

Pillars of Professionalism (POP):

PUTTING A “POP” IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A CLINICAL LADDER PROGRAM



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PURPOSE

Magnet designation speaks to quality care and nursing professionalism. Our clinical ladder advancement program, Pillars of Professionalism (POP), helps set the standard of clinical excellence by enhancing professional development, teamwork, & motivating staff.

Clinical ladder programs increase nurse satisfaction and retention, as well as provide a vehicle for registered nurses to exhibit their professional achievements and receive recognition.

BACKGROUND

Hahnemann’s Pillars of Professionalism program criteria was created by nurses in various roles including front line staff nurses from in-patient and procedural areas, educators, advanced practice nurses, and clinical managers.

Our POP program is open to nursing staff in different areas and engages staff to pursue different levels of professionalism, such as:

- Research
- Quality Improvement
- Education
- Shared Governance
- Community Service
- Leadership

With front line nurse feedback, the process was revamped to a point system, ultimately increasing participation & dedication to professionalism and quality.



STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

POP was first implemented in 2008 with four different tracks

- Clinical
- Education
- Research
- Leadership

The various tracks would help increase interest and integrate with one’s specific talents. Each track has the ability to advance to a level 5.

In 2010, due to staff input, it was determined the POP process would evolve to a point system for the 2011 year, allowing nurses greater flexibility and autonomy in deciding which criteria to pursue for the track/level they chose. However, some criteria do remain “required.” The higher the level, the more base criteria is required. Points needed to advance range from 100 to 120.

Choosing a level to pursue also depends on your amount of experience as an RN:

- Level 1: > 6 months nursing experience
- Level 2: > 1 year nursing experience
- Level 3: > 3 years nursing experience
- Level 4: > 3 years nursing experience
- Level 5: > 5 years nursing experience

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION SAMPLE

A level 3 requires a BSN degree or matriculated into a BSN program. A level 4 requires a BSN degree and a level 5 requires a MSN degree. A level 3 and above also requires a national nursing certification in a specialty area.

Base criteria required and criteria options to build up to total points vary depending on track and level chosen. Examples of criteria include:

- Shared Governance
- Membership in a professional organization & peer-reviewed journal subscription
- Attending an outside conference
- Participation in journal club
- Providing patient and staff education
- Presenting at Nursing Grand Rounds
- PI project and Research project involvement
- Champions for various roles, such as: Magnet, Falls, Skin
- Initiatives for patient, employee, physician satisfaction
- Charge nurse and Preceptor
- Writing narratives, nominations, and articles
- Interdisciplinary team involvement to improve outcomes related to patients/staff
- Community Outreach

