



**UAMS Magnet  
Champion  
Overview Guide**

**NOTE: The information in this toolkit is framed from a nursing excellence perspective, utilizing the American Nurses Credentialing Center Magnet Designation manual as a reference.**

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## Nursing Excellence

The Oxford dictionary describes Excellence as “the quality of being outstanding or extremely good.” Excellence is very different from perfection, which can be thought of as a state of being without mistake, flaw, or fault. Excellence is a state of maximizing performance to reach or exceed goals. It requires knowledge, skill, focus, commitment, and desire. In the ever-changing and complex environment of healthcare, excellence is a constant pursuit – following a path that never ends, a journey for which there is no final destination. Terry Orlick, author of, *In Pursuit of Excellence*, describes what is at the heart of excellence: “Discovering an activity, mission, possibility, or opportunity that absorbs you, frees you, challenges you, or gives you a sense of meaning, purpose, joy, or passion.” Nothing could better describe the profession of Nursing.

As nurses, we are on a constant mission to achieve excellence. We seek to attain the knowledge and skill to care for patients. We consistently look for ways to advance our delivery of care to improve outcomes for our patients. We practice to the full extent of our scope to meet the goals of high-quality patient care. It takes a daily (and maybe even hourly) commitment to show up and face the challenges of healthcare head on. This is Nursing Excellence.

Magnet® designation is the highest recognition of nursing excellence. It is a prestigious credential awarded by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) to healthcare organizations committed to supporting the profession of nursing as evidenced by highly engaged nursing staff, improved patient outcomes and increased patient satisfaction. Magnet provides a framework for promoting nursing excellence in an organization. What follows is a description of the Magnet framework and the corresponding UAMS components, in order to prepare to the Magnet Site Visit in 2024.

Thank you for engaging in nursing excellence.



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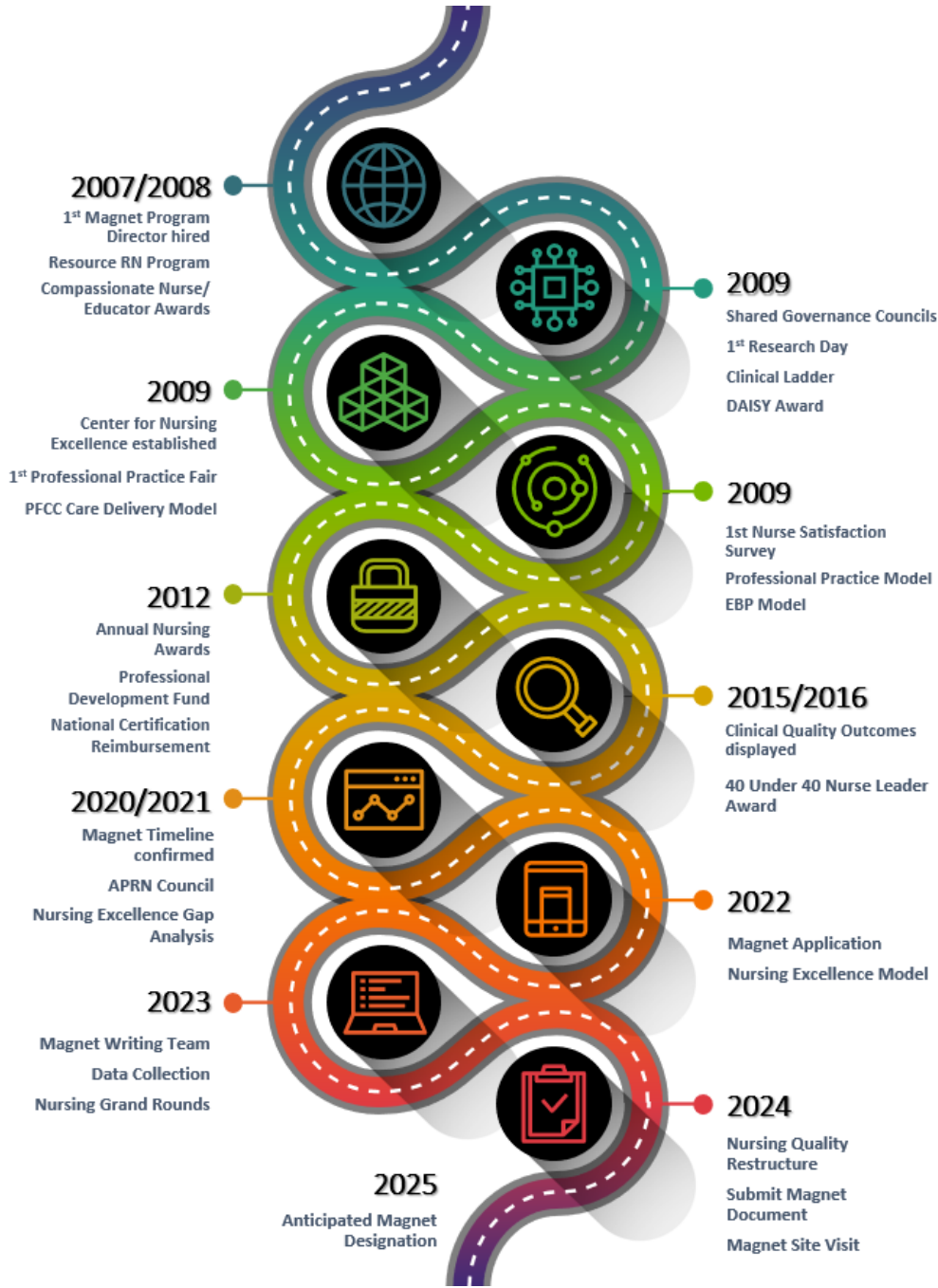
UAMS.edu | UAMSHHealth.com

