

Registered Nurse Clinical Advancement Program – RN-CAP

Our Advancement and Compensation Program



Hackensack
Meridian *Health*

November 2021

Keep Getting Better

We kicked off 2020 with a three-year nursing strategic plan – one rooted in our deep commitment to humanistic care and sustained through key priorities and goals.

As one integrated nursing team, a critical part of this plan was implementing competitive, harmonized nursing pay practices across the network. We are excited to formally introduce an important element of this initiative and living our brand as we **Keep Getting Better** - our new Registered Nurse Clinical Advancement Program – RN-CAP.

The program is designed to recognize nursing excellence through a points-based system that aligns with our nursing strategic plan and Professional Practice Model.



Purpose

1. Reward and recognize exemplary practices
2. Provide additional opportunities for growth and advancement
3. Acknowledge clinical expertise at the bedside/clinical setting



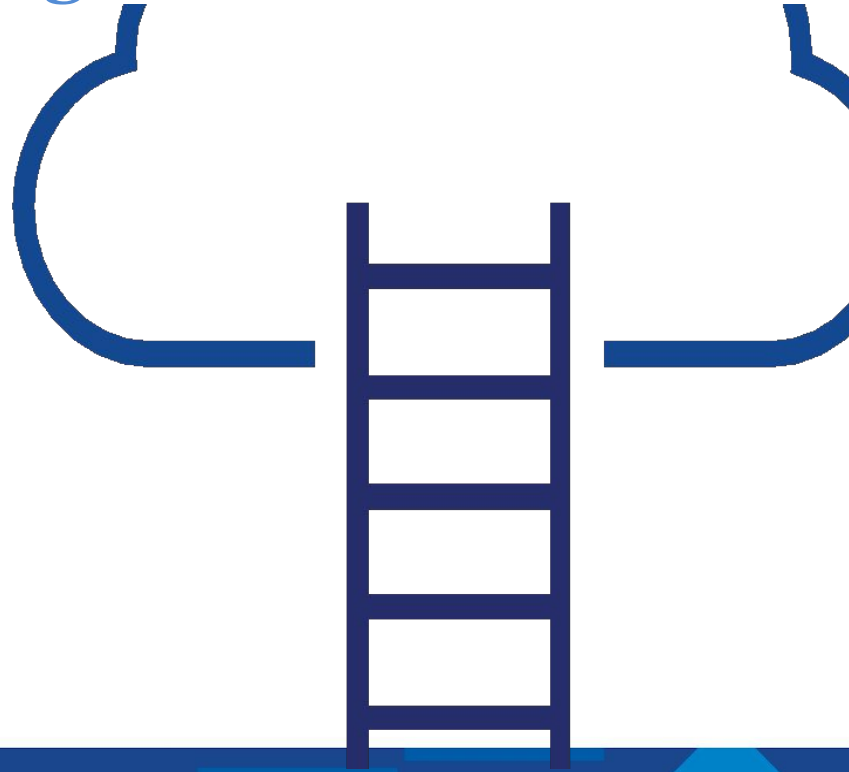
Objectives

- To **enhance patient care** through clinical excellence.
- To **improve job satisfaction**, encourage recruitment, aid retention efforts, and to improve the nurse's engagement to the institution.
- To provide opportunities to **enhance professional development** and encourage the development of clinical expertise.
- To **provide an outcomes-based model** that accurately demonstrates the expertise of the bedside nurse.



5 Components to Climbing the Ladder

1. Transformational Leadership
2. Structural Empowerment
3. Exemplary Professional Practice
4. New Knowledge, Innovation, and Improvements
5. Clinical Practice Exemplars



Who is Eligible?

- Staff Nurse RNs with standard work hours for 20+ hours/week (Full-Time or Part-Time)
- Levels II, III and IV require:
 - Satisfactory Performance Appraisal
 - Manager Endorsement
 - No Level II, Gross Infraction disciplinary actions within 12 months

Who is *Not* Eligible?

- Per diem team members
- Part time team members with standard work hours less than 20 hours per week
- RNs in leadership positions/roles, including (but not limited to): Nurse Managers, Assistant Nurse Managers, Case Managers, Supervisors, Directors, Administrators, Nurse Educators, Coordinators
- RNs that were not part of the May 2020 Staff Registered Nurse Harmonization efforts
- Team members covered under a collective bargaining agreement unless their Union agrees to their participation in the program. HMH and its affiliates are required by law to negotiate about mandatory subjects of bargaining.



