

ANCC Pathway to Excellence[®]: Driving ROI Through Staff Engagement and Quality

Critical Access Hospital Quality Workshop

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What is the Pathway to Excellence Program?

- ANCC designation recognizing positive practice environments where nurses excel
- Focuses on shared decision-making, leadership, safety, well-being, and professional development
- Built for all types of health care organizations—including Critical Access Hospitals



Requirements for Pathway to Excellence Designation

To achieve Pathway to Excellence designation, organizations must:

1. Submit written documentation for each standard. Demonstrate compliance with all 6 Pathway Standards:
 - Shared Decision-Making
 - Leadership
 - Safety
 - Quality
 - Well-Being
 - Professional Development
2. Achieve a minimum 60% nurse participation rate on the Pathway survey. As well as a 75% positivity rating on 26 of 28 survey items.
3. Pass ANCC evaluation of documentation and survey outcomes



To learn more about Pathway to Excellence® please use this link [ANCC Pathway to Excellence® Program](#)

The Results of Our Nurse Survey

Survey Overview:

- Participation Rate: 101 out of 111 nurses participated, resulting in a 90% participation rate.
1. **Overall Agreement:** All 28 survey items had at least a 50% agreement rate.
 2. **High Agreement:** 28 out of 28 items exceeded 75% agreement (minimum of 21).
 3. **Very High Agreement:** 18 of the 28 items scored a 90% agreement rate.
 4. **Extremely High Agreement:** 14 of the 28 items (half the survey) scored a 95% agreement rate.



Pathway to Excellence Designation Achieved

A milestone of Pride, Purpose, and Professionalism



Why Pathway Matters



Empowers frontline
nurses



Drives a culture of
excellence



Aligns with quality
improvement and
safety priorities



Strengthens
recruitment and
retention

Nurse & Staff Involvement is the Engine



Shared governance models promote staff voice in decision-making



Unit-based councils help identify and solve quality issues



Recognition programs boost morale and motivation



Staff feel valued and heard, which improves engagement and accountability

Pathway to Excellence®: Impact on Patient Outcomes

- **Lower Infection Rates**

- Emphasis on evidence-based practice and nurse-driven protocols improves infection control.
- Empowered frontline nurses escalate concerns and implement best practices.
- Shared governance models accelerate integration of updated infection prevention strategies.
- Pathway hospitals have reported reduced rates of CLABSI and CAUTI. *Cited in: Lake et al., 2019; ANCC, 2021*

- **Reduced Readmissions**

- Strong nurse-patient education enhances understanding of discharge instructions.
- Nurses involved in care coordination improve transitions and follow-up.
- Pathway hospitals have shown 10–20% reductions in 30-day readmissions. *Cited in: Kutney-Lee et al.*

- **Higher Patient Satisfaction Scores**

- Positive work environments lead to higher nurse engagement and compassionate care.
- Patients report better communication and responsiveness from nurses.
- Pathway-designated facilities show higher HCAHPS scores in nurse communication domains. *Cited in: Press Ganey, 2018; ANCC, 2021, 2015; ANCC, 2021*

