



Nursing Strategic Plan



September 1, 2025 – February 28, 2027



The Process

- All those within Nursing were invited to give feedback to the SWOT via survey monkey or focus groups. (April 2025)
 - 200 responses were received with well over 1000 comments, ideas, and suggestions.
 - A representative group of nursing leaders from all areas came together for retreats on May 21 and June 17 to process the results, set priorities and developed 9 strategic goals.
 - The Plan will be presented to Nursing Congress for endorsement.
 - The plan will be monitored by quarterly progress reports to Nursing Congress and the Nursing Executive Cabinet.
-

Strengths

Top 10 Strengths

- Patient Care/compassionate care
- Patient Advocacy/relations
- Professional Development Opportunities, advancement/many career paths, education, tuition reimbursement
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Innovation/Creativity
- CNO who cares about making Upstate a great place to work
- Nursing makes the best of challenging situations
- Adaptability
- Recognition and awards

Weaknesses

Top 10 Weaknesses

- Lack of communication – between supervisor-employee, among team members, and with physicians.
- Burnout, fatigue, and lack of work-life balance and overall wellness is affecting performance and satisfaction. Long shifts and short staff
- Nurses are overburdened with daily audits, documentation, and trying to keep physicians accountable for daily care.
- Human resources functions are cumbersome and slow therefore interfering with the hiring, on boarding and disciplinary processes
- Staffing shortages and retention
- Lack of teamwork and support are creating less than positive environments
- Lack of time/ no protected time to actually complete education
- Epic documentation is taking away from direct patient care
- Lack of, and high turnover of ancillary staff due to low salaries results in RN's and LPN's doing these tasks
- Nursing needs support staff to handle the increasing number of administrative duties that interfere with patient care.

Opportunities

Top 10 Opportunities

- Find ways to increase communication between nursing and providers. Increase overall collaboration with multi-disciplinary teams.
- Create new Orientation and On-Boarding processes.
- Develop career paths and succession planning efforts for on-going talent development and retention.
- Engage employees in best practices to improve patient experience
- Explore creative ways to keep experienced nurses from leaving the bedside; create hybrid leadership-bedside positions and look at varying shift hours
- Find ways to involve more front-line staff in shared governance and decision making
- Move away from double rooms to single patient rooms especially for med/surg.
- Promote more work-life balance, wellness, self-care
- Automation and increased reliance on technology for efficiency
- Better utilization and definition of the Assistant Nurse Manager role

Threats

Top 10 Threats

- Staff turnover and staff shortages
- Workplace violence
- Physician-led power dynamic leading to lack of communication, respect, and conflicts.
- Countless improvement projects are unsuccessful due to lack of accountability and providers embracing change.
- Our current political environment may impact our funding, research and marginalized populations from receiving care.
- Feeling protected, safe and secure in the workplace
- Aging facilities making it difficult to practice good mechanics
- Nurse burnout – being overworked and underpaid
- Lack of provider involvement and accountability with policies, procedures and supervision of residents
- Unconscious bias

The Priorities



Priority 1 – items to be worked on/accomplished within 6 - 9 months



Priority 2 – items to be worked on/accomplished within 10 – 18 months.



The strategic plan will remain agile to accommodate the ever-changing needs and trends. Priority 3 items were identified for further discussion and addition into the plan as deemed appropriate.

Strengths Priorities

To keep our strengths strong, we will continue to devote attention to...

P1 Areas of Focus

- Providing Excellent Patient Care
- Nursing Professional Development
- Communication

P2 Areas of Focus

- Teamwork
- Recruitment
- Quality Improvement processes

Weaknesses Priorities

P1 Areas of Focus:

- Improve communication to break down silos and build trust among unit teams and providers
- Promote wellness and work-life balance to avoid burnout and fatigue
- Promote safety and prevent workplace violence with strong policies and actions
- Improve workplace culture with positivity, professionalism, and accountability

P2 Areas of Focus:

- Increase communication with external partners (HR, IMT, Unions, etc.) to improve efficiencies
- Explore increasing administrative responsibilities and capitalize on innovation with automation and key supportive roles to assist and ease the burden

Opportunities Priorities

P1 Areas of Focus:

- Creating a new orientation and on-boarding process
- Addressing the overall well-being and safety of our nurses
- Improving the patient experience

P2 Areas of Focus:

- Retention of bedside staff
- Better utilization of the Assistant Nurse Manager role
- Overall communication between front line staff, leadership, and physicians
- Develop career coaching/career guidance center

Threats Priorities

P1 Areas of Focus:

- Staff shortages
- Staff protection
- Staff empowerment
- Teamwork
- Unconscious bias

P2 Areas of Focus:

- Administrative tasks taking away from patient care
- Concerns about providers lack of communication and teamwork



Goal Alignment to Our Upstate Pillars

Alignment to our Upstate Pillars

Our Quality includes those items related to quality, safety, delivery of services, access, continuous improvement, our image

Our Experience includes those items related to patient experience, patient care, diversity, our people, wellness, engagement, recognition, Magnet, professional development

Our Innovation includes those items related to workflow and operational efficiencies, new services and initiatives, technology, automation, informatics, solutions to problems

Our Sustainability & Growth includes those items related to finances, business continuity, succession planning, expansion of services, locations, competitor impact, health care trends, economic & political environment, capacity, facilities, equipment, staffing models, recruitment & retention practices

Our Quality

Quality Goal #1



- Excellence in Nursing – Sensitive Indicators
 - Focus: Pressure injuries, falls, CAUTIs, CLABSI
 - Action Steps: Collaborate with Hospital Quality, Maintain Quality Board, Showcase at Huddles & Meetings, Conduct Audits as necessary
 - Expected Outcome: Consistently outperform national benchmarks
 - Measurement: Tableau
 - Champion/Task Group: Quality Shared Governance Council

Quality Goal #2



- Strengthen Shared Governance Engagement
 - Focus: Improved staff satisfaction by expanding involvement in decision making.
 - Action steps: Nursing Congress to develop Shared Governance responsibilities and expectations for participation; educate regarding importance and role of shared governance and recruitment of new representatives, develop training for shared governance chairs; publish shared governance minutes on OneUp Nursing Community.
 - Expected Outcome: increased frontline participation and engagement across all councils
 - Measurement: Press Ganey, staff satisfaction survey, turnover/retention rates
 - Champion/Task Group: Nursing Practice Excellence

Our Experience

Our Experience Goal #1



- Foster a culture of trust, inclusiveness, and diversity
 - Focus: assess and enhance unit cultures through targeted improvements
 - Action Steps: engage with Development Strategist to complete unit culture assessment and develop customized action plan to change current norms.
 - Expected Outcome: improved team dynamics and overall workplace satisfaction.
 - Measurement: staff satisfaction survey, retention/turnover rates, time/attendance reports
 - Champion/Task Group: MaryAnn Stark, Nursing Development Strategist along with OIE, bedside RN representatives

Our Experience Goal #2



- Establish comprehensive workplace violence prevention.
 - Focus: Identify and address gaps in training, support resources, and response processes.
 - Action Steps: Fully develop adult BERT team; do needs assessment to identify gaps in resources for WPV support; Develop consistent training that includes all areas; gain input from front line staff; develop a micro credential program to train WPV Ambassadors. Develop new process for facilitating behavioral agreements. Develop one standard organizational-wide for safety measures
 - Expected Outcome: Reduction in workplace violence incidents and heightened awareness of support systems.
 - Measurements: SA Events, tracker report, time/attendance reports, staff turnover numbers, behavioral agreements, assaults
 - Champion/Task Group: WPV Coordinators along with Kamrin Kucera – Risk Management

Our Experience Goal #3



Elevate the Patient Experience across all patient care areas.

