

2021 Pathway Nurse of the Year Award™ winners

By Maggie McCright, MSN, RN, NE-BC, and Maricon Dans, MSN, RN, NE-BC

When organizations recognize their employees for their contributions, it sends a powerful message that they're valued, a key component of a positive work environment. Meaningful recognition involves an organization recognizing an individual for a specific behavior.¹ Recognition comes in many forms and is intentional and aligned with the Pathway to Excellence® framework. (See *Figure 1*.)

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) is proud to announce the recipients of the 2021 Pathway Nurse of the Year Award.™ These awards recognize the outstanding contributions of one direct care nurse and one nurse leader globally from a Pathway organization, who positively impacts the practice environment and exemplifies at least two of the Pathway Standards by demonstrating remarkable skills in working collaboratively with team members and integrating clinical expertise with compassionate patient interactions. This year's recipients were recognized during the 2021 ANCC National Magnet Conference® and the ANCC Pathway to Excellence Conference® in Atlanta, Ga., on November 12, 2021.

A culture of excellence

The ANCC's Pathway to Excellence program recognizes organizations that create positive practice environments and a sustained

culture of excellence where nurses excel. To achieve the credential, organizations must demonstrate the integration of critical components essential to a positive practice environment as defined under six Pathway Standards: shared decision-making, leadership, safety, quality, well-being, and professional development.



Pathway organizations have an established shared governance structure as the foundation for involving direct care nurses in decision-making. Leadership fosters collaboration among staff and supports a shared governance environment. Pathway organizations protect the safety and well-being of nurses, staff, and patients through safety policies and processes. Quality initiatives are evidence-based, focused on improving patient outcomes, and developed through interprofessional collaboration. Work-life effectiveness is a core component, and staff are actively involved in planning, selecting, and evaluating

initiatives that promote a work-life balance. The importance of life-long learning, ongoing education, and professional development activities is valued and recognized.

Pathway Nurse of the Year (direct care nurse)



Joell Tadlock, BSN, RN, CCRN, an RN V on the CCU at the four-time Pathway-designated Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital in Ste-

phenville, Tex., is the direct care nurse winner of the 2021 Pathway Nurse of the Year Award. Tadlock consistently demonstrates competency, leadership, and a desire for professional advancement, all components rooted in the Pathway Standards. She integrates clinical expertise and compassion, "nursing out loud" so her patients always know what's happening to them and why. Tadlock is an epitome of a highly engaged Pathway nurse who lives the Pathway framework every day.

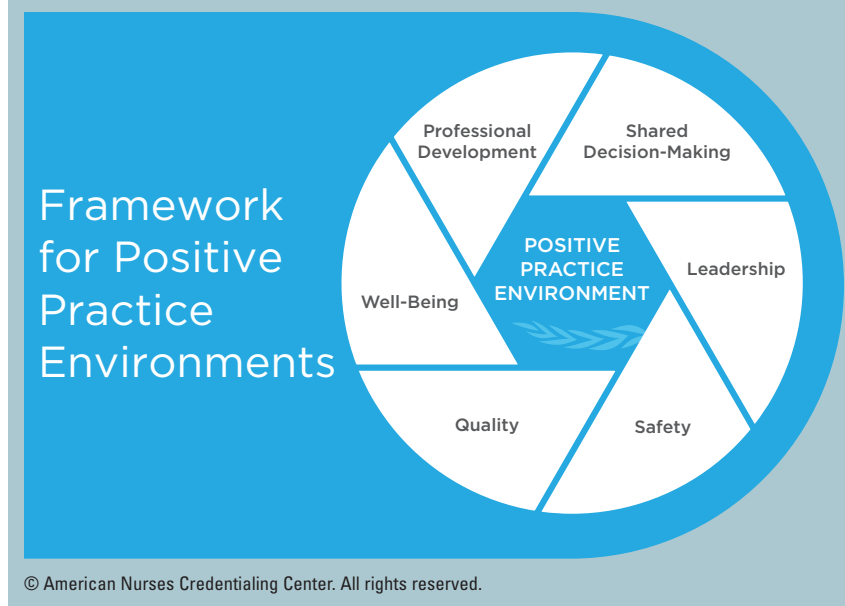
Tadlock was nominated by Kerry Parkinson, JD, MHA, BSN, RN, and endorsed by Cynthia McCarthy, DNP, MBA, MHA, RN, CEN, NEA-BC, CNO at Texas Health Harris Methodist Stephenville.