How Do I Climb the Ladder?

- Achievement- and growth-driven model
- Transparent criteria and points accumulation
- Balance of education, experience and excellence in patient care

Here are some examples of climbing the ladder activities:

Component	Structural Empowerment	Transformational Leadership
Level II	Develops/presents unit-based education	Attended preceptor/mentor educational activities
Level III	Develops/presents campus-based education	Acts as preceptor/mentor for at least one individual
Level IV	Develops/presents regional/network/external education	Acts as preceptor/mentor for more than one individual(s)

Note: All New Hires start as Level I

Criteria – Level II

- 1+ years of clinical experience*
- BSN in progress*
- Obtain a minimum of **3 points** in each of the 5 Components. No more than 5 points will be credited in each category.
- Total of **20 points** earned

*Note: Current team members on a clinical ladder programs prior to May 2020: Current education and experience will be recognized to maintain your current ladder level as long as you meet all the other requirements for the ladder. Those team members will not be able to move up unless the new education and experience requirements are met for the next level.

Criteria – Level III

- 3+ years of clinical experience*
- BSN completed*
- Must obtain a minimum of **6 points** in each of the 5 Components. No more than 10 points will be credited in each category.
- Total of **35 points** earned

*Note: Current team members on a clinical ladder programs prior to May 2020: Current education and experience will be recognized to maintain your current ladder level as long as you meet all the other requirements for the ladder. Those team members will not be able to move up unless the new education and experience requirements are met for the next level.

Criteria – Level IV

- 5+ years of clinical experience*
- Nationally Certified
- MSN*
- Must obtain a minimum of **9 points** in each of the 5 Components. No more than 15 points will be credited in each category.
- Total of **50 points** earned

*Note: Current team members on a clinical ladder programs prior to May 2020: Current education and experience will be recognized to maintain your current ladder level as long as you meet all the other requirements for the ladder. Those team members will not be able to move up unless the new education and experience requirements are met for the next level.

Compensation

- Annual payment each July (prorated based on scheduled hours).
 - Level II: \$1,000
 - Level III: \$2,500
 - Level IV: \$4,000

Note: Any amounts paid for a Clinical Ladder prior to harmonization have been factored into the new base rates. We wanted to make sure that hourly base rates will be at or better than before!

Existing Clinical Ladder Participants

- Everyone's hourly rate will be at or better than before!
 - Let us reassure you, we made sure to factor in all of your current Clinical Ladder pay components when calculating your new higher hourly rate.
 - RNs will now have a higher base rate eligible for merit increases each year AND the annual bonus potential.
- Recognition of Education and Experience:
 - Current education and experience recognized as per the table below to maintain current ladder level. (Note: this is applicable for both the initial application and renewal applications)
 - **All existing Clinical Ladder participants must submit an application portfolio and meet all other requirements/total points to qualify to maintain current ladder level.**
 - Cannot advance to next level until new education and experience requirements are met for the next level

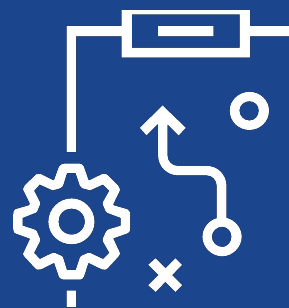
Level	HMH Nursing Program	HUMC	OMC, RMC, BMC	RBMC	PMC, JFK, Carrier
1st Tier - New Hires	Level I	Level I	Level I	n/a	No Program
2nd Tier	Level II	Level II	Level II	Level I	
3rd Tier	Level III	Level III	Level III	Level II	
4th Tier	Level IV	Level IV	Level IV Level V	Level III	

Existing Clinical Ladder Participants

Prior to May 2020	Application Process November 2021 <input type="checkbox"/> March 2022	Ladder Level Achieved By May 2022
<p>Prior Ladder Program participant, if applicable.</p> <p>Compensation: Base hourly rate + hourly clinical ladder pay where applicable.</p>	<p>Ladder levels will be determined following initial application process. All RNs must apply to the new RN-CAP program</p> <p>Compensation: Base hourly rate will be at or better than prior base hourly rate plus hourly clinical ladder pay. No negative impact to pay.</p> <p>For initial application, will count the education and experience for same level. So you will not be disqualified if you were a Level III previously but do not have the BSN to meet the new Level III requirements now.</p> <p>Must accumulate enough points in the new ladder program to maintain level. So for Level III, will need at least 35 points to maintain level.</p>	<p>Clinical Ladder committee will review and approve applications.</p> <p>As long as application is approved prior to May 31, 2021, will be eligible for the Clinical Ladder Bonus in July 2021.</p>

