Bristol Hospital Achieves ANCC Magnet Recognition

Bristol Hospital The Only Facility In Hartford County To Receive Prestigious National Award

BRISTOL, Conn.—Bristol Hospital has achieved Magnet® recognition by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's (ANCC) Magnet Recognition Program®, which ensures that rigorous standards for nursing excellence are met.

The announcement of the award took place Tuesday morning at Bristol Hospital when Donna Havens, PhD, RN, FAAN, chair of the Commission for the Magnet Recognition Program®, spoke via a conference call at an event that was attended by hospital leadership as well as dozens of employees, board members and local officials. Havens’ announcement was greeted by exuberant cheering and applause by all those in attendance.

"This is one of the most significant recognitions in the 94 year history of Bristol Hospital," said Kurt A. Barwis, FACHE, president and CEO of Bristol Hospital and Health Care Group Inc. “Achieving Magnet status is proof of our relentless pursuit of excellence in nursing and all areas of the hospital. The ANCC model is well-aligned with our culture and value-based leadership principles, so we knew that this accomplishment was well within our reach."

Magnet is the highest recognition an organization can receive for nursing care as established by the ANCC, a division of the American Nurses Association. This award recognizes health care organizations that provide the very best in nursing care and uphold the tradition of professional nursing practice.

Currently, Bristol Hospital is the only hospital in Hartford County to hold Magnet recognition and is only one of four Magnet hospitals in Connecticut. About 7 percent of the nation’s hospitals have met the criteria to earn this prestigious designation for providing the highest quality patient care, teamwork, professionalism and innovation in nursing practice.

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Sheila Kempf, RN, PhD, senior vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer, led the Magnet journey following the decision of the Bristol Hospital Board of Directors and its Quality Committee to pursue the Magnet designation about three years ago.

“We are extremely grateful for the Board of Directors for their support in pursuing this lofty goal,” Kempf said. “Their support was a vital first step in this journey.”

Kempf added that the early phase of the process included a gap assessment and organizational cultural alignment with the Magnet organizational standards which include improving quality outcomes and the patient experience, reinforcing a positive environment with effective collaboration, recognition of the values of nurses, driving recruitment and retention of staff, and attracting high quality physicians.

An 800-plus page document submitted to the ANCC showed evidence of Bristol Hospital meeting the organization’s high standards. ANCC Magnet appraisers then conducted a three-day site visit earlier this spring, and the final step was a review by a panel of Magnet commissioners before a decision was made.

“The Bristol Hospital Nursing Department’s shared governance model—which includes the Nursing Executive Council, the Professional Practice Council and the Unit-Based Practice Councils—also played a key role in making the Magnet designation a reality,” Kempf said.

Kurt Barwis said that the Magnet status designation is granted for four years and that Bristol Hospital is required to maintain the strict criteria of the award which includes high-quality care, strong nursing leadership and high levels of job satisfaction.

“An accomplishment of this magnitude truly takes the dedication of everyone within our organization,” he said. “It takes an ‘extraordinary’ amount of effort by team members at all levels to reach and maintain Magnet designation.”

-30-