

# Performance Strategies



Achieve Magnet Recognition for Nursing Excellence

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## Inova Fairfax Experiences Ongoing Magnet Benefits



*By Pat Conway-Morana, MAd, RNC, CPHQ, NEA-BC, FACHE  
Assistant Vice President, Chief Nurse Executive  
Inova Fairfax Hospital*



### Realizing Long-Term Magnet Benefits

Earning Magnet Recognition® is not an end in itself. At [Inova Fairfax Hospital](#), an 833-bed regional medical center based in Falls Church, Va., we've found that the benefits associated with receiving this honor simply multiply over time.

In 1997, we became the fourth hospital in the country to earn Magnet Recognition from the [American Nurses Credentialing Center](#), and we have been re-designated as a Magnet facility twice since then. We will apply for re-designation again in 2010.

Although participating in the Magnet process is quite an undertaking, the benefits continue long after receiving the accolade. For example, because we have held Magnet status for more than a decade, our nurses are extremely well regarded in the professional community. We often are asked to present papers and poster sessions at professional conferences. A number of our nurses sit on the boards of prestigious associations such as the American Organization of Nurse Executives. In essence, the award has enabled us to elevate recognition of the practice of nursing in our organization.

Perhaps most importantly, the Magnet designation attracts nursing school graduates to our facility. Today more graduates are intent on starting their professional careers at Magnet facilities. As a result, we have been able to easily attract an outstanding clinical staff.

- About 63% of our nurses hold bachelor's degrees (compared to a national average of only 32%)
- About 25% hold national specialty certification

It's quite an accomplishment considering that by 2020, 808,416 jobs for full-time-equivalent RNs are expected to go unfilled nationwide, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

### The Bar Continues to Rise

Each time we seek re-designation as a Magnet facility, the bar is higher. With increasing expectations from the Magnet program, we need to demonstrate exactly how we are moving to the next level. For example, in addition to filling nursing positions, we need to prove that we are retaining nurses. As a result, we have developed a clinical ladder program, which enables nurses to increase their level of responsibility and compensation by completing the professional development and continuing education required to climb from rung to rung. The program provides the professional advancement necessary to keep nurses engaged in their careers here at Inova.

We also concentrate on demonstrating improved outcomes to achieve repeat Magnet designation. For instance, if a facility meets 60% of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services quality indicators when initially designated as a Magnet facility, the appraisers might expect the organization to achieve 70% or higher the next time around.

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## Inova Fairfax Experiences Ongoing Magnet Benefits (Cont.)

### **Leveraging Information Technology in Our Magnet Mission**

Since we already have been through the process three times – and will seek a fourth designation in 2010 – we increasingly rely on information technology to support our Magnet mission. Using the following systems enables us to improve practices and outcomes — and to streamline the Magnet application process.

**McKesson's *nurse/staff scheduling and enterprise productivity system*** enables us to schedule our nurses to meet patient needs. In addition, the system tracks nurse education and certification, which enables us to easily document the level of preparedness of our nursing staff, an important Magnet consideration.

**An *online clinical documentation system*** ensures that we continue to make improvements in terms of patient safety and quality outcomes. With this system, we can easily access the data that helps us track clinical outcomes.