"Joell is a consummate nurse who lives the Pathway to Excellence Standards in every way," McCarthy said. "She's a dedicated, well-respected, and thoughtful resource at our hospital and throughout our community."

Tadlock was nominated for her exemplary contributions and commitment to shared decision-making and the organization's shared governance structure and nursing excellence. She's active in national professional organizations, regional and facility councils, and committees, including being chair of the shared governance council. Through her leadership, the council has been successful in initiating and maintaining unit-based councils. She works collaboratively with the healthcare team as the chair of the nursing career advancement program, promoting professional development among her peers and guiding their successful progression through the application process. She's an AACN-certified nurse, which recognizes her as an individual who promotes nursing excellence, integrating clinical expertise with compassionate patient interactions.

Tadlock commented, "As a direct care nurse, living Pathway has allowed me to have an active voice in all six of the Standards. My involvement in shared decision-making and professional development while being at the front line

Figure 1: Pathway to Excellence® Framework for Positive Practice Environments



that change is constant. At one point, I thought that in order to survive and thrive at the bedside, I just had to 'roll with it' and go with the flow. I soon began to realize that flexibility and resilience are important, but so is having a voice in change and looking at the bigger picture. I've been able to flourish in my role as a direct care nurse while

the bigger picture. Often at the bedside, we're so focused on survival, we just want to get through the shift. We say a million times a day 'They should do this' or 'This shouldn't be this way.' Realize that *you're* the 'they' and can do something about the 'this.' Take advantage of opportunities to provide feedback and offer solutions. Become active in problem resolution in your unit-based council or other avenues at your entity. Start small. Know that you're the master of your own destiny. Think about your own professional development: sign up for interesting continuing-education credit opportunities, attend a conference, take advantage of your career advancement programs, get certified, get that degree. Just do something!"

When asked about the power of Pathway, Tadlock remarked, "Pathway provides us with the framework to highlight our accomplishments, celebrate our wins, and recognize excellence that occurs on a daily basis within our units. Our

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in the ICU is very rewarding. I've been able to have a positive impact on my practice environment, integrating clinical experience, compassion, and interprofessional teamwork in the pursuit to optimize patient care. I became active in my organization in response to change. Early on in my nursing career, I learned rather expediently

actively being engaged and empowered to participate in improving outcomes, advancing practice, and focusing on well-being. Living Pathway, I now 'roll with' the fact that I've been able to see positive changes right before my eyes."

Tadlock offered the following advice: "My advice for fellow clinical nurses is to step back and look at

community, patients, and their families are at the core of our professional practice model (PPM). Our Texas Health Stephenville PPM mirrors many of the Pathway Standards. Pathway promotes a healthy practice environment for our nurses who provide safe, reliable, evidence-based care, with a focus on positive outcomes and optimal patient care. Our leaders at Texas Health Stephenville and across the system have been instrumental in creating a culture of nursing excellence. Not only do we have a voice, but probably more important, we're heard. Our leaders promote leadership at and from the bedside. During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, I recall huddles in the middle of the ICU with our CNO, director, biomed, nurses, engineering, cardiopulmonary, and nursing administration trying to determine how to go about monitoring and caring for overflow patients in the wing adjacent to the ICU. Shared decision-making at its finest!"

Pathway Nurse of the Year (nurse leader)



Jaclyn Carr, MSN, RN, PCCN, from Pathway-designated OhioHealth Doctors Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, is the nurse leader winner of the 2021 Pathway

Nurse of the Year Award. At the time of her nomination, Carr was director of inpatient nursing. She has since been promoted to CNO and vice president of patient care services. Carr is a compassionate and patient-focused nurse leader, recognized for her ability to solve large-scale, complex problems with effective solutions. She was nominated by Laurel Janning, BSN, RN, manager of nursing excellence at OhioHealth Doctors Hospital and endorsed by OhioHealth Doctors

Hospital president, Lindsay Osting, MS, BSN, RN, NE-BC.