<https://uamshealth.com/nurses/>

# UAMS Journey to Nursing Excellence

UAMS hired its first Magnet Program Director in 2007. Since that time, years of foundational work has been completed to prepare UAMS to achieve Magnet Designation by integrating Magnet framework principles through implementation of the core components of nursing excellence – things like shared governance, quality structures, interprofessional partnerships, and a care-delivery model.

## Timeline to Excellence



# Center for Nursing Excellence

The Center for Nursing Excellence was established in 2009 to centralize the programs that support UAMS Nurses. Visit [Nurses.UAMS.edu](https://nurses.uams.edu) for more information.

## Philosophy

The nursing profession is the backbone of healthcare. Nurses need support in care of self, care of profession, and care of patients. The Center for Nursing Excellence exists to support the nurse's practice. Care of the nursing professional leads to increased nurse engagement, satisfaction, development, and improved patient outcomes.

## Mission

The Center for Nursing Excellence is committed to building a culture of excellence, supporting the nursing professional with continuing education, professional development, career advancement, and recognition.

## Vision

Through support of the Center for Nursing Excellence, UAMS will be recognized as the best place to practice nursing, having the most educated and advanced nursing staff, and generating the best patient outcomes in Arkansas.

## Programs and Activities

### Culture of Excellence

- Model of Nursing Excellence
- Magnet Program

### Education

- Transition to Practice
- Clinical Education
- Continuing Education

### Practice

- Professional Practice Model
- Care Delivery Model
- Scope
- Policies
- Informatics

### Professional Development

- Clinical Ladder
- RNIV/V Program
- National Certification

### Shared Governance

- NQUEST Councils
- Unit Based Councils

### Communication

- Staff Meeting Content

- Nursing Newsletter

### Recognition

- Daisy/Bee
- Outstanding Area of the Month
- Annual Professional Nursing Awards
- Mary Helen Forrest Legacy Award
- Helen May Compassion Award
- Nurse Remembrance Program

### EBP/QI/Research

- Culture of Inquiry - INQUIRE
- Resource RN Program
- Quality Improvement Initiatives
- Evidence Based Practice Model and Projects
- Research and Innovation

### Nurse Recruitment

- Retention
- Recognition opportunities
- Recruitment
- UAMS Nurses Facebook page

# Annual Report

[UAMS Nursing Annual Reports](#)



## Nursing Excellence Leadership



Tammy Jones, PhD

Chief Nursing  
Officer



Rebekah Thacker,  
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Director of  
Nursing Research  
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# UAMS Nursing Excellence Framework

## UAMS Nursing Values

In August 2020, the inpatient and ambulatory councils engaged in an activity to define the nursing values at UAMS. Nursing completed a survey asking them for their top 3 values as a nurse. These survey results were loaded into a program that creates a word cloud. The larger and darker the word in the word cloud, the more times the word was submitted as a response. This activity resulted in the following values of UAMS Nursing:

- Professionalism – communication, teamwork, ethics, reliability, appearance, accountability
- Knowledge – competence, critical thinking, education, skills, expertise, inquiry
- Compassion – action, care, altruism, humanity, support
- Empathy – connection, understanding, listening, insight, validation, awareness, feelings





## UAMS Model of Nursing Excellence

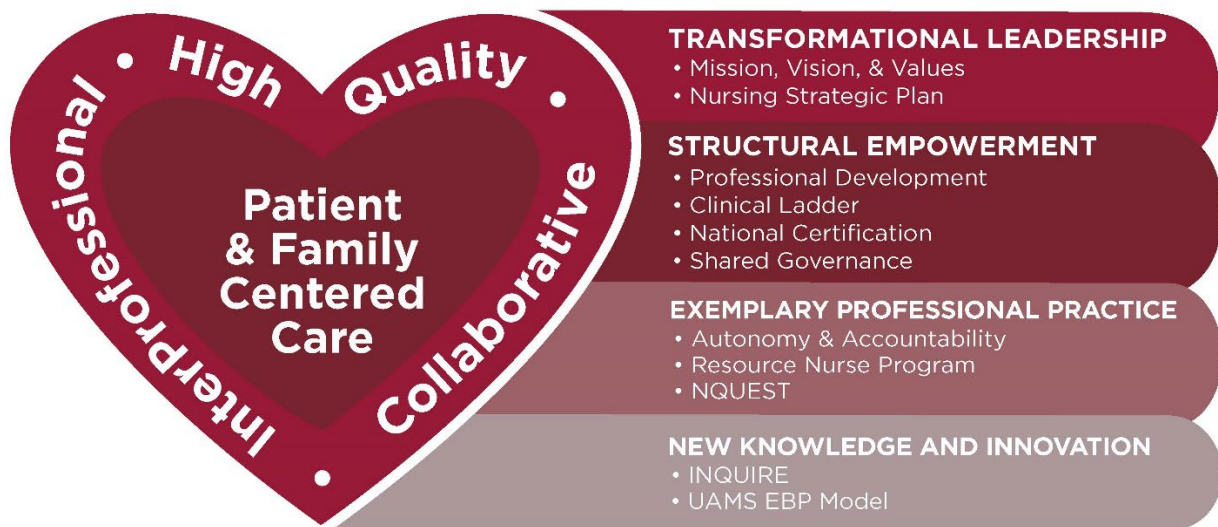
The UAMS Nursing Excellence Model is made of 4 components: Engage, Elevate, Enhance, and Excel. At UAMS, nurses embody excellence through activities in each of these domains.

- Engage – get involved in unit-based activities, organizational initiatives and community boards
- Elevate – advance the practice of nursing and the outcomes of patients
- Enhance – improve processes
- Excel – exceed expectations



## Professional Practice Model

The UAMS Nursing Professional Practice Model (PPM) illustrates how nurses practice, collaborate, communicate and professionally develop while keeping patients and families at the center of their work to carry out the mission of UAMS Nursing. The PPM includes our care-delivery model (interprofessional, high-quality, collaborative, patient & family centered care), our mission, and programs supporting Magnet domains.



### The Mission of UAMS Nursing

is to deliver safe, high quality, patient-family centered care through interprofessional relationships, supported by a structure of Nursing Excellence.

## Shared Governance Structure

The UAMS nursing shared decision-making structure is based on Tim Porter O'Grady's model of shared governance, and it embodies partnership, equity, accountability and ownership. Committees, councils and task forces are developed at the organizational and service line levels, peer and specialty population levels, and local unit/clinic levels. UAMS values decentralized decision-making, engaging stakeholders and improving communication to all nurses across the organization to improve nursing practice and the patient experience. Each council structure represents, where appropriate, nurses from all practice and leadership levels, all units or divisions of units, and associated colleagues from other disciplines or departments.