Pathway Model in Action

Daily CHG Treatment Audit

Go to Pt. Level Detail
→

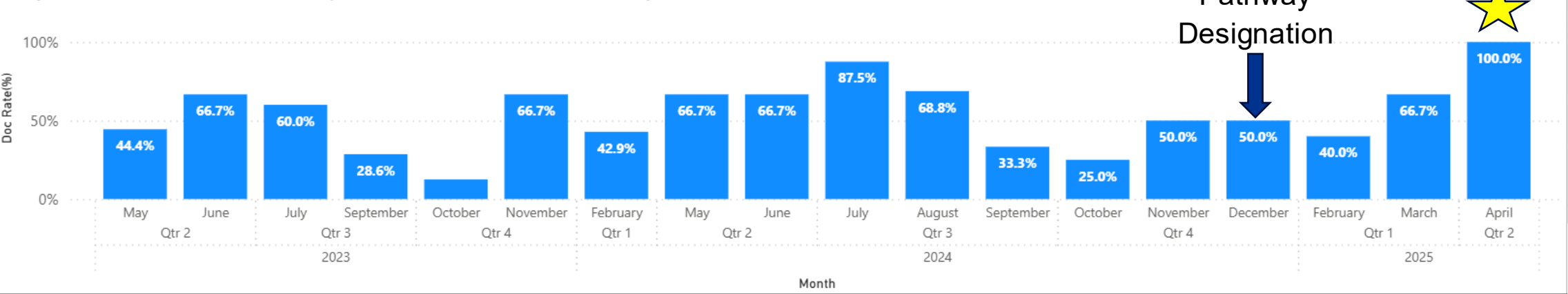
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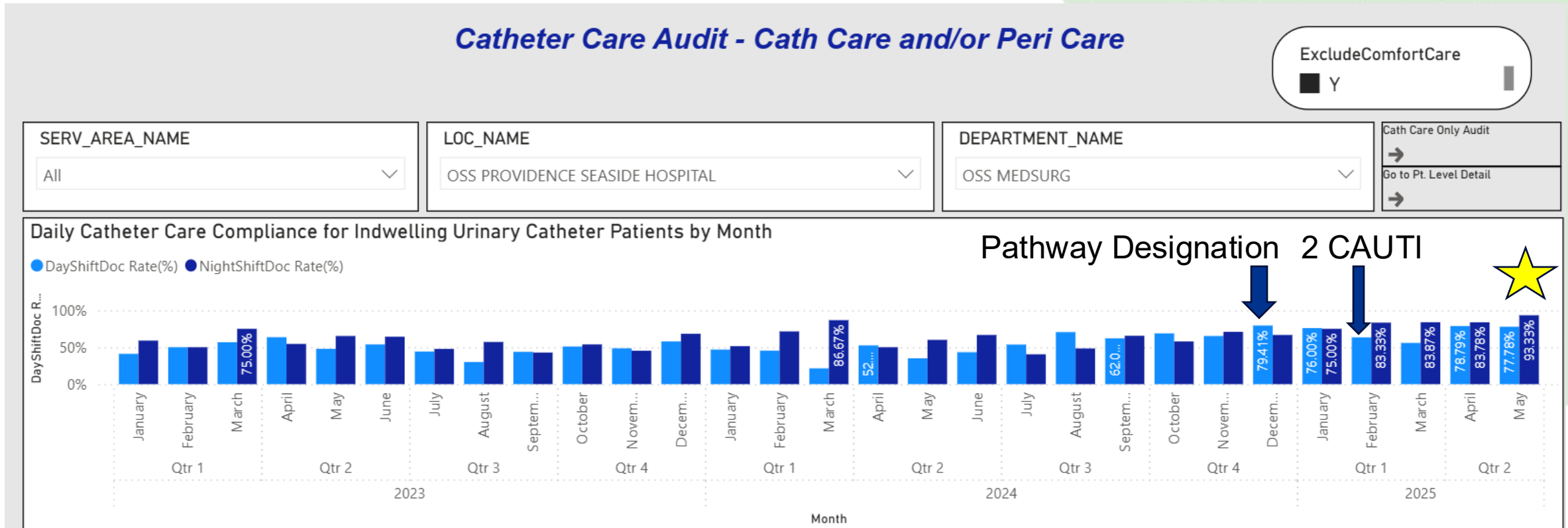
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Daily Chlorhexidine Treatment Compliance for Central Line Patients by Month



In January 2025, the ICU and Med/Surg reported 1 CLABSI and 2 CAUTIs—the first in several years. The nurse manager escalated the concern to the unit-based shared governance group, which identified a compliance gap in CHG bathing. The team created and implemented targeted education in March 2025. As a result, CHG compliance improved significantly, reaching 100% in April 2025.

