



# 2024-2025 Nursing Strategic Plan

**Our nursing commitment:** To provide the foundation for nursing practice at St. Louis Children's Hospital, a member of BJC HealthCare and an academic partner of Washington University School of Medicine.





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# Our Nursing Mission, Vision, Values, and Philosophy

## Mission

- To “Do What’s Right for Kids”
- To reflect a commitment to improve the health and well-being of children and the communities we serve through Our BJC Values of compassion, respect, excellence, safety, and teamwork.

## Vision

Team members across St. Louis Children’s Hospital, and throughout BJC HealthCare’s hospitals and service organizations, follow a set of shared, core values that guide our behaviors and set consistent expectations for how we hold each other, and ourselves, accountable.

Each BJC value has an associated promise that tells our patients and guests what they can expect from their place of care and tells our caregivers what they can expect from their workplace.

- **Compassion** – We promise to care about you.
- **Respect** – We promise to treat you with dignity.
- **Excellence** – We promise to be our best.
- **Safety** – We promise to keep you safe.
- **Teamwork** – We promise to partner with you.

## Values

We are one team, with a passion for children, committed to creating a safe and healing environment through living Our BJC Values of compassion, respect, excellence, safety, and teamwork. We help families build on their strengths to achieve their best health at home, in the hospital, and in their community. We will be known as a world leader in pediatric health care through our use of evidence-based and innovative practice models.

## Philosophy

The philosophy of care at St. Louis Children’s Hospital is to provide exceptional patient- and family-centered care. Doing what’s right for families is doing what’s right for kids. Our patients and families will experience innovative medicine, compassionate care, and unbiased access to resources. We will do this by:

- Promoting equitable, safe, and quality family-centered care experiences.
- Reducing health care disparities.
- Building trust in the communities we serve.

## *Dear Patient Care Services Team,*

**The past few years have brought unprecedented challenges to the health care industry, significantly impacting clinical practice, workforce, and well-being due to the tridemic, a triple threat from the combined spread of flu, RSV, and COVID, combined with the behavioral health crisis. Despite these obstacles, our mission to do what's right for kids by delivering quality health care has remained steadfast and unwavering.**

As your Chief Nursing Officer at St. Louis Children's Hospital, I am privileged to lead and support each of you as we work together to create a brighter future for children. As we look ahead and evolve, we have identified key focus areas to ensure we continue to provide exceptional care. Our journey aims to advance quality and safety outcomes, foster professional growth and development, deliver an outstanding experience for our patients and families, and enhance well-being for all.

My goal is to eliminate barriers by offering essential resources and support, enhancing communication, and promoting the professional development of our team. I am deeply committed to empowering our team through active participation in committees, councils, and initiatives focused on workplace violence prevention, patient safety, and other areas critical to our team. I encourage every team member to actively participate in our professional governance council structure, supporting and advancing our strategic plan for the betterment of patient care, staff experience, and engagement.

As we launch into the initiatives outlined in the 2024-2025 Nursing Strategic Plan, I am thrilled to share a few notable achievements in 2023 that underscore our team's dedication and hard work:

- A 5% decrease in RN Adjusted Voluntary Turnover (AVT) in 2023, highlighting our focus on creating a supportive and satisfying work environment.
- The successful implementation of the Nursing Career Ladder, which supports our commitment to professional growth and development.
- A hyper-focus on improving our quality metrics, including central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSIs), pressure injuries, surgical site infections (SSIs), and patient throughput, as well as improving outcomes, ensuring safety, and providing evidence-based practices to our patients.
- Significant improvements in Patient Experience scores, which reflect our dedication to delivering an exceptional experience.
- Our continued commitment to patients and their families has propelled a 5% growth in our volume, demonstrating our expanding impact on pediatric health care.

Every day, as I witness the dedication and commitment of our team across all St. Louis Children's Hospital locations, I am profoundly inspired. The compassion you show our patients and families fills my heart and fuels my determination to lead such an incredible team.

Thank you for your commitment, your compassion, and your excellence. Let's continue to build on our achievements and work together towards an even brighter future for pediatric health care at St. Louis Children's Hospital.

With deepest appreciation,



*Carrie Lee*

**Carrie Lee, DNP, MBA/HCM, RN, NE-BC**

*Vice President, Patient Care Services*

*Chief Nursing Officer*

*St. Louis Children's Hospital*

# Professional Practice Model

**Patient, Family, Community** within the arch unique to St. Louis reflects the spectrum and continuity of care provided to patients and families who receive care at St. Louis Children's Hospital either in the hospital, by accessing ambulatory services, or through community outreach and services.

