

MAGNET4EUROPE PROJECT

STRONG STAFF, STRONG HOSPITAL

US hospital model with magnetic attraction can also solve problems in European countries

The applause for their work during the pandemic may have given nurses and doctors courage. But little has changed in the precarious situation of hospital staff since then. Three quarters of nursing staff are stressed by their job, a third of nursing staff under the age of 30 want to change jobs.

But a hospital can only be good if its staff is well. The healthier and more satisfied the nurses and doctors are, the better the hospital is. The USA understood this decades ago: when their healthcare system was in crisis in the 1980s, researchers developed a quality seal that has established itself as the gold standard in care to this day: Magnet®.

After four decades of research, it shows Magnet® can improve the working environment, staff satisfaction and, with it, patient outcomes. Increased staff retention results in improved quality of care, thanks to evidence-based care and working conditions far above average. The benefits of the hospital management are less absenteeism of the staff, lower turnover and recruitment costs, a higher staff satisfaction thanks of a more pleasant working atmosphere, lower costs due to optimized processes, a better reputation of the hospital and therefore competitive advantages over other hospitals.

The Magnet Recognition Program® is designed to make hospitals so attractive as a place to work that nursing and medical staff are virtually magnetically drawn to them. Such a hospital impresses with a high level of professional competence and a high level of satisfaction among nursing staff, which then leads to excellent patient outcomes.

The five Magnet® model components make this possible:



Transformational leadership

Leaders in Magnet hospitals are expected to inspire, motivate, and foster a culture of excellence and innovation. Flat hierarchies should enable trusting cooperation in interdisciplinary commonality.



Structural empowerment

Nurses have access to resources and opportunities for professional development and are empowered to make decisions about patient care. The staff are involved in management decisions taking on more responsibility.



Exemplary professional practice

High standards of nursing practice are established and maintained, leading to superior patient care and outcomes. Clear roles and tasks are revised and defined for everyone.



New knowledge, innovations and improvements

Continuous improvement and the integration of new knowledge and innovations in practice are encouraged. Processes in everyday working life are jointly revised according to the latest findings of science.



Empirical outcomes

Hospitals are required to measure and demonstrate improvements in patient care, nursing practice, and work environment. Surveys regularly examine the experience gained and the satisfaction of staff and patients.

Why Magnet® Status matters?

In Magnet® hospitals, the optimal work environment is created to ensure the best possible patient care. This involves continuous improvements and re-accreditation every four years, which requires hospitals to show ongoing enhancements based on staff feedback and other metrics. Staff perspectives are integral to this process, with regular surveys conducted to assess their experiences and satisfaction. Results from several US studies suggest that working conditions, as well as the satisfaction and well-being of nursing staff, improve after the implementation of the Magnet® model.

This is why Magnet® status signifies a hospital where healthcare professionals work in an environment with better staffing with qualified personnel and that values and supports their professional development, promotes a positive work culture, and empowers them to provide the highest quality care.

There are now over 600 designated Magnet hospitals worldwide. The concept is also to be applied in other European countries. Currently, only two hospitals in Europe hold the Magnet® designation.

Benefits for Hospitals include:

- **Improved patient outcomes:** Consistent improvements in patient care metrics, including reduced lengths of stay and lower readmission rates, contribute to overall hospital performance and reputation.
- **Improved organizational outcomes:** Promoting a positive and empowering work culture enhances team collaboration and efficiency, leading to improved organizational outcomes.
- **Lower staff turnover rates and burnout rates:** Less staff turnover help reduce recruitment and training costs. Lower burnout rates among staff can lead to reduced absenteeism, ensuring a more consistent and reliable workforce.
- **Better staffing with qualified personnel:** Magnet hospitals are better staffed with qualified personnel, which enhances the quality of care provided.

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What did the Magnet4Europe project do?



Magnet4Europe was an ambitious 4.5-year initiative (2020-2024) aimed at transforming hospital work environments across Europe based on the Magnet Recognition Program®.

The main goal of Magnet4Europe is to enhance the clinical work environment in European hospitals and promote the mental health and well-being of healthcare workers. Over 60 hospitals across six countries (Belgium, England, Germany, Ireland, Norway, and Sweden) have begun implementing the Magnet® model through the Magnet4Europe project. This initiative is funded by the EU and involves a study conducted by research institutes in the participating European countries and the US.

Magnet4Europe intervention includes the following key components:



Access to Magnet® resources

Hospitals received free access to Magnet® manuals and tools to conduct gap analyses and identify areas for improvement.



Twinning partnerships

European hospitals were paired with Magnet®-certified hospitals in the US to share knowledge and strategies.



International learning collaboratives

Meetings and workshops involving all participating hospitals, research teams, and stakeholders to foster learning and collaboration.



Building critical mass and networking

Establishing a network of participating hospitals to share best practices and support each other.



Providing results of staff surveys at 3 timepoints

Hospitals received the results of the three surveys conducted among nurses and physicians to know about staffs' satisfaction, well-being, and the impact of Magnet4Europe.

What did Magnet4Europe achieve so far?

Realizing Magnet® in Europe requires adaptation to the local context. While the principles of leadership, staff development and quality improvement through data are universal, adjustments to fit the European healthcare systems are necessary. Participating hospitals are still in the process of implementing these changes.

The Magnet® model can be successfully adapted to European hospitals, though a direct 1:1 transfer from the US model is not feasible. Significant strides have been made in areas such as leadership behavior, staff development and using data to drive quality improvements. Hospitals involved in the project are seeing early signs of positive change.

Magnet4Europe has also developed a hospital network with open exchange and support through national and international learning collaboratives and other events, as well as collaboration with experienced Magnet® hospitals from the US. This network will remain in place after the end of the project and welcomes other hospitals to collaborate.

The path to the Magnet status takes time. It requires commitment and courage to change the management culture towards a more dynamic, self-determined and constantly evolving organization. However, a long-term strategy is needed to counter the shortage of skilled workers.

For more information, please visit the Magnet4Europe website. On our website, you will find a list of participating hospitals. If you are interested in implementing Magnet principles in your workplace, our handouts for Chief Nursing Officers (CNOs) and Project Managers offer a comprehensive collection of experiences and concrete examples of implementation from Magnet4Europe hospitals:

www.magnet4europe.eu



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