

Guiding the European Magnet® Journey: Insights for Chief Nursing Officers (CNO)

Introduction:

*This guide is based on the **collective experiences of European hospitals participating in Magnet4Europe**. The information and recommendations in this document are derived from individual interviews, focus groups, and exchanges during network meetings. It is important to understand that **the approaches and methods presented here reflect subjective experiences** and should not be seen as universally applicable or proven facts. They serve as guidance and a source of inspiration for hospitals considering similar changes and should be adapted to the specific conditions and cultures.*

Strategic Orientation:

- Assume a proactive and strategic leadership role in implementing Magnet® in your hospital. Reflect on how this could align with and enhance your hospital's strategic goals.
- Use Magnet® components as a framework for structured organizational change, adapting them to fit the overarching goals and visions of your organization.
- Engage with management and other leaders to discuss the potential benefit of seeking Magnet® accreditation through ANCC and whether it aligns with your institution's aspirations.
- Consider the scope of Magnet® implementation: the entire hospital or initially pilot wards? (If pilot wards, then encourage wards to participate in the decision-making process, perhaps through a tender or application process).
- Patience and Perseverance: Acknowledge that adopting Magnet® is a long-term journey requiring patience and perseverance, since it involves cultural change and transformation. This requires time (both for implementation and to engage staff), making it essential to plan the initiative as a long-term task and support it continuously, even when setbacks or obstacles occur.
- Communication Strategy: Consider whether the explicit name Magnet® adds clarity, or whether another terminology is more in line with the hospital's goals and vision.

Communication with Management and other Leaders:

- Maintain open and constructive communication with other leaders in the hospital, including medical management.
- Clarify how you can effectively convey the benefits and objectives of Magnet® and gaining support at all levels.
- Using employee and patient outcomes as basis for argumentation in advocating for Magnet.
- Close cooperation with the Magnet® coordinator.
- Consider organizing a kick-off event to secure executive approval and enthusiasm (e.g., during a retreat).



Transformational Leadership (TL):

- Cultivate a TL culture to support the implementation of further Magnet® components.
- TL could be suitable as a first focus if not all Magnet® components are started simultaneously.
- Encourage leaders to maintain a visible presence and connection with staff and try to be present and close to employees (e.g., by visiting the ward). Ask how the employees are doing, and what they need.
- Consider training of leaders in the principles of TL.
- Supporting a leadership culture that promotes bottom-up changes.
- Encouraging creativity and innovative thinking by creating an environment where employees can openly share and implement ideas and initiatives.

Resource provision and Resource utilization:

- Allocate adequate staff for project coordination, a steering group¹, and project teams², considering the size of your hospital and the complexity of the tasks. Experience from Magnet4Europe has shown that 0.5-1 FTE for the Magnet® project coordination is reasonable [can be split among several people, while ensuring consistency of information], more FTE are possible depending on hospital size.
- Ensuring sufficient financial, personnel, and time resources for the Magnet® coordinators and project teams.
- Allowing Magnet® coordinators access to resources without always requiring prior permission.
- Consider providing training, workshops, and coaching on Magnet® content, as well as technology support for the implementation process.
- Incorporation of Quality Management could optimize processes, workflows, and policies.
- The involvement of the Communications Department could promote Magnet® across various channels (implementation carried out by the Magnet® coordinator and project team(s)).

Empowerment and Engagement:

- Involve nursing staff in decision-making and provide development opportunities.
- Making nurses visible, giving nursing a voice, and demonstrating the added value of nursing.
- Create opportunities for feedback, idea exchange, creativity, and participation to foster a sense of personal responsibility and belonging to the project.
- Encouraging employee initiatives to improve working conditions.
- Establishing structures and a culture for empowerment and engagement in nursing practice.
 - Opportunities for further education and development (e.g., degree course).
 - Strengthening the autonomy of nursing staff.
 - Individual support.
- Promote the involvement of employees both intra-professionally (nursing) and inter-professionally, at all levels of the hospital. Encourage an open dialogue in which feedback from all professional groups is valued, without making nurses' decision-making autonomy dependent on the approval of other professional groups.

¹ The **steering group** serves as the central body for strategic direction and coordination of the Magnet® initiative and works closely with the project team. It is organizationally superior to the project team and has budget responsibility. The steering group includes decision maker of the hospital (e.g. the CNO, Magnet® Coordinator, the Medical Director, and the Executive Management).

² The **project team** focuses on the operational implementation of specific projects required for the implementation of the Magnet® components. At least one project manager takes the lead of this group. Further subdivision into sub-project teams with sub-project managers is possible.

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Training, Coaching, and Support: CNO provides resources for training and coaching and advises on their content.

- Providing support:
 - For the project team to ensure all members understand the Magnet® concept and goals for an effective implementation.
 - For employees to ensure they understand the goals and benefits of the Magnet® program and can participate actively.
- Introducing Magnet® components during the onboarding process (for all professional groups).
- Promoting skills in change-management, project work, leadership, and interprofessional teamwork to ensure successful project implementation.
- Training and coaching in idea development, workshops, future workshops, and journal clubs to encourage employees to bring their creativity and innovative thinking to the table and think and implement new ways.
- Mentoring by certified Magnet® hospitals.

Promotion of Networks and Partnerships:

- The CNO can play a key role in bringing stakeholders together and giving employees the opportunity to make valuable contacts.
- Establishing networking opportunities within the hospital:
 - Setting up platforms/meeting points and organizing regular networking events or forums that allow employees to network and exchange ideas across professional groups.
- Encouraging and facilitating active participation of employees in networks and partnerships at the national and international levels to learn new ideas and share good practices.
- Exchange with other hospitals and professionals:
 - Participating in Magnet® networks with CNOs and professionals from the field to learn from each other and discuss and develop innovative approaches.
 - Organizing exchange programs or visits to other hospitals to learn from their experiences and adopt good practices.
- Opportunities for event/conference participation:
 - Providing financial and organizational support for participation in relevant events and conferences.
 - Creating a calendar of relevant events and conferences and inviting employees to participate.
 - Organizing selection processes or competitions to motivate employees to participate in certain events; and cost coverage, e.g., for participation fees, travel costs

Measurement and Evaluation:

- Setting milestones and intermediate goals in the Magnet® implementation process and announce them officially.
- Implementing a measurement and evaluation process with clear performance metrics and indicators to track the progress and impact of the Magnet® implementation.
- Creating opportunities for external benchmarking

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Recognition:

- Initiating or supporting structures and processes for recognizing successes, progress, and engagement (implementation carried out by the Magnet® coordinator and project team(s)).
- Celebrating small and large successes, milestones, and intermediate goals as well as their public communication.

Succession Management and Deputy:

- Considering the succession or deputy for the position of the CNO and the Magnet® Coordinator in a timely manner.
- Distributing project responsibility among several people.
- Naming at least one deputy for Magnet® coordination to ensure continuity and stability in the project, especially in cases of absence such as vacation, illness, or maternity leave.
- Appointment and training of successors to the Magnet® coordinator at an early stage to ensure a smooth transition and that the project will continue to be successful in the future.