- Focus: Use PDSA cycles and targeted education to support unit improvement (Green → maintain, Yellow → Green, Red → Yellow)
- Action Steps: Educate, PDSA's, Transparency, Share tips
- Expected Outcome: Measurable improvement in patient experience metrics system wide
- Measurement: monitor reports for 50% improvement of yellow to green and red to yellow.
- Champion/Task Group: Create new shared governance nursing committee to partner with Patient Experience team (Bethany Sciotti)

Our Innovation



Our Innovation Goal #1

- Advance automation of audits and quality metric accessibility.
 - Focus: Implement best practices for audit and data management
 - Action Steps: Identify existing resources; identify best practice; identify current required audits; determine what can be automated; create proactive process measuring
 - Expected Outcome: increased operational efficiency and technology – driven decision making.
 - Measurement: via access and usage of tableau, staff satisfaction surveys
 - Champion/Task Group: Informatics System Council along with NLCAB, quality and systems engineering



Our Innovation Goal #2

- Strengthen interdisciplinary and interdepartmental communication.
 - Focus: Collect and streamline dissemination of cross departmental information.
 - Action Steps: identify best practice for innovative solutions; identify possibilities within current infrastructure; Identify ways to collect global departmental information and disseminate.
 - Expected Outcomes: Enhanced collaboration and transparency across disciplines.
 - Measurement: pre and post survey, accountability, staff satisfaction surveys and quality metrics
 - Champion/Task Group: Quality Leadership Team

Our Sustainability & Growth

Our Sustainability & Growth – Goal #1



- Launch a Nursing Career Development Center
- Focus: Support a skilled workforce through every stage of career progression.
- Action steps:
 - create and align pertinent training for each phase of career. Pay special attention to the ANM role – optimize to meet needs.
 - Enhance coaching, development plans, mentoring, micro-credentials, and advanced certifications and degrees to achieve the competencies needed to increase current skills and prepare future leaders.
 - Perform comprehensive assessment of talent based on performance vs. potential and align opportunities accordingly.
 - Create coaching resources for leaders/managers to assist with employee development and accountability conversations (i.e. appropriate phone use, etc.)
 - Create awareness of offerings and opportunities through a new OneUp Community.
 - Develop career paths; begin conversations from time of hire and intertwine with the annual appraisal process; assist with interview prep, resume writing, etc.
- Expected Outcome: A strong, sustainable pipeline of talent to support succession and continuity planning.
- Measurement: track participation and #'s obtaining certifications and degrees, promotions, utilizing tuition, etc. Retention/turnover rates.
- Champion/Task Group: MaryAnn Stark, Nursing Development Strategist, along with preceptors, trainers, NM workgroup and Nurse Practice Excellence

Our Sustainability & Growth Goal #2



- Achieve net positive staffing growth annually
 - Focus: Recruitment and retention of RN, LPN, HCT/MHTA, and SOT roles
 - Action Steps: consider zero mandation in all roles, expanded use of social media, job fairs, high school programs, nursing schools, NAI pathway, and SCA; improved applicant data database to allow for candidate tracking; identify additional resources that Nursing Recruitment office may need to be fully effective.
 - Expected Outcome: 5% annual increase in staff retention rates and positive hiring trends.
 - Measurement: Satisfaction surveys, retention rate, vacancy rate, increased participation in professional development.
 - Champion/Task Group: Sherria Sparks, Associate Director of Nursing Recruitment, Retention & Recognition

The Strategic Planning Team

- Amanda Bane
- Anita McConnell
- Becky Dwyer
- Beth Wells
- Brenda Dano
- Chantana Taranto
- Erin Campolo
- Erin Shortslef
- Gwynne Conway
- Jackie Stotler
- Karli Wilcox
- Kyle Choquette
- MaryAnn Stark
- Melissia Wheeler
- Michelle Zoanetti
- Rob Springstead
- Sarah Fries
- Savannah Mudge
- Scott Jessie
- Seema DeJoy
- Shamika Blyden-Mayo
- Sherria Sparks
- Simone Baker
- Tiffany Bell
- Tonya Seckner

- We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the SWOT and the planning team for the hours they devoted to this process.

