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Mercy Health earns nursing designation

Fairfield Hospital is now one of nine in Cin-Day region with Magnet recognition.

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By Hannah Poturalski

Staff Writer

FAIRFIELD — Mercy Health-Fairfield Hospital has become Butler County's first hospital to earn a national recognition for its nursing practices.

The Magnet Recognition Program — by the American Nurses Credentialing Center — recognizes health care organizations for quality patient care, nursing excellence and innovations in professional nursing practice.

There are currently 27 hospitals with this designation in Ohio, and just over 400 in the nation, including eight from the Cincinnati-Dayton region.

Mercy Health — Fairfield Hospital now joins the Magnet hospitals of Cincinnati Children's Hospital; Dayton Children's Hospital; Premier Health's Good Samaritan and Miami Valley hospitals near Dayton; Shriners Hospital for Children; The Christ Hospital; and TriHealth's Good Samaritan and Bethesda North hospitals.

"Achieving Magnet recognition reinforces the culture of excellence that is a cornerstone of how we serve our community," said Pat Davis-Hagens, chief nursing officer for Mercy Health. "It's also the tangible evidence of our nurses' commitment to providing the very best care to our patients, of which we are extremely proud."

Fairfield Hospital employs about 640 registered nurses, and has been working toward Magnet status since 2007, Davis-Hagens said.

Efforts have included a team of staff charged with improving the work environment and communication; better integration between nurses and pharmacists to educate patients on medications; and in 2009, implementing a LIFT program to help nurses more safely move patients, according to Davis-Hagens.

Mercy Health was notified of earning the recognition in mid-April after a three-day site visit was completed in February.

The initial application submitted last June included 2,500 pages of evidence detailing how Fairfield Hospital meets the 98 standards for Magnet status.

Those nearly 100 standards are encompassed inside five components of the Magnet model: transformational leadership; structural empowerment; exemplary professional practice; new knowledge, innovations and improvements; and empirical outcomes.

"It's a commitment to a higher standard of care," Davis-Hagens said.

The Magnet designation lasts four years, and when the time comes for re-designation, officials at the Cincinnati-based Mercy Health plan to apply as an entire system to earn Magnet status at its five hospitals.

Other Butler County hospitals that could go after Magnet status in the future include UC Health's West Chester Hospital; TriHealth's Bethesda Butler Hospital in Hamilton; and Premier Health's Atrium Medical Center in Middletown, according to officials.

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