Unit-based and Service Line shared decision-making groups:

- Unit/Service Line Based Councils
- Quality and Safety Unit Based Committees

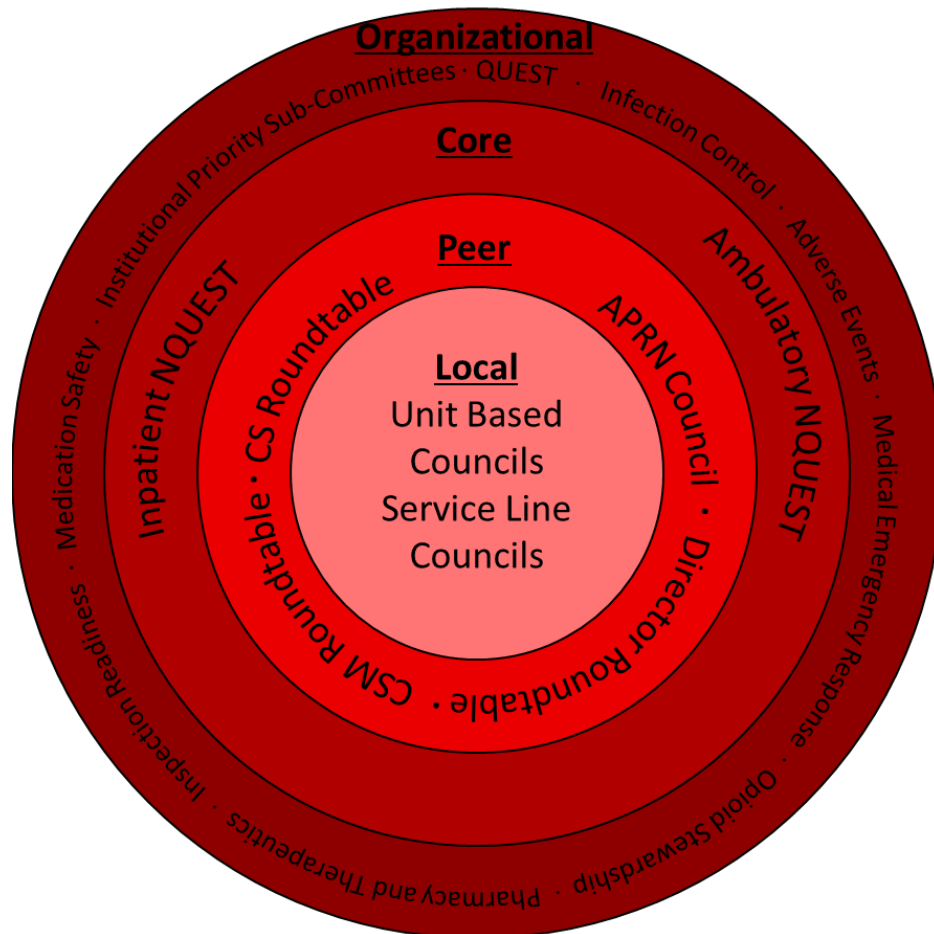
## Centralized Core Nursing Councils

- Inpatient Nursing Quality Excellence Experience Safety (NQUEST)
- Ambulatory NQUEST

## Peer-level shared decision-making groups:

- Advanced Practice Provider Council – Members include APRNs, CRNAs, CNMs, NPs and Pas.
- Clinical Services Manager Roundtable – Members include clinical services managers (CSM) and assistant CSMs from inpatient and ambulatory areas.
- Clinical Specialist Roundtable – Members include clinical specialists from inpatient and ambulatory areas.
- Nursing Directors Roundtable – Members include program and clinical nursing directors and assistant directors.