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

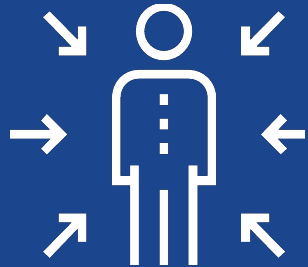
- Aligned with nursing mission, vision, and values.
- Advocates for resources.
- Influences change.
- Support ongoing leadership/professional development.



Clinical Ladder Level II	Clinical Ladder Level III	Clinical Ladder Level IV
COMPETENT (1 POINT EACH)	PROFICIENT (2 POINTS EACH)	EXPERT (3 POINTS EACH)
Attended shift leader/charge nurse educational activity (show proof of one-time attendance)	Acts as shift leader/charge nurse (attestation from nurse manager)	Acts as the primary shift leader/charge nurse (attestation from nurse manager)
Attended preceptor/mentor educational activities	Acts as preceptor/mentor for at least one individual	Acts as preceptor/mentor for more than one individual(s)
Unit-based committee member	Unit-based committee chair or co-chair Campus-based committee member	Campus-based committee chair or co-chair OR Regional/Network-based committee member
Unit-based taskforce participation	Unit-based taskforce lead or Campus-based taskforce participation	Campus-based taskforce lead
Campus-based award/honor		Network or external award/honor
Nursing and/or professional organization membership	Nursing and/or professional organization participation	Nursing and/or professional organization leadership
Identifies need for additional resource(s) (unit-based or higher)	Assists in proposal development for additional resource(s) (unit-based or higher)	Participates in the allocation of at least 1 new resource (unit-based or higher)

STRUCTURAL EMPOWERMENT

- Involvement in interprofessional decision-making groups.
- Participates in local, regional, national, international professional organizations
- Participates in professional development activities.
- Engaged in professional development.
- Contributes to strategic priorities.



Clinical Ladder Level II	Clinical Ladder Level III	Clinical Ladder Level IV
COMPETENT (1 POINT EACH)	PROFICIENT (2 POINTS EACH)	EXPERT (3 POINTS EACH)
Develops/presents unit-based education	Develops/presents campus-based education	Develops/presents regional/network/external education
Designs a unit-based story board/poster.	Designs and disseminates a unit-based story board/poster and presents at a campus/system conference	Provides contact-hours for educational activity Designs and Disseminates a story board/poster at State/Regional or National Conference
Member of a journal club	Participates in the preparation of a journal club presentation	Leader of a journal club; Presents article at journal club
Campus involvement in community healthcare outreach/awareness	Local involvement in community healthcare outreach/awareness	Regional or higher involvement in community healthcare outreach Participation in a medical mission
	Attended at least one local or regional conference	Attends at least 1 state or national conference
	Progression in an academic or specialty educational program	Completion of an academic or specialty educational program

EXEMPLARY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

- Participation in recruitment and retention activities.
- Collaborate with interprofessional activities to improve quality of care and patient safety.
- Engage in performance review activities.
- Work to full autonomy and potential within scope of practice.
- Utilizes resources for ethical issues.
- Promotes workplace safety.
- Focused on proactive risk assessment and error management.
- Participates in activities to improve/maintain nurse-sensitive clinical indicators.
- Participates in activities to improve/maintain patient satisfaction.