Pathway Model in Action(CAUTI-Med/Surg)



This data is showing daily catheter care compliance for Med/Surg. The unit-based council did education in March. We are seeing a trend upwards in compliance. Night shift compliance has increased nearly 10% between April and May.

Pathway Model in Action(CAUTI-ICU)

Catheter Care Audit - Cath Care and/or Peri Care

ExcludeComfortCare

☒ Y

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DEPARTMENT_NAME

OSS ICU

Cath Care Only Audit

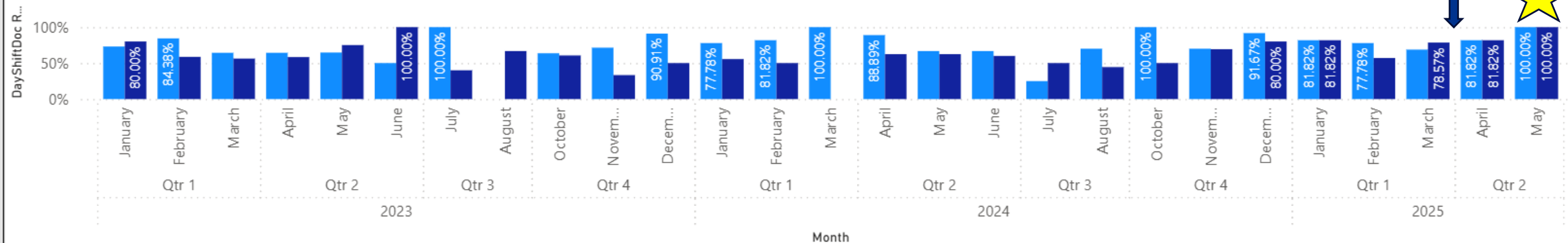


Go to Pt. Level Detail



Daily Catheter Care Compliance for Indwelling Urinary Catheter Patients by Month

DayShiftDoc Rate(%) NightShiftDoc Rate(%)



Education and Training

Data Insights (2023–2025):

- Compliance rates for daily catheter care documentation (Day & Night Shifts) gradually improved.
- A sharp uptick in compliance is visible **post-designation**, aligning with:
 - **Increased staff engagement**
 - **Shared governance empowerment**
 - **Evidence-based practice reinforcement**
- **ROI Impact:**
 - Reduction in catheter-associated infections.
 - Empowerment of frontline teams to drive change.
 - Reinforced culture of accountability and clinical excellence.



