

## **Pathway to Excellence® Case Study: Parkland Health & Hospital System Dallas, TX**

Parkland Health & Hospital System first opened its doors in 1894 and is now one of the largest public hospital systems in the country, averaging more than 1 million patient visits annually. Despite this growth, it has never lost sight of its founding mission and vision – to provide the best possible care for patients and families through compassion, skill, and teamwork.

Parkland is a world-renowned health system, but several years of federal oversight had impacted morale and the nursing environment. Leaders were looking for ways to instill pride back into the organization, and nursing in particular. They believed ANCC's Pathway to Excellence® Program would provide the way forward. The health system embarked on the journey with several goals in mind: to engage and energize the nursing staff, enhance the professional practice environment, and create and sustain a healthy workplace culture.

In 2018, Parkland became the first public, safety-net system with a correctional health component to receive the coveted Pathway credential. The designation also includes Parkland's network of Community Oriented Primary Care health centers and its Homeless Outreach Medical Services program, which delivers essential care to homeless children and adults throughout Dallas County.

### **An Invigorated, Involved Nursing Staff**

Benefits of the Pathway journey were immediate and far reaching and include:

- **Improved RN Engagement**  
Parkland saw across-the-board improvement on its NDNQI RN Engagement Survey. With a 92% participation rate, scores rose in all categories, including the overall Mean Practice Environment Scale, RN-to-RN interaction, collegial RN-MD relationships, job enjoyment, and staffing and resources.
- **Increased Nurse Recognition Programs**  
In addition to a clinical advancement program and the DAISY Award for direct care nurses, Parkland created a ROSE program for unlicensed nursing support personnel and will soon implement a Blue Bonnet Award for nurses in support roles.
- **Expanded Shared Governance Initiatives**  
The health system's shared governance structure is thriving, giving nurses at all levels the opportunity to participate. In 2019 alone, Parkland trained more than 120 nurses to be unit-based council chairs and co-chairs, and added a Nurses in Support Roles

Council. The Nursing Research and Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) Council received a \$25,000 annual grant to promote research and EBP projects.

### **Workplace Violence Prevention Grant**

With 70% of the patient population presenting with mental or psychiatric illnesses, workplace violence (WPV) was a growing threat to Parkland nurses. When the health system began its Pathway journey, disruptive behavior among patients had spiked by 69% and physical assaults by 66% – the vast majority impacting nurses. With Pathway’s focus on safety and well-being as its guide, Parkland adopted a proactive approach to combatting this critical issue.

The health system was awarded a \$325,000 from Texas Health and Human Services to strengthen a comprehensive WPV plan that includes education and training, physical and environmental infrastructure enhancements, and a system-wide, community-wide WPV campaign. Funds were used to develop, implement, and evaluate innovative solutions to reduce the severity and frequency of verbal and physical WPV against Parkland nurses.

### **Restoring Nursing Pride**

“Pathway’s focus on a healthy, positive work environment has changed the nursing culture at Parkland and created a robust professional practice environment for all our nurses,” says Joanne Muturi, MHA, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Program Manager of Professional Practice and Nursing Research. “The Pathway to Excellence journey has made us believe in our worth and value as nurses. We are so excited to see where we soar. Our Pathway theme puts it best: ‘We Are Boldly Going Where No One Has Been Before!’”

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### **About Parkland Health & Hospital System**

Parkland Health & Hospital System is one of the largest public hospital systems in the country. Premier services include the Level I Rees-Jones Trauma Center, the only burn center in North Texas verified by the American Burn Association and a Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. The system also includes more than 30 community-based clinics and numerous outreach and education programs. By cultivating its diversity, inclusion and health equity efforts, Parkland enriches the health and wellness of the communities it serves. For more information, visit [www.parklandhospital.com](http://www.parklandhospital.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](http://www.nursecredentialing.org/pathway)

## About ANCC

The mission of the [American Nurses Credentialing Center](https://www.nursingworld.org/ancc) (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](https://www.nursingworld.org/ancc) and follow us on [Twitter](#). ANCC is the only nurse credentialing organization to successfully achieve ISO 9001:2015 certification.