



Leading from the Bedside

CASE STUDY OF COMPREHENSIVE NURSING ASSESSMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Discover how a regional health system achieved dramatic gains in scores for Nursing Engagement, HCAHPS and Quality of Care in just two years.



The client organization is the largest healthcare provider in its region of the northeastern United States, serving the area's eight counties with state-of-the-art technology and comprehensive healthcare services. More than one million sick or injured patients choose their facilities annually, including a flagship major teaching hospital, a state of the art vascular institute, two community hospitals and a children's hospital. The system also provides services through two long-term care facilities, over 80 outpatient clinics, home health care and residency training programs.

The System CEO replaced a legacy leader in 2014 and thoughtfully changed most of the corporate leadership team and addressed a variety of challenging financial issues. But by January 2016 it became clear that Nursing was one of the most pressing areas requiring change. The new CEO was, and continues to be, committed to “leading from the bedside” and delivering the highest quality patient care. To do that, he knew strong Nursing leadership is essential and that had been lacking for several years.

Between 2009 and early 2016, there were 11 different CNOs at three acute care hospitals and as of January 2016 there was only one permanent CNO who had been in the role for less than a year. There was also significant dissatisfaction, distrust and turnover at the Director and Nurse Manager levels. All of this led to unrest and low engagement among the nursing staff. Nurses were most dissatisfied with staffing levels and **over 600 nurses had signed cards stating they believed staffing was unsafe and medical staff were joining them in that concern.** Some of the specific metrics that defined the Nursing issues at the end of 2015 were:

- Nursing hours per patient day were 10 – 35% below NDNQI, Labor Management Institute and Premier benchmarks.
- HCAHPS scores were all significantly below target and many nursing related scores were below the 20th percentile, particularly in communication with nurses and staff responsiveness.

- Press Ganey RN Staff Engagement scores were the lowest of any hospital in the area and well below national averages.
- CMS Dec. 2014 publicly available data showed a potential \$3.8M penalty in 2018 on the four VBP Domains.
- All Patient Experience and Safety Outcomes domains were below the CMS threshold and several safety outcomes fell below the Hospital Baseline (CLABSI, Colon SSI and Abdominal Hysterectomy SSI)

While the health system was beginning to turn the corner on financial challenges and see growth, they still needed to be very judicious in the allocation of resources. They were poised for expansion of their network but **the senior leadership team knew that success depended on “leading from the bedside” and placing the utmost emphasis on ensuring the quality of patient care.**



THE APPROACH

In March 2016, the health system engaged Kirby Bates Associates, LLC to conduct a comprehensive assessment of Nursing Services focused on the quality of patient care and the potential contributors to low quality. The comprehensive evaluation included:

- Span of Control Study
- AONE Leadership Competencies
- Nurse Engagement Scores
- Best practices for Nursing Organizational Structure

The Nursing Assessment findings and recommendations were presented to the executive leadership team in June 2016. The assessment was well received, and hospital leadership asked the Kirby Bates team to develop the implementation plan and change strategy that resulted in major improvements in the quality of care and staff engagement across the organization. Key steps in the hospital's deliberate and methodical action plan are described on the right.



The goal was clear: operationalize *"leading from the bedside"* by improving staff engagement and strengthening nursing leadership, thereby enhancing the quality of care.

INTO ACTION

1. **The first and most important step** in transforming Nursing was the CEO's appointment of a strong Executive Vice President and Chief Nursing Executive. By making this a top level corporate position, the CEO confirmed his commitment to *"leading from the bedside"*. It also laid the foundation and provided the leadership required for the transformation.
2. **The second critical step** was the development and implementation of a detailed two-year implementation plan covering all the Nursing Assessment recommendations, which was followed meticulously by the CNE.
3. The appointment of new Nursing leaders across the organization:
 - CNO's at each of the hospitals.
 - System-wide Director of Nursing Education and Professional Practice Director of Women and Children's Services
4. Addition of 35 FTEs of Nurse Manager/Assistant NM coverage as indicated by analysis of the Span of Control study.
5. The **implementation of a Nurse Manager Council**, which the CNE believes was one of the most important aspects of the transformation. Nurse Managers across the system meet every other month for information sharing, team building, project work and continuing education.
6. The implementation of 24/7 staffing support.
7. Enhancements in the quality program, which ultimately led to the appointment of a Chief Quality and Patient Safety Officer at each hospital.
8. The appointment of a Senior Advisor for Nursing Finance with a dual reporting relationship to Finance and Nursing.

TRANSFORMATION

In June of 2017, Kirby Bates consultants conducted a one-year follow-up visit to the health system and met with all levels of nursing staff and other leaders across the organization. The difference in the enthusiasm among nursing leaders, particularly the Nurse Manager group, was dramatic and palpable. Several of the Nurse Managers who had been promoted from within had said just one year prior that they would never consider a nursing leadership role, despite holding a Master's degree. They were not willing to leave the security of union positions in an organization with a "revolving door" among leaders.

In just one year they were transformed and excited to share all the new programs that were being implemented to increase both quality of care and staff engagement.

