

# Pinnacle: Optimize Nursing Competency and Advance Professional Standing

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Case Reports

## Background

The Rajagiri Hospital, Kochi, was established in 2014 to provide high-quality and affordable healthcare. The hospital has achieved several prestigious accreditations, including JCI Gold Seal, NABH and NABL accreditations, and ISO 22000:2018 certification for its food and beverage services.

The previous system for managing nursing competencies faced several significant challenges. These included time-consuming manual processes, leading to wasted resources and low efficiency. High rates of non-compliance with mandatory certifications posed a significant risk. Moreover, limited visibility into nurse skills and competencies hindered effective workforce planning and resource allocation. Infrequent assessments resulted in skill misalignment and underutilization of nursing staff, while insufficient data on competencies impeded targeted recruitment and hiring strategies. Finally, gaps in the tracking and management of nurses with special privileges posed potential challenges in patient care. To enhance nursing competency and patient safety, the hospital developed the Nursing Competency Assessment & Privileging (NCAP) Module, also called '**Pinnacle**' an innovative online application created in collaboration with Nursing and IT departments.

## Distinctiveness of the practice

The Pinnacle streamlines the assessment process, replacing manual methods with a more efficient, data-driven, and transparent system. By digitizing competency evaluations and granting of clinical privileges, the NCAP module ensures that nurses maintain proficiency in their designated tasks and

ultimately contributes to improved patient outcomes and workforce development. This initiative aims to enhance the hospital's performance by:

- Improving nurse competency & retention by standardized competency assessment and provide learning opportunities to learn necessary skills and certifications for safe and effective patient care.
- Optimizing hospital operations through data-driven insights into nurse competencies, enabling efficient resource allocation and staffing decisions.
- Fostering a culture of excellence by encouraging targeted training and skill development among nursing staff.
- Minimize medical errors by identifying and addressing skill gaps proactively.
- Enhance patient outcomes through improved communication, coordination of care, and timely interventions facilitated by competent nursing staff.

The module has distinctive features such as:

- The application allows for real-time assessment of nurses' skills and competencies, categorizing them into different proficiency levels (e.g., Level 1 to Level 5) providing a clear framework for professional development and skill advancement.
- The system proactively alerts nurses and administrators regarding the expiration of critical certifications (BLS, ACLS, PALS, NRP, etc.) and special privileges (e.g., PICC line insertion), ensuring timely refresher training and maintaining patient safety. The module significantly improved compliance with mandatory certifications, such as Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Cardiovascular

Life Support (ACLS), increasing from 56% to 96%.

- The module provides real-time data on nurse competencies, enabling the Nursing Professional Practice Development team to efficiently plan training sessions, allocate resources effectively, and optimize staffing schedules based on skill mix requirements.
- The practice included a targeted recruitment strategy that focused on hiring more experienced nurses, resulting in a decrease in the percentage of newly hired nurses with less than six months of experience.

## Challenges

The implementation of the Nursing Competency Module presented challenges which were addressed by the competent team proactively, as presented below:

- Initial resistance to change among some nursing staff was addressed through comprehensive training sessions and fostering a sense of ownership.
- Technical glitches and usability issues were resolved through ongoing collaboration with the IT department and regular updates to the module.
- Addressing varying levels of technological familiarity among staff required tailored training sessions and ongoing support.
- Data security and integration with existing hospital systems were ensured through robust data governance policies and collaborative efforts between departments.

- Maintaining long-term engagement was achieved by recognizing and rewarding staff for utilizing the module and sharing success stories.
- Finally, establishing clear metrics and conducting regular evaluations ensured that the module remained effective and responsive to evolving needs.

Above challenges were successfully addressed these issues through proactive strategies, collaboration, and continuous feedback.

## Measuring effects

The implementation of the structured competency and privileging module at Rajagiri Hospital has yielded significant benefits for all stakeholders.

- A significant decrease in paperwork associated with competency assessments. The hospital previously utilized approximately 3,600 papers annually for the competency and privileging process, which has been significantly reduced.
- A dramatic increase in compliance with mandatory certifications (e.g., BLS, ACLS) increased from 67% to 99.9% after the implementation of the new module.
- The automation of competency assessments in the Pinnacle has reduced assessment times by 83%, allowing nursing leaders to focus on clinical operations rather than administrative tasks.
- A decrease in nurse turnover rates, contributing to a more stable workforce.



**Fig. 1 Improvement in Nurses Certification Compliance & Patient Satisfaction Rate**

## Key qualitative improvements included:

- Notable decrease in medication errors, falls, phlebitis rates, and incidents of accidental dislodging leading to patient safety and overall patient satisfaction.
- Increased sense of empowerment, effective planning, and enhanced nurse empowerment and retention. It provided a clear path for professional development, enhanced skill recognition, and boosted nurse confidence.
- Optimized staffing and resource allocation leading to improved workflow and patient care delivery.
- Improved data-driven decision-making in areas such as training needs and resource allocation.
- The system has improved communication between nursing staff and management, facilitating a collaborative environment for continuous improvement.
- Overall, it helped management to ensure adherence to regulatory standards and maintains the hospital's reputation and operational stability.

## Lessons Learned

The implementation of the Nursing Competency initiative provided several lessons:

- Tailored module to the hospital's specific needs and workflows.
- Active engagement of nursing staff, clinical instructors, and IT personnel throughout the development and implementation process.
- Providing comprehensive training and

ongoing support for all users was essential for successful adoption of the module. Clear and open communication ensured that all staff members understood how the changes would positively impact their work.

- Utilizing data analytics to inform decision-making regarding staffing, training, and resource allocation is crucial for optimizing the system and maximizing its impact.
- Emphasizing the benefits of the module for professional growth and career advancement fostered greater nurse engagement and improved adoption rates.

## Sustainability of Practice

The Pinnacle is designed for long-term sustainability. Its automation minimizes manual intervention, and its adaptability allows for updates to reflect evolving standards. By supporting regulatory compliance and freeing up time for strategic activities like training, the module ensures continued delivery of high-quality patient care. Real-time data analytics enable optimized staffing and resource allocation. Finally, the application's scalability facilitates its adoption in other healthcare institutions.

## Conclusion

The Nursing Competency Module (Pinnacle) is highly adaptable and replicable across diverse healthcare settings. Built upon a robust foundation of established nursing frameworks like Benner's model, the module's core principles and assessment methodologies can be readily adapted to the specific needs and contexts of other hospitals and departments.

## Pinnacle: Optimize Nursing Competency and Advance Professional Standing

1

### Target Population

Nursing staff, clinical instructors, and hospital administrators at Rajagiri Hospital.

2

### Phenomenon of Interest

Implementation of the Pinnacle Nursing Competency Assessment & Privileging (NCAP) module to digitize competency tracking, enhance skill development, and improve patient safety.

3

### Context

Streamline competency assessments, improve compliance, and optimize hospital operations.

### Conclusion



Pinnacle-QIP is a flexible, replicable framework based on Benner's model, adaptable to various healthcare settings and departmental needs.

### Key Findings

1

### Enhanced Efficiency and Workforce Stability

Automation of competency assessments reduced assessment duration by 83%, allowing nursing leaders to focus on clinical operations while also decreasing nurse turnover rates.

2

### Significant Increase in Certification Compliance

Compliance with mandatory certifications (BLS, ACLS) rose from 67% to 99%, ensuring higher patient safety and regulatory adherence.

3

### Improved Patient Safety and Satisfaction

The system led to fewer medication errors, falls, and incidents of accidental dislodging, optimizing staffing resource allocation, and overall patient care.