**Patient- and Family-Centered Equitable Care** is the philosophy from which St. Louis Children's Hospital developed a framework for care delivery. It is an approach that promotes partnerships with the patient and families to achieve optimal health outcomes in a way that ensures all patients, regardless of race, ethnicity, and primary language spoken receive exceptional patient- and family-centered care.

**Our BJC Values are reflected by the children holding balloons representing compassion, respect, excellence, safety, and teamwork.**

**Research, Evidence-Based Practice, and Innovation** represent the scientific aspect of nursing and the commitment to advancing nursing practice at St. Louis Children's Hospital. Without the scientific base there would not be improvement. Research is the generation of new knowledge through scientific inquiry. Evidence-based practice (EBP) is the thoughtful use of scientific knowledge encompassing both external research and internal data combined with clinical expertise and patient preferences in the delivery of nursing care. At St. Louis Children's Hospital, EBP is the standard of care and the organization strives to create a culture that sustains the use of evidence for direct care decision-making. Innovation is using a novel approach to solve an existing problem in a different way.

**Professional Governance** comprises of five interprofessional working councils that promote interprofessional collaboration, decision-making, autonomy, and accountability in our practice environment. The councils, made up of representatives



across all disciplines, including nursing, are led by clinical team members, and empower staff to work together to advance professional and evidence-based care, staff engagement and professional growth, and patient, family, and workforce experience.

**Accountability** refers to being "answerable" to yourself and others for your own choices, decisions, and actions when compared to the Code of Ethics for Nurses (American Nurses Credentialing Center, 2015, p. 4). Nurses must be accountable for their own knowledge and skills as they provide patient care (Farquharson, 2004).

**Recognition** represents how nurses at St. Louis Children's Hospital are rewarded and recognized for their outstanding achievements and contributions to nursing practice.

**Professional Development** is a phase of lifelong learning where nurses engage to develop and maintain competence, enhance nursing practice, and support achievement of their career goals.

# Providing Safe Patient Care

**Provide safe patient care by using evidence-based practice, high reliability principles, and standard work, while promoting autonomous practice, and using quality data to prevent hospital-acquired conditions and improve patient outcomes.**

**St. Louis Children's Hospital and BJC HealthCare's 2024-2025 Strategic Plan Alignment:**

- Clinical Excellence
- Stewardship

**Magnet Alignment:**

- Exemplary Professional Practice

**Nursing Practice:**

- Reliable delivery of patient- and family-centered, evidence-based, safe nursing care

**Outcomes:**

1. Continued alignment with organizational dyad/triad leadership and key stakeholder partnerships to drive performance of key indicators.
2. Continued active organization-wide interdisciplinary preventable harm teams.
3. Nurse promotion of improved patient outcomes related to preventable harm or any quality and safety improvement activities.
4. Achievement of performance targets as part of organizational/system clinical excellence scorecard including, although not limited to: catheter-associated urinary tract infections, central line-associated blood stream infections, hospital-acquired pressure injuries, falls, surgical site infections, unplanned extubations, adverse drug events (level E, R-I), Emergency Department (ED) length of stay for patients admitted from the ED.
5. Continued safety education for newly hired nurses.
6. Continued safety coach program training for leaders and interdisciplinary frontline champions.
7. Continued partnership with the Patient and Family Advisory Councils (PFAC) as safe care stakeholders.
8. Partnership with the health system's practice and safety councils that impact nursing to define priorities, review outcomes, and align patient care needs.
9. Reduced restraint usage in children with behavioral health needs.

**TEAM LEAD:** Karen Looper, BSN, RN, CPN

**EXECUTIVE SPONSOR:** Joan Smith, PhD, RN, NNP-BC, FAAN

# Delivering an Outstanding Patient Experience

**Empower nursing to create a patient- and family-centered care environment where everyone feels valued and respected aligning with Our BJC Values and Magnet guiding principles to engage patients and families so they are confident in their care.**

**St. Louis Children’s Hospital and BJC HealthCare’s 2024-2025 Strategic Plan Alignment:**

- Clinical Excellence
- Stewardship

**Magnet Alignment:**

- Exemplary Professional Practice

**Nursing Practice:**

- Partner with patients and families
- View the patient as a whole person, respecting the differences among people
- Develop, document, and individualize care and goals based on patient and family needs and expectations

**Outcomes:**

1. Partner with the national Pediatric Experience Collaborative and BJC quality and patient experience leaders to improve the following metrics:
  - Nurse communication to parent: nurse explains to parent Child CAHPS (Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems).
  - Nurse communication to parent: nurse listens to Child CAHPS.
  - Nurse communication to parent: nurse treats with courtesy and respect Child CAHPS.
  - Nurse communication to child: nurse explains to Child CAHPS.
  - Nurse communication to child: nurse listens to Child CAHPS.
  - Nurse communication to child: nurse treats with courtesy and respect Child CAHPS.
  - Overall teamwork between doctors, nurses, and staff Child CAHPS.
  - Overall Net Promoter Score Child CAHPS.
2. Continue partnership with the Patient and Family Advisory Councils (PFAC) as patient- and family-experience stakeholders.