Emergency Department Patient Experience Scores

Top Box Score

Overall rating of care

76.27% ▲

— — Score Goal ● High Point ● Low Point

n=59

77.27%

68.44%

59.61%

Oct 2024

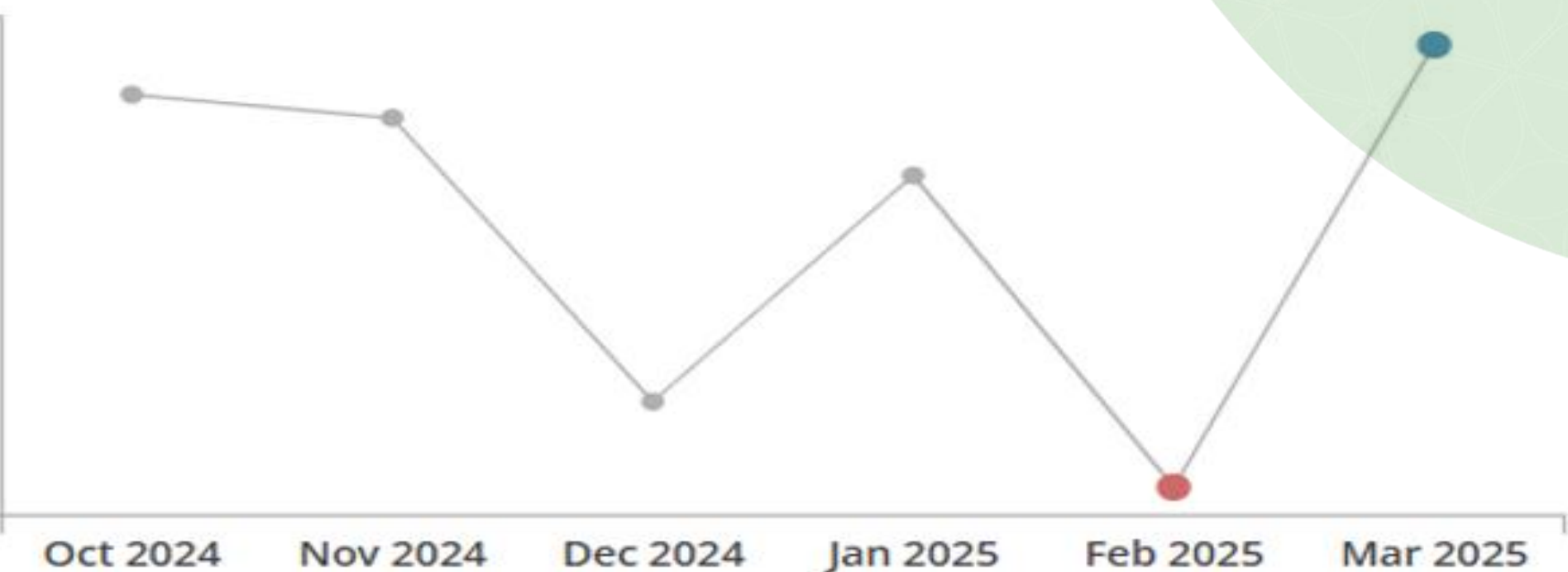
Nov 2024

Dec 2024

Jan 2025

Feb 2025

Mar 2025



Emergency Department – Patient Experience: Overall Rating of Care

- Top Box Score Trend (Oct 2024 – Mar 2025)
- **Performance Overview:**
 - Threshold Goal: 77%
 - March 2025 Score: 76.27% ▲ (Significant rebound)
 - Lowest Point: February 2025 at 59.61% ▼
 - Sample Size: n=59
- **Insights:**
 - Following a dip in patient satisfaction during February 2025, the ED team conducted:
 - Real-time patient rounding
 - Nurse leader check-ins
 - Refresher sessions on communication best practices
 - March data shows rapid recovery, nearing the Top Box goal.
- **Impact of Pathway Principles:**
 - Staff-led solutions and accountability
 - Empowerment through shared governance
 - Focus on patient-centered care culture

“As a bedside nurse, I am beyond proud of our Pathway to Excellence Designation. It is a true testament of the hard work and compassion I see every day from the amazing nurses I work with. To receive this meaningful recognition as a team is invigorating, fueling our drive and reaffirming our shared purpose.”

-Alisha Gregory, BSN, RN

Pathway empowers pride, purpose, and professional unity.



ROI – Quality & Financial Impact

- Reduced nurse turnover: Cost savings from retaining experienced staff
- Improved patient outcomes: Fewer adverse events, infections, and readmissions
- Higher patient satisfaction scores (HCAHPS): Impacts reimbursement
- Better accreditation readiness: Streamlined standards and processes



Critical Access Hospital Benefits

- Maximizes the value of limited resources through empowered staff
- Fosters community trust with improved patient experience
- Builds sustainable quality improvement without needing high-cost interventions



Call to Action



Begin by building a culture where nurses lead the way



Use the Pathway standards as a blueprint for quality and engagement



Celebrate small wins—and build from there

Thank you !

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References

- Lake, E. T., et al. (2019). A Meta-Analysis of the Associations Between the Nurse Work Environment in Hospitals and 4 Sets of Outcomes. Medical Care.
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