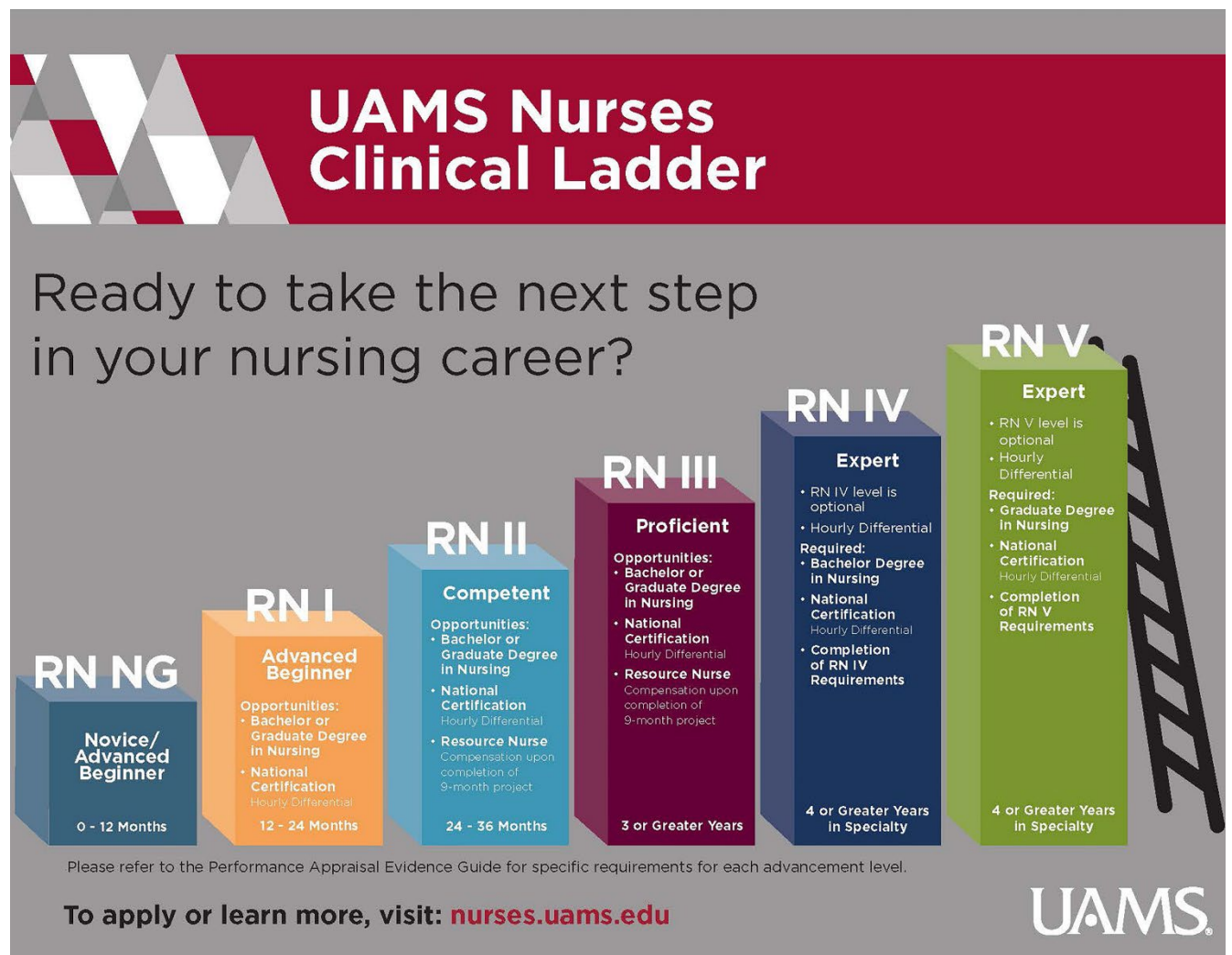
Nurses are also integrated into the organization-level committees.



## RN Clinical Ladder

The UAMS Nurses Clinical Ladder provides a framework for the nurse on a professional journey. This program describes the roles and competency expectations within each practice level (i.e., RN NG (New Grad), RN I, RN II, RN III, RN IV and RN V). Upon hire, all UAMS nurses are placed on the clinical ladder based on years of experience, achievement of skills, and competencies. The basis for progression of the clinical and leadership expectations in the performance appraisal documents are based upon “Benner’s Model” which delineates the nurse’s career path from novice to expert.

While every UAMS Health RN will be expected to attain and maintain the RN III level of proficient practice, progression beyond that level is optional. This voluntary progression allows each RN to determine whether the promotion to RN IV (requiring a BSN degree) or RN V (requiring a Graduate Degree) is right for their own work-life balance and professional development goals.



## Culture of Inquiry

**INQUIRE** is a model designed to support a culture of inquiry for nurses to critically evaluate nursing care and practices. **INQUIRE** provides the information needed for nurses to investigate clinical questions, evaluate current practices, and innovate new solutions. The Center for Nursing Excellence provides guidance, consultation, and forms to support nursing inquiry.



I am responsible for promoting and engaging in a Culture of Inquiry to advance the profession of nursing and the outcomes of patients.



INNOVATION

### **INNOVATE**

Creation of new theories, practices, tools, or equipment to meet the needs of patients and nursing.



QUALITY  
IMPROVEMENT

### **QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

Improvement in current, sound practices and models to promote safety, reduce inefficiencies and create better outcomes for patients.



RESEARCH

### **RESEARCH**

Continually remaining in the forefront of advancing nursing practice through evaluating and developing new knowledge of nursing interventions in the prevention or treatment of disease with well-designed nursing research studies.