**TEAM LEAD:** Jill Mechler, BS, CPEP  
**EXECUTIVE SPONSOR:** Aimee Jackstadt, MHA, BSN, RN



# Supporting a System of Accountability for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**Focus on issues and support of valuing diversity, equity, and inclusion as they relate to the provision of care to our patients and their families, as well as to our workforce.**

## St. Louis Children's Hospital and BJC HealthCare's 2024-2025 Strategic Plan Alignment:

- People
- Clinical Excellence
- Stewardship

## Magnet Alignment:

- Exemplary Professional Practice

## Nursing Practice:

- Provide culturally sensitive care to all patients and families
- Respect and embrace a diverse team

## Outcomes:

1. Improve diverse RN hiring.
2. Increase DEI training for leader and frontline staff.
3. Apply DEI training into Family Rounds.
4. Increase resources for patients and families with diverse needs.
5. Increase percentage of diverse nurses in the workforce.
6. Establish standard work for reviewing quality and safety data to identify disparities.
7. Expand pilots to full implementation of trauma-informed care.
8. Decrease adjusted voluntary turnover in diverse RNs and unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP).



**TEAM LEAD:** Stephanie Esses, DNP, RN, CPNP-PC/AC, NE-BC

**EXECUTIVE SPONSOR:** Carra Tilley, MSN, RN



# Promoting a Culture of Safety in Our Environment

**Ensure a healthy and healing environment free from inappropriate and disruptive behavior that can hinder delivery of safe, quality patient care.**

**St. Louis Children's Hospital and BJC HealthCare's 2024-2025 Strategic Plan Alignment:**

- Clinical Excellence
- People
- Stewardship

**Magnet Alignment:**

- Structural Empowerment
- Exemplary Professional Practice

**Nursing Practice:**

- Continue to foster an interdisciplinary approach across departments to enhance safety practices within the BJC HealthCare clinical environments
- Demonstrate an ongoing commitment for event response when team members experience threats, perceived threats, and harm
- Ensure all staff are adequately trained in recognition, response, and intervention (where appropriate)

**Outcomes:**

1. Enhance BJC/St. Louis Children's Hospital education and communication around workplace safety.
2. Increase de-escalation training to all St. Louis Children's Hospital employees with planned rollout.
3. Decrease RN and UAP workplace violence injuries.
4. Improve usage of Epic workplace violence (WPV) flags for high-risk patients.



5. Improvement in the following BJC Safety Pulse Survey Domains:

- "If I make a mistake in this team, I know it will not be held against me."
- "When a change is made to improve patient and/or employee safety, the change is evaluated to see how well it worked."
- "Team members consistently show respect for one another."

**TEAM LEAD:** Kim Sauder, BSN, RN, CPN | Stacie Estes, MSN, RN

**EXECUTIVE SPONSOR:** Jessica Zurmuehlen, MHA, BSN, RN | Tom Saggio, MSN, RN, PMH-BC

# Enhancing Employee Engagement and the Practice Environment

**Continue to improve nursing engagement by maintaining a strong emphasis on the correlation between employee engagement and a healthy work environment.**

**St. Louis Children’s Hospital and BJC HealthCare’s 2024-2025 Strategic Plan Alignment:**

- People
- Clinical Excellence

**Magnet Alignment:**

- Transformational Leadership
- Exemplary Professional Practice

**Nursing Practice:**

- Promote effective collaboration between work units
- Emphasize the importance of leader engagement in the employee experience
- Partner with the workplace safety team to bring forward concerns and thoughts for improvement
- Integrate the healthy work environment education into nursing new employee orientation
- Cultivate resiliency practices across St. Louis Children’s Hospital and BJC HealthCare
- Expand pilots to full implementation of clinical mentor program
- Knowledge of the healthy work environment standards as measured by formal and informal assessments
- Partner with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council to impact action items around the employee engagement diversity module questions
- Civility training to all leaders and to frontline civility champions

**Outcomes:**

1. Improvement in the following metrics on the nurse practice environment survey:
  - Autonomy
  - Foundations for Quality of Care
2. Decrease RN and UAP adjusted voluntary turnover.