Clinical Ladder Level II	Clinical Ladder Level III	Clinical Ladder Level IV
COMPETENT (1 POINT EACH)	PROFICIENT (2 POINTS EACH)	EXPERT (3 POINTS EACH)
Participates in peer review process	Participates in clinical ladder committee	Lead peer review process
Provides unit-based expertise for clinical/quality issues	Provides campus-based expertise for clinical/quality issues	Provides regional/network-based expertise for clinical/quality issues
	Participates in a unit-level or higher project for clinical indicators/patient safety/patient satisfaction (QI/PI)	Lead in a unit-level or higher project for clinical indicators/patient safety/patient satisfaction
Participates in unit-based recruitment/retention activities	Participates in organizational-based recruitment/retention activities	Participates in regional/network-based recruitment/retention activities - OR - Leads in unit-based recruitment/retention activities
Identifies workplace safety concerns	Participates in a unit-level or higher project for workplace safety initiative	Lead in a unit-level or higher project for workplace safety initiative
Attends an educational activity on ethical /cultural issues	Shares knowledge learned at ethical/cultural educational activities at the unit-level	Supports activities/resources at unit-level or higher for ethical/cultural issues

NEW KNOWLEDGE, INNOVATIONS & IMPROVEMENTS

- Supports advancement of Evidence-Based Practice Models(EBP) / research.
- Promotes EBP/research findings.
- Supports innovation in nursing.
- Supports technological advancements for patient experience and/or nursing practice.
- Supports workflow improvements.



Clinical Ladder Level II	Clinical Ladder Level III	Clinical Ladder Level IV
COMPETENT (1 POINT EACH)	PROFICIENT (2 POINTS EACH)	EXPERT (3 POINTS EACH)
Attends at least one educational activities on EBP/Research per year and shares knowledge learned	Attends at least one local conference(s) on EBP/Research per year and shares knowledge learned	Attends at least one regional or national conference(s) on EBP/Research and shares knowledge learned
		Implements change from knowledge learned at educational activities and shows an improved patient outcome as a result of this change
Conducts a literature review	Develops a PICO question	Completes critical appraisal of a research project
Member of an EBP project	Participates in an EBP project	Lead for an EBP project
Member of a research project	Participates in a research project	Lead for a research project (Investigator or co-investigator)
Attends Research/EBP conference at campus-level of higher	Participates in planning of Research/EBP conference at campus-level of higher	Assist with coordination of Research/EBP conference at campus-level of higher
	Co-contributor for published article	Has submitted an abstract on research/EBP to a recognized conference or peer review journal
	Has been published in a campus/network wide article	Has been published in a peer review journal

NEW KNOWLEDGE, INNOVATIONS & IMPROVEMENTS *continued*

Definitions

- Member: Nurse actively involved in the project delivering interventions or changes in practice
- Participates: Nurse who is part of the project/research team involved in the development of the project and/or data collection
- Lead: Nurse who leads the project/research team



Clinical Ladder Level II	Clinical Ladder Level III	Clinical Ladder Level IV
COMPETENT (1 POINT EACH)	PROFICIENT (2 POINTS EACH)	EXPERT (3 POINTS EACH)
Member of a quality improvement project	Participates in a quality improvement project	Lead for a quality improvement project with project approval from the site quality department
Member of an innovation project	Participates in an innovation project	Lead for an innovation project
Member of a technology project	Participates in a technology project	Lead for a technology project
Provide proof of attendance at a poster presentation event and critiques the poster	Critique poster presentation(s) for contact hours	Critique poster presentation(s) for selection for conference or awards for Nurse Research and EBP posters (walkthrough activity with an accompanying EBP tool)
Presents research activity/poster at unit level	Presents research activity/poster at campus level	Presents research activity/poster to hospital research council or other Nursing Council; at network level or externally
		Completes education on the protection of human subjects (CITI training)
Participation in research by completing quantitative/qualitative surveys	Participation in research by participating interviews and/or focus groups	Meaningful participation in research studies through data collection
		Group project, lead by applicant, to create and disseminate nursing research/EBP to unit

CLINICAL PRACTICE EXEMPLARS

Provide narrative with peer/manager signature for verification



Clinical Ladder Level II	Clinical Ladder Level III	Clinical Ladder Level IV
COMPETENT (1 POINT EACH)	PROFICIENT (2 POINTS EACH)	EXPERT (3 POINTS EACH)
Demonstrates ability to recognize patterns & changes in patient status	Discusses specific patient care situations where anticipation of the likely course of events led to independent & collaborative interventions resulting in the best possible outcome	Describes how & when other nurses or members of the interdisciplinary team have sought guidance on challenging patient care problems/issues
Demonstrates independent and collaborative interventions to effect positive outcomes	Demonstrates individualized care to ensure the best outcome and implements interventions that addresses patients' beliefs and values	Provides examples of situations where identification of early, unexpected or subtle changes in a patient with complex needs led to independent & collaborative interventions that improved specific outcomes. Demonstrates expert critical thinking
Demonstrates positive outcomes based upon communication with patients and significant others	Routinely consults with the interdisciplinary team	Empowers and advocates for patients in a manner that improves patient outcomes or impacts/changes hospital systems
Other	Serves as a resource to others especially in area of expertise	Other
Other	Other	Other

How Is It Administered?