The CNE reflected this success as she introduced their first Nursing Annual Report titled *Nurses Leading with Care: Nursing Report 2017*:



THE RESULTS

1. The development of a Nursing Strategic Plan
2. Stroke team nurses helped to achieve Comprehensive Stroke Center Certification
3. The nursing team at the children's hospital played a key role in successfully planning and then moving into an entirely new state-of-the-art hospital.
4. RN Turnover and Nursing Engagement improved significantly between 2016 and 2017 in all three domains, organization, employee, and manager. Highlights of the 2017 survey include:

NURSING ENGAGEMENT SCORES IMPROVED DRAMATICALLY

1,612
SURVEY
RESPONSE RATE
Grew to a high

2.91 → 3.15
DECISION MAKING
INVOLVEMENT
Felt by nursing professionals

3.77 → 3.90
ENGAGEMENT
SCORES
Overall (1-5 Scale)

68%
RN VOLUNTARY
TURNOVER
IMPROVEMENT

33% → 59%
CLIMATE OF
TRUST

36% → 51%
RECOGNITION
FOR DOING A
GOOD JOB

“ *I am so proud to lead the most talented and dedicated nurses. You capture the passion and emotion of our profession. (Our CEO) set the organizational model for (our organization), 'Leading from the bedside,' and nurses across our many sites of care have taken on that leadership role. You are leading and developing changes in practice. You are impacting infection prevention and other safety initiatives. You are embracing evidence-based practices and sharing this knowledge with novice nurses joining our team.”*

EVP and Chief Nursing Executive of the Health System



NDNQI SCORES INCREASED

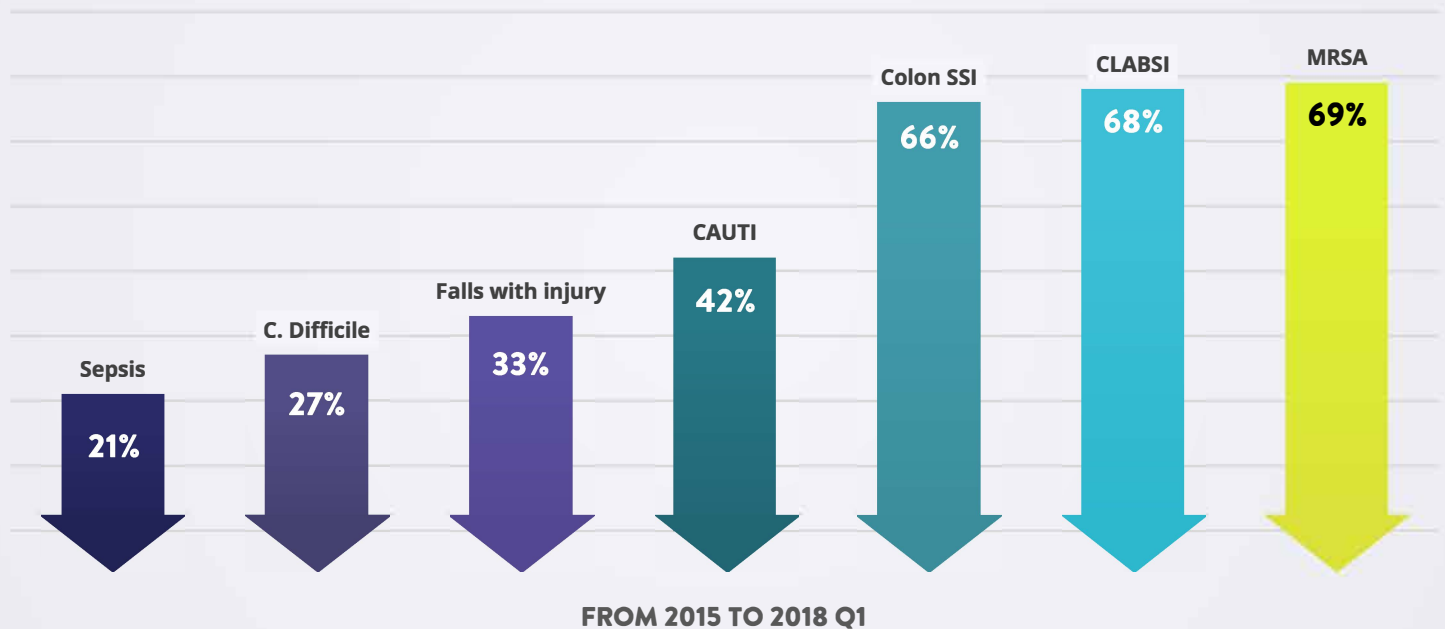
10th → 50th
PERCENTILE

WITHIN 18 MONTHS

“Nurses are the backbone of healthcare, impacting a patient’s experience from start to finish. We are fortunate to have nurses – some 3,000 strong – who not only have the highest degree of knowledge, skill and patient focus, but the most compassion as well. As our great physicians will tell you, a culture of excellence starts at the bedside and is led by nursing. We simply could not do it without them.”

President & CEO of the Health System

IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY OF CARE SCORES



“The Client has made major investments in Nursing based on their strong belief in “leading from the bedside” and providing the highest quality patient care. Given all the competing demands for financial resources and the compelling need to invest in growing the system, this was not an easy decision, but it was clearly the right one and it paid off. They have achieved significant reductions in voluntary turnover and dramatic increases in quality scores.”



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KIRBY BATES ASSOCIATES

Kirby Bates Associates, LLC, drives healthcare organizations to achieve high quality, cost-effective patient care through a comprehensive platform of proven services, including Executive Search, Interim Leadership, Leadership Coaching and Operations and Financial Consulting.

We build long term relationships with clients and candidates to understand their unique culture and goals. These insights guide us to present effective solutions and achieve sustainable outcomes for our clients' executive, operational and clinical leadership teams.

As former CNOs and COOs, we know firsthand the challenges facing healthcare leaders today, so we take a personal interest in solving our clients' challenges. We share your commitment to improve the delivery of patient care and the lives of everyone we touch.

Discover how we help our clients meet their leadership needs and achieve sustainable results.