EVIDENCE BASED  
PRACTICE

### **EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE**

Systematically reviewing and critically appraising the literature and implementing new practice when indicated.

**UAMS**



## Professional Development

Key components within a culture of Nursing Excellence are the programs that support lifelong learning through continuing education, achieving certification, and advancing. We have an organizational and unit/clinic level goals to increase the number of certified nurses and baccalaureate prepared nurses 1% per year.

### National Certification

UAMS supports nursing in achievement of national certification through certification fee reimbursement, paid time to sit for examination, and paid time for activities to maintain certification. UAMS also recognizes the achievement of national certification with a pay differential of \$0.75/hr.

Nurses are eligible to sit for most nursing certification exams after 2 years of experience and successfully achieve national certification by participating in review courses, self-study programs, and reading core review books. Most certifications must be renewed every 3-5 years with proof of current, unencumbered nursing license, practice hours, and a specified number of CEUs. As an additional bonus, in Arkansas, your indication of national certification is all you need to renew your state nursing license.

### Advancing Education

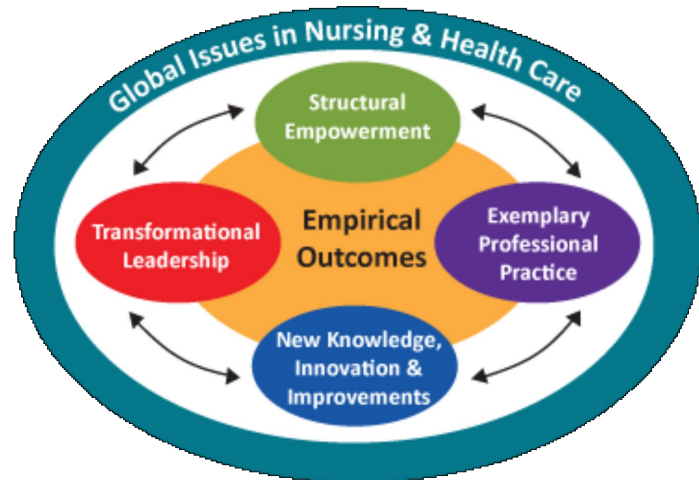
UAMS employees receive 50% tuition discount for baccalaureate programs in any University of Arkansas systems school. University of Arkansas at Little Rock has an RN-BSN program that is completely online and can be completed in 12 or 18 months. After successful completion, RNs receive \$1/hr increase in pay.



# Magnet Organization Essential Elements

There are 5 Essential Elements Which Define a Magnet Organization

- Transformational Leadership
- Structural Empowerment
- Exemplary Professional Practice
- New Knowledge, Innovations & Improvements
- Empirical Outcomes



## Transformational Leadership

The Transformational Leader leads people to where they need to be to meet the demands of the future. Leaders create a vision for the future and the environment necessary to achieve that vision.

### Qualities of Transformational Nursing Leaders

- Provide a vision to evolve the organization to meet current and anticipated needs and strategic priorities
- Advocate for resources to support staff in delivering high quality, patient care
- Value direct care nurse input and involvement in setting goals and making decisions
- Visible and accessible to staff
- Effective, multi-directional communicator
- Advocate for ongoing leadership development for all nurses, with a focus on mentoring and succession planning

## Structural Empowerment

Structural empowerment creates an innovative environment where professional practice thrives and leads to positive outcomes.

### Organizational Structure

- Unit/clinic-based decision making prevails (shared governance)
- Strong nursing representation on organization-wide committees and at all levels of decision-making

### Community and the Healthcare Organization

- The organization promotes and develops strong partnerships with community organizations to improve patient outcomes and advance the health of the communities we serve

## **Image of Nursing**

- Nurses are viewed as essential members of the healthcare team
- Nurses are recognized for their contributions in addressing the strategic priorities of the organization

## **Professional Development**

- Significant emphasis is placed on supporting nurses during their transition to practice (orientation), continuing education, obtaining professional nursing certification, and other career development activities
- Nurses are supported in participating in local, regional, national, or international professional organizations

## **Exemplary Professional Practice**

Exemplary professional practice in nursing entails a comprehensive understanding of the role of nursing and what the professional practice can achieve.