**TEAM LEAD:** Lindsay Shinn, MSN, RN  
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# Guiding the Direction of Professional Nursing

**Define the direction for the profession of nursing at St. Louis Children’s Hospital, including maximizing collegiality, respect, and collaboration among disciplines and continued professional development to ensure the provision of the very best care for our patients.**

**St. Louis Children’s Hospital and BJC HealthCare’s 2024–2025 Strategic Plan Alignment:**

- People
- Clinical Excellence
- Stewardship

**Magnet Alignment:**

- Transformational Leadership
- Structural Empowerment
- Exemplary Professional Practice
- New Knowledge, Innovations, and Improvements

**Nursing Practice:**

- Commit to a culture of continued professional development, innovation, and autonomy
- Actively develop others through precepting, mentoring, and role-modeling
- Implement the newly re-designed professional governance structure
- Promote a culture of professional governance and autonomy over nursing practice
- Maintain Magnet designation
- Continue growth toward a predominately BSN-prepared nursing workforce
- Accelerate adoption of evidence-based nursing practices
- Grow the nursing research/evidence-based practice program

**Outcomes:**

1. Achieve a 5% or higher increase in the number of nurses actively participating in professional governance councils.
2. Maintain the organizational professional board certification rate for eligible nurses at  $\geq 51\%$ .
3. Maintain the organizational goal for  $\geq 80\%$  of St. Louis Children’s nurses holding a baccalaureate or higher degree in nursing.
4. Utilize the BJC Nursing Career Ladder to guide/support professional development.
5. Continue enhancements to BJC Leader/ Patient Care Manager (PCM) development programs to support attainment.
6. Continue preceptor development to support continued growth of the BSN workforce.
7. Improve overall score in the category Nurse Participation in Hospital Affairs on the nurse practice environment survey (to measure engagement with Professional Governance Councils).
8. Implement and evaluate a nurse practitioner transition to practice program.
9. Maintain the ANCC’s Practice Transition Accreditation Program (PTAP) for the clinical nurse Support for Success program and explore accreditation for an APN PTAP program.

**TEAM LEAD:** Erin Arcipowski, PhD, RN | Chelsea Fischer, MSN, RN  
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# Supporting Growth and Optimizing Access to Health Care

**Optimize organizational and system capacity management through an evidence-based, patient-centric approach to patient movement along the care continuum.**

**St. Louis Children's Hospital and BJC HealthCare's 2024-2025 Strategic Plan Alignment:**

- Growth
- Stewardship

**Magnet Alignment:**

- Exemplary Professional Practice

**Nursing Practice:**

- Optimize placement needs for all transfer requests and smooth transition of ambulatory admissions
- Optimize patient throughput and placement across the organization with the following tools and resources:
  - Leverage Epic Grand Central
  - Utilize capacity surge plans
  - Develop a Throughput Hub to maximize bed and resource utilization to improve access

**Outcomes:**

1. Evaluate Throughput Hub effectiveness.
2. Decrease ED lengths of stay (LOS) from arrival to departure or hospital admission.
3. Evaluate external partnerships to better serve our patient population.
4. Monitor labor costs.
5. Increase service line volumes in targeted areas.
6. Increase St. Louis Children's Hospital nurse presence in underserved community schools.
7. Expand convenient care locations in the community.
8. Increase community partnerships to improve resources, support, and access to services for children with behavioral health needs.



**TEAM LEAD:** Michelle Mendonsa, MSN, RN | Tracy Stieren, BSN, RN

**EXECUTIVE SPONSOR:** Carrie Lee, DNP, MBA/HCM, RN, NE-BC

# Enriching the Well-Being of our Workforce

**Caring for others is an essential element of nursing practice; however, practicing self-care is integral to being able to demonstrate compassion and care toward others.**

**St. Louis Children’s Hospital and BJC HealthCare’s 2024-2025 Strategic Plan Alignment:**

- People
- Stewardship

**Magnet Alignment:**

- Transformational Leadership
- Exemplary Professional Practice
- Structural Empowerment

**Nursing Practice:**

- Utilize St. Louis Children’s Hospital/BJC wellness resources – WeCare Program, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Wellness Program Manager, etc.
- Cultivate resilience practices across the organization

**Outcomes:**

1. Increase utilization of wellness resources.
2. Expand mental health access and services, and mental health promotion services for nurses, while breaking down barriers of stigma.
3. Achieve a 10% or higher reduction in St. Louis Children’s Hospital’s nursing turnover rate.



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