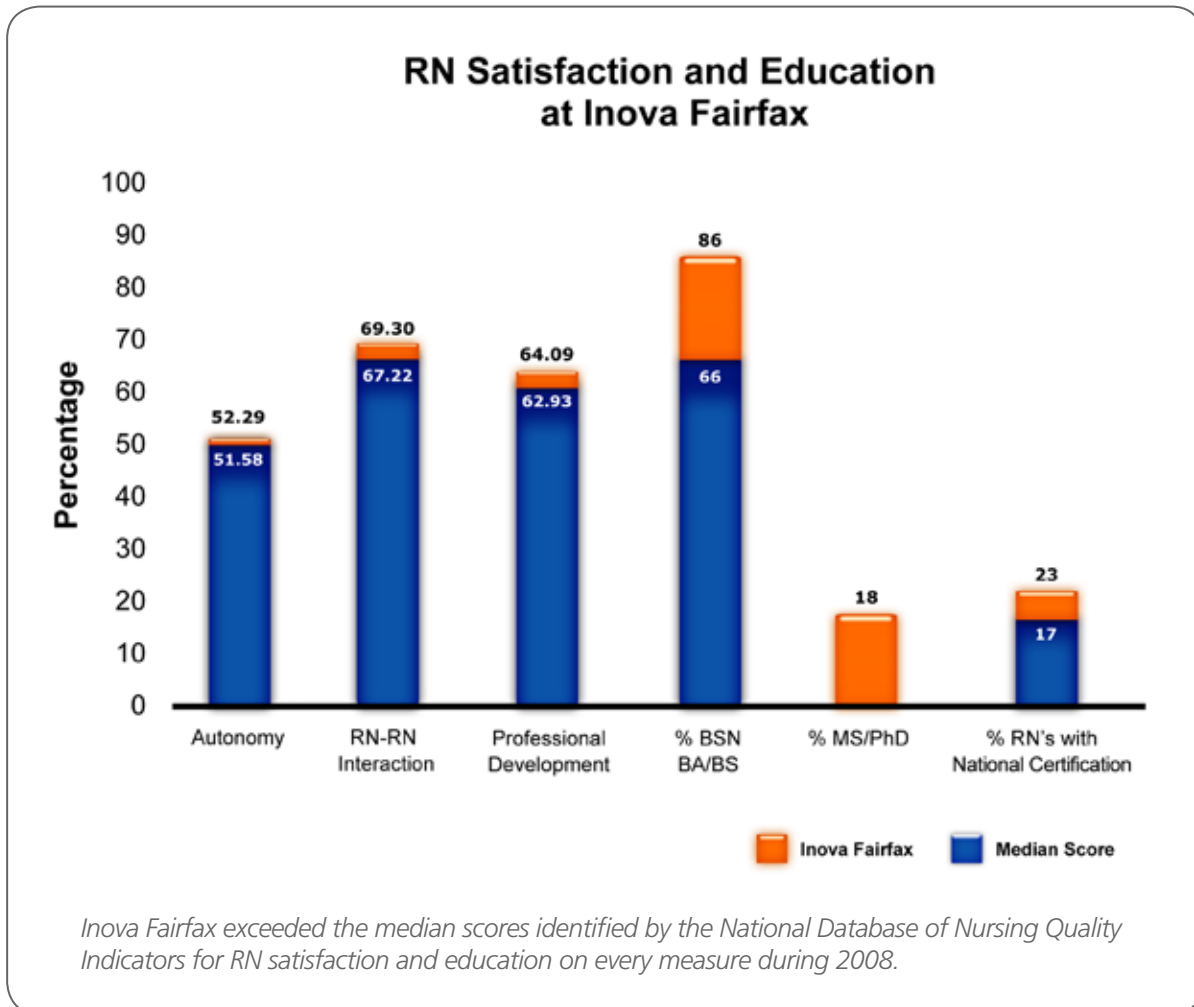
**A *financial information system*** enables us to keep tabs on resource allocations, which are required for Magnet certification. For example, the system enables us to easily provide the Magnet committee a dollar amount on how much we spend on nursing education — quite a task considering we employ more than 2,300 nurses.

**A *home-grown e-learning system*** enables nurses to go online, access continuing education materials and then take an online test to assess their competency. The technology makes it possible for our busy nurses to easily keep up with the ongoing education requirements of the Magnet program.

In the final analysis, pursuing Magnet designation has become more than just a goal at Inova. It has become a part of our culture. And we relish the challenge, because we realize that the program provides us with the incentive to continue to elevate our practice of nursing.

*Pat Conway-Morana is the Assistant Vice President and Chief Nurse Executive at Inova Health System, Falls Church, Va. In this position, she oversees approximately 2,300 nurses. She also is a member of numerous professional organizations and currently serves on the board of directors of the American Organization of Nurse Executives. Conway-Morana holds several academic degrees, including an MAd in Human Resources Management from Lynchburg College; a BS in Nursing from the Jefferson College of Health Sciences; a BS in Business Administration from Christopher Newport University; and a diploma in nursing from Riverside Regional Medical Center School of Professional Nursing. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Nursing Administration from George Mason University.*

## Inova Fairfax Experiences Ongoing Magnet Benefits (Cont.)



## Learn More

[AHRQ: Patient Safety and Quality Handbook for Nurses](#)

[ANCC: Key Changes to the Magnet Program](#)

[ANCC Magnet Application Process](#)