Why Magnet® Designation is Worth It
By Gen Guanci, MEd, RN-BC, CCRN, Consultant

My journey to Magnet® was not as an early adopter. In the early 2000s my CNO announced at a Director’s meeting that we “had applied for Magnet®...and wasn’t that great!” At that time I had never heard of Magnet®. Of course everyone in the room agreed with her as we knew it could be career limiting if we did not.

However...the meeting after the meeting was a different story. I was resistant, and I wasn’t the only one. First, I had no clue what Magnet® was—never mind how much work it might take. I didn’t care about the answers to these questions as I already had too much work to do and so did everyone else.

Despite my having made no secret of my reservations, I was tapped to co-lead the Magnet® Champion group. This was the group of staff members who would be the eyes, ears, and voice of Magnet® at our hospital. It was only when I saw how excited the champions were about being empowered in the work place, did I finally “drink the Kool-Aid.” I saw how people were changed by the prospect of finally having a voice in decision-making, owning their practice; evolving into professionals, and being able to practice with increased autonomy. Because that work was so rewarding (and I discovered that I was really good at it) I have gone on to work as a consultant partnering with organizations on their initial designation journey or redesignation journey.

A Magnet® journey costs organizations money. Costs can include (but are not limited to) the following:

• Costs associated with the operationalization of professional practice structures and processes including shared decision-making structures
• Magnet®-related education
• Outcome benchmarking database fees
• Fees associated with application, document review, and site visits

Interestingly, however, it’s my experience that Magnet® expenses do more than just earn an organization Magnet® designation or redesignation. The very pursuit of Magnet® raises
the level of professional practice throughout the organization, which in turn improves nurse satisfaction and myriad other measures. Just look at the potential cost savings associated with decreased vacancy rates. Current industry average to replace a bedside nurse is averaging around 75% of their annual salary. This figure doesn’t even include the costs to cover that vacancy such as overtime and agency usage. Depending on salaries in your area, the costs associated with Magnet® Designation could be offset pretty quickly if you were able to decrease your vacancy rate by 10%. This type of double digit decrease is common for Magnet® designated organizations.

The benefits of Magnet®, however, are not limited to nursing. Magnet® organizations also see decreased adverse patient outcomes such as hospital acquired pressure ulcers (HAPU), falls, central line blood stream infections, etc. According to research, one patient fall with injury can add approximately $34,000, or more to a hospitalization cost. Now imagine if your organization decreased its annual falls by 10...that could be a potential savings of $340,000!

Some ask why it wouldn’t be smarter to just put this money into increasing staffing. Staffing alone does not ensure better patient outcomes. Ownership of data by direct care nurses, as well as RN education levels, has proven to improve patient satisfaction as well as nurse sensitive outcomes. It is a healthy work environment, fostered by a Magnet® journey, that has been proven to improve patient outcomes. There is no question that the Magnet® journey has helped raise the level of RN professionalism in every organization I’ve worked with.

So what do you think? Is Magnet® worth it?

As a consultant at Creative Health Care Management, Gen provides expert guidance and leadership, staff, and team development along with structure and process development and strengthening consistent with ANCC Magnet® and Pathway to Excellence(R) Programs as well as other national recognition programs. Organizations who have worked with CHCM have seen an increase in patient satisfaction, improved clinical outcomes and an increase in staff satisfaction. CHCM is very proud to share that 100% of the organizations who have partnered with us for comprehensive support for their Magnet® journey have successfully received their initial designation or redesignation. Gen can be contacted at gguanci@chcm.com.

CHCM’s Cultures of Excellence team’s success rate in helping organizations achieve Magnet® designation or redesignation is 100%.