"Jaclyn is a collaborative, active, engaged, and compassionate nurse leader who embodies the Pathway Standards," Osting said. "She does excellent work, always seeks to improve the work she does while she does it, and makes sure to engage key stakeholders each step of the way so that our patients receive the best care and our nurses provide it in the best environment." She integrates "Living Pathway" into her daily leadership practices.

Carr, a highly engaged and transformational leader, was nominated for her contributions to leadership and quality. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, she was involved in the establishment of a surge hospital that connected three major healthcare systems in central Ohio and made an additional 1,200 beds available. She played an active role in establishing 10 COVID-19 vaccine clinics that administered vaccines to 2,000 community members and employees. In addition, Carr worked with an interdisciplinary team to open the short stay unit, which allowed patients requiring long-term antibiotics to remain outpatients and maintain work-life balance while receiving treatment.

Beyond her incredible work at the hospital, Carr deeply cares for her community. She helped create a nursing clinic for homeless men and provided assessment, education, and "medical pedicures" because many don't have shoes. She serves as a certified instructor for Stop the Bleed and helps teach elementary school students fundamental life skills, such as how to open a bank account. She also pursues leadership opportunities and was selected as an American Organization for Nursing Leadership Nurse Director Fellow.

Carr commented, "For me, leadership is about listening. Listening to the nurses, multiprofessional team members, physicians, and to the patients. I listen so that I can truly have a grasp on what challenges our associates encounter on a day-to-day basis. I'm an avid supporter of shared governance and frequently invite frontline nurses into decision-making conversations. As a leader, knowing about the small pebble in the shoes of our staff helps me advocate for them to improve their work environment, fully embracing a shared decision-making model. As a leader, I feel it's important to lead by example. I practice yoga, do strength training, and meditate to keep my well-being going strong, even during the pandemic. I know to be the best leader I can for my staff, it's vital that I ensure I'm handling the stressors of the pandemic in a healthy way."

Carr reflected on the importance of keeping the patient at the center of care, "For healthcare to function effectively, we must collaborate with the many teams that touch the patient, and it's paramount that we include the patient in these conversations. Coming up with a treatment plan unifying all specialties and giving the patient a voice in their care is evidence-based and a very effective way to promote health within our communities. OhioHealth's mission is 'to improve the health of those we serve' and giving our patients a voice in their care is the first step in living our mission. Giving patients a voice establishes trust and allows us to fully understand the patients' unique needs. Doctors Hospital serves a community that faces many social determinants of health. Meeting our patients where they're at is something we've been focusing on. We're currently piloting virtual care for

our patients to provide accessible and timely care to those in need.”

Carr offered this advice: “My advice to my fellow nurse leaders is ‘give yourself grace’; we’ve just led through such an extraordinarily hard time in healthcare. Be proud of what we’ve accomplished and continue to shine bright in the future.”

Living the Pathway Standards

When the Pathway Standards are deeply embedded in an organization’s culture, nurses feel valued and are inspired to go beyond their call of duty. This is clearly demonstrated with the 2021 Pathway Nurse of the Year Award recipients. These nurses’ contributions

exemplify how their organizations live the Pathway Standards, which is further demonstrated by their leaders’ commitment to nominating their nurses, and their team’s exemplary dedication and commitment to their patients and community. Meaningful recognition is an important factor in fostering resilience, safeguarding well-being, and sustaining a positive practice environment at both award-winning organizations.

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2021 Pathway Nurse of the Year Award! For more information regarding the eligibility criteria and call for nominations, visit www.nursingworld.org/PNOY. **NMI**

REFERENCE

1. Eddy JR, Kovick L, Caboral-Stevens M. Meaningful recognition: a synergy between the individual and the organization. *Nurs Manage*. 2021;52(1):14-21.

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