## **Professional Models of Care**

- Nurses have shared authority and are accountable for their evidence-based nursing practice
- Nurses are the coordinators of the care patients receive

## **Consultation and Resources**

- Knowledgeable experts are available for peer support and consultation, both inside and outside nursing

## **Autonomy**

- Nurses use independent judgment within the context of a multidisciplinary approach to patient care and within the context of the Arkansas State Nurse Practice Act

## **Nurses as Teachers**

- Nurses are supported and expected to incorporate teaching into all aspects of their practice

## **Interdisciplinary Relationships**

- Interdisciplinary relationships are positive with mutual respect
- Conflicts are managed constructively

## **Workplace Advocacy**

- Nurses are empowered to identify and bring forth concerns
- Attention is given to achieving equity of care and equity in the workplace environment



## New Knowledge, Innovations & Improvements

This component includes new models of care, application of existing or new evidence, and visible contributions to the science of nursing as a part of the professional responsibility to contribute to patient care, the organization, and the profession.

### Research

- Nurses receive education about evidence-based practice and research
- Nurses conduct, disseminate, and systematically evaluate research

### Nurses as Innovators

- Innovations in patient care, nursing, and the practice environment are supported and encouraged

### Technology and Workflow Improvement

- Nurses are involved with the design and implementation of technology
- Nurses design and implement work-flow improvements and space design

## Empirical Outcomes

Magnet organizations are uniquely positioned to be pioneers and demonstrate innovative solutions related to nursing and demonstrate measurable outcomes.

### Quality of Care

- High quality patient care is a priority
- Staff nurses are involved in all aspects of safety, quality monitoring and quality improvement
- Nurses analyze data and use national benchmarks to gain a comparative perspective about their performance and the care patients receive

# Benefits for Magnet Organizations

## Nurses

Magnet is a sign of the enculturation of nursing involvement and engagement in initiatives within the organization and the Magnet framework provides the structure to support nurses to collaborate in decisions that affect nursing practice and patient care, from direct care staff to the Chief Nursing Officer.

Nurses who work in Magnet organizations experience:

- Decreased nurse burnout
- Increased nurse job satisfaction
- Decreased nurse turnover

## Healthcare Partners

High-quality care and improved patient outcomes cannot be achieved without partners in care. This is obviously our physician partners, but includes Physical Therapy, Respiratory Therapy, Nutrition, Pharmacy, Laboratory, and all other allied health professionals who impact the care of the patient. Magnet organizations have to demonstrate evidence that nurses are collaborating with interprofessional teams in 10 of the required examples. Interprofessional relationships is also a category included in the RN Engagement Survey and Magnet organizations have a solid foundation to make sure these interprofessional relationships are effective and positive

## Patients

Magnet organizations have demonstrated improved patient outcome including, but not limited to:

- Lower mortality rates
- Lower patient fall rates
- Lower CLABSIs
- Lower HAPIs
- Lower HAIs

Magnet organizations must also demonstrate improved patient experience scores. There are 19 required examples related to improving quality outcomes for patients and 2 required examples about collaborating with patients and families on initiatives.

## UAMS

The UAMS Vision 2029 Strategic Plan states: “By 2029, UAMS will lead Arkansas to be the healthiest state in the region through its synergies of education, clinical care, research and purposeful leadership”

Magnet Designation supports the strategic plan by providing a framework designed to drive high-quality care, better patient experience and highly engaged staff and contributes to the following outcomes in the UAMS Strategic Plan:

- S3. Improve health care quality and patient experience at a lower cost
- C1. Attain national recognition for excellence in clinical care
- T1. Recruit, develop, and retain a skilled, motivated and engaged workforce

## Other Benefits to UAMS

### **America’s Best Hospitals – US News & World Report**

- Factors Magnet designation into Best Hospitals rankings
- Magnet designation contributes to the total score for quality of inpatient care

### **Leapfrog**

- Hospital ratings include Magnet status

- Organizations with Magnet designation automatically earn full credit for Safe Practice #9 Nursing Workforce (used to score hospital's commitment to staffing highly trained nurses and nurse leaders)

### **The Joint Commission (TJC)**

- Recognizes and endorses the Magnet Program
- Values the impact Magnet has in creating workplace culture and nursing practices that support patient safety and high-quality care
- Having Magnet status prepares nurses for TJC visits, policies and procedures are current and evidence-based, and QI projects are staff-nurse driven

### **How Magnet Organizations Rank**

- 22 of the 23 hospitals on U.S. News & World Report's 2023-2024 Best Hospitals Honor Roll are Magnet designated