- Each campus has a committee with a Chair and Co-Chair.
- Network program coordinator:
 - Susan Ryan, MA, RN-BC - Susan.Ryan@hmhn.org
- Applications accepted November 1 through March 1
 - Applications submitted by the 1st of the month will be reviewed in that month.
- Advancement will follow upon acceptance
 - Allow up to 2 months for processing

How Often Can I Advance?

- Clinical Levels are renewed every 3 years
- RNs may apply to advance to another Level every 12 months
 - Assumes criteria is met
 - Levels II, III and IV must have:
 - Satisfactory Performance Appraisal and Manager Endorsement.
 - If applicable, the most recent peer review attestation form
 - Up to date Resume/CV
 - No Level II, Gross disciplinary actions within 12 months.

New Hires

- Starts Level I
 - After successfully completing probationary period
- Experienced nurses can
 - Newly hired Registered Nurses with a minimum of fifteen (15) months of experience may apply for the most appropriate RN-CAP level at the next advancement period.
- New graduate RNs must wait 12 months to apply for Level II

Where can I get an application?

- The RN-CAP webpage can be accessed from hospital or home at:
 - Intranet – MyHMH -Search: RN Clinical Advancement
 - Internet- www.jobs.HackensackMeridianHealth.org
 - Click on Nursing – scroll down to Education & Support
- The site includes:
 - By-Laws
 - The By-Laws tell you the who, what, where, when, why and how
 - Application Guide
 - How to complete the application
 - Examples
 - Application

Questions and Answers

Q. Prior to June 2020 I was a Level III with a renewal date of 2023. Do I need to apply to receive the 2022 bonus?

A. Yes. Ladder levels will be determined following initial application process. All RNs must apply to the new RN-CAP program.

Q. I was a Level IV, but I do not have an MSN. Can I still apply for Level IV?

A. Yes. Registered Nurses who were advanced on previous HMH clinical advancement programs may apply at the same level, regardless of degree status. All other requirements to qualify must be met.

Q. I was a Specialty Scholar, Level V. Do I need to apply?

A. Yes. There is no longer a Level V. You may apply for up to Level IV.

Q & A continued

Q. I was a Level IV. What if I do not meet the other requirements for Level IV?

A. You may apply to the highest level you feel you can meet. Your campus committee will review your application portfolio to determine your level.

Q. I wasn't on a previous Ladder program. What Level can I apply for?

A. First time applicants may apply to whatever level they desire, if they meet the minimum experience and educational levels.

Q & A continued

Q. What happens if my application portfolio is denied?

A. Applications submitted November through March that do not meet criteria will be returned to the applicant with deficiencies noted. The applicant may reapply through May 1 if deficiencies are rectified.

Q. I was a Level III at HUMC, now I work at JSUMC. Can I still apply for Level III?

A. Yes. Registered Nurses who were advanced on previous HMH clinical advancement programs may apply at the same level, regardless of degree status. All other requirements to qualify must be met. RN-CAP status is maintained and transferred from unit to unit and hospital campus to hospital campus.

Please note: these programs do not include team members covered under a collective bargaining agreement. We are required by law to negotiate about mandatory subjects of bargaining with the unions that represent a small number of Hackensack Meridian Health team members. Some of the labor contracts between Hackensack Meridian Health allow respective represented team members to automatically receive the benefits non-union team members receive; others do not. We are committed to negotiating in good faith as required by law, and we will not engage in any direct dealing with union-represented team members. Union-represented team members should contact their respective union about any questions they have.

HMH expressly reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to change, modify or delete the provisions of this policy in whole or in part, at any time or for any reason without notice. The employment terms set out in this policy work in conjunction with, and do not replace, amend, or supplement any terms or conditions of employment stated in any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Wherever employment terms in this policy differ from the terms expressed in the applicable collective bargaining agreement, team members should refer to the specific terms of the collective bargaining agreement, which will control. Any questions regarding this policy and procedure may be referred to Human Resources.