IMPLEMENTATION

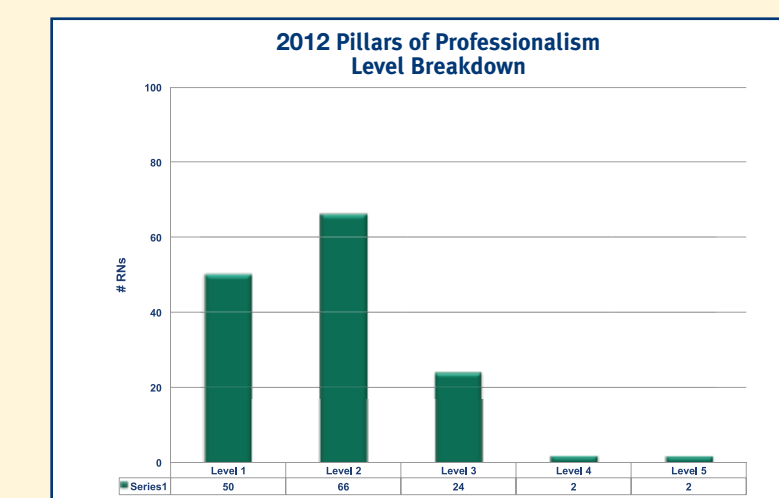
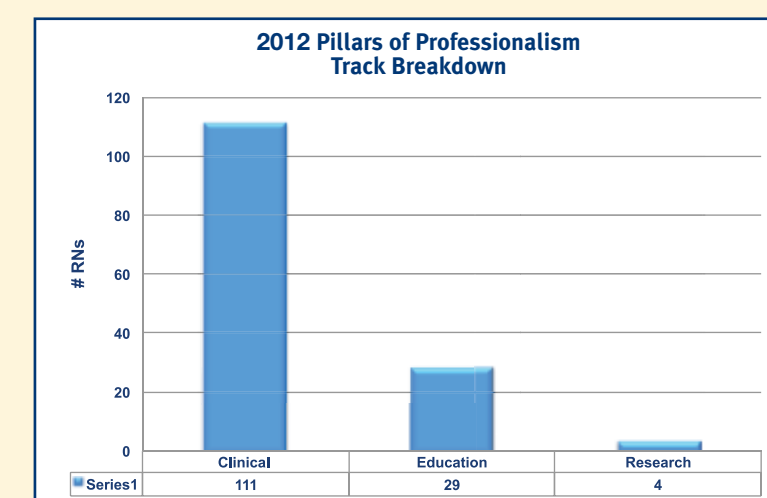
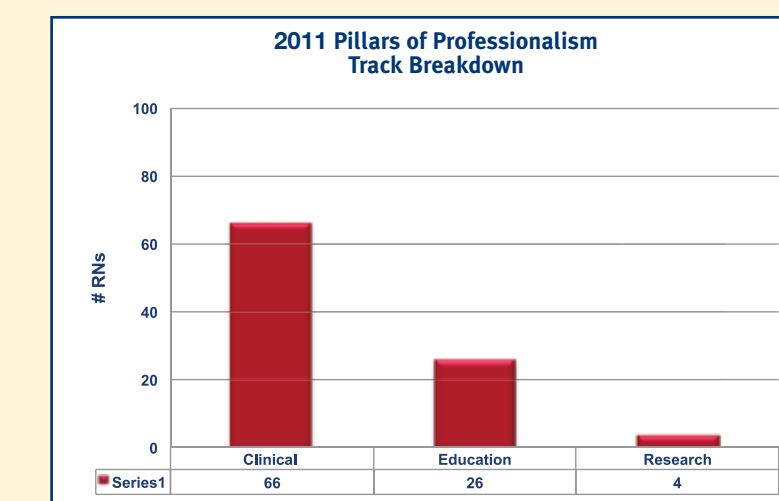
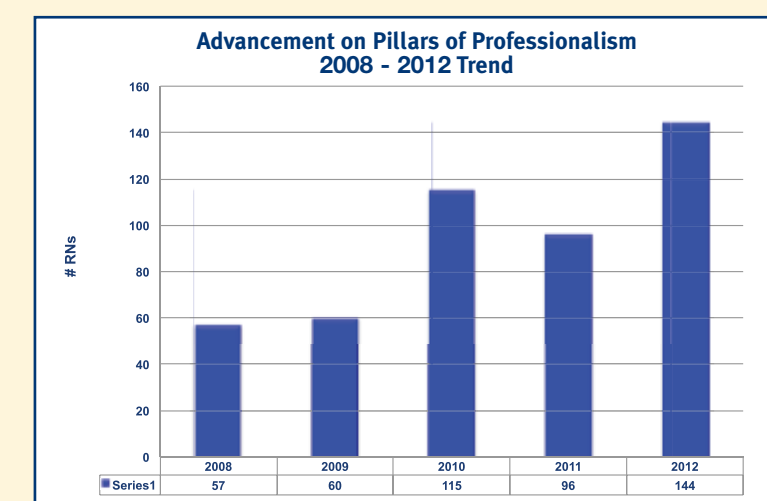
Hahnemann nurses gather all the required criteria of their chosen track and ladder and place it in a portfolio format to be submitted. The committee reviews each submission with the Nurse Executive Council acting as final approval.

The nurses who demonstrate their new height of professional achievement by successfully advancing through the Pillars of Professionalism program receive a financial reward. The nurses are also recognized by the CEO and CNO during a celebration event.

RESULTS

This graph demonstrates the increase in the number of nurses who advanced through the Pillars of Professionalism program from its inception in 2008 to 2012. The dip in 2011 can be attributed

to transitioning to the format of a point system, per staff request. The new system challenged nurses to seek, compete, and exhibit their growth on a new wavelength of professional development.



DISCUSSION

Hahnemann’s clinical ladder program has successfully increased the number of nurses advancing on POP. The multi-area focus has improved our participation in shared governance, nurses acting as Champions, nurses obtaining professional certification, and much more.

For clinical ladders to remain significant there must be ongoing evaluation & validation of RN practice attributes. Our point system challenged RNs to seek, complete, & exhibit their growth on new wavelengths of professional development. Our process can be implemented by those dedicated to quality & RN growth.

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