https://www.nursingworld.org/organizational-programs/pathway/apply/pre-application/

• Begin your Pathway to Excellence® journey:
Apply for the Pathway to Excellence® | ANCC | ANA Enterprise (nursingworld.org)

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1. Swartwout, E. (2026). The Evidence Behind ANCC's Pathway to Excellence® Credential's Return on Investment. JONA: The Journal of Nursing Administration, 56(3), 114-120.
2. Yu, H., Brooks Carthon, J. M., Aiken, L. H., McEwan, K. K., & McHugh, M. D. (2026, January 7). Pathway to Excellence® designation, nurse work environment, and hospital quality and safety: A multi-state hospital study. Research in Nursing & Health. doi: 10.1002/nur.70052.
3. George, N., Pascale, A., & Warshawsky, N. E. (2025). Practice Environment and Nurse Outcomes by ANCC Designation: Insights From NDNQI. Journal of Nursing Management, 2025(1), 1772029.
4. Yu, H., Golinelli, D., McHugh, M. D., Carthon, J. M. B., & Aiken, L. H. (2025). The Influence of Pathway to Excellence® Designation on Patient Satisfaction. JONA: The Journal of Nursing Administration, 55(8), 457-464.
5. Yu, H., Golinelli, D., Aiken, L. H., McHugh, M. D., & Brooks Carthon, J. M. (2025). The protective effect of Pathway to Excellence® designation on patient satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic. International Journal for Quality in Health Care, 37(4), mzaf096.

> **The Pathway to Excellence® journey strengthened our nursing culture by empowering nurses, elevating leadership accessibility, and embedding quality, safety, and well-being into daily practice. With clear guidance and strong collaboration from the ANCC Pathway team, our nurses felt supported, engaged, and valued throughout the journey. Pathway has helped us create a healthy, positive practice environment that drives excellence in patient care.**
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