



Nursing Professional Advancement Ladder Guidelines

Purpose

The Nursing Professional Advancement Ladder (NPAL) is a method of recognizing staff nurses who demonstrate professional nursing practice.

Eligibility Requirements

All nurses eligible to apply to the NPAL program will be considered Level I unless the employee demonstrates the criteria required for advancement to a higher level and criteria has been met. Employees who wish to participate must meet the following eligibility requirements in order to be considered and maintain their status once achieved:

1. Minimum work requirements for Bronson must be met.
2. No written disciplinary actions against the employee in the last 12 months. The employee must remain in good standing while on the NPAL. If written disciplinary action occurs while on the NPAL, all rewards cease.
3. Must be an employee of Bronson Methodist Hospital or Bronson Vicksburg Hospital in one of the following job classes:
 - 2510 (Registered Nurse)
 - 2519 (Cardiovascular Svc. Registered Nurse)
 - 2524 (Registered Nurse – In-house Transport)
 - 2525 (Registered Nurse – OC VIP)
 - 2550 (Charge Nurse – prior to 1/1/96)
 - 2553 (Charge Nurse)
 - 2719 (Registered Nurse – Transport)

Criteria for Advancement

There are ten categories of criteria for advancement. Four of the categories are mandatory and must be achieved in order to advance to the next level. The other six criteria are elective; however, at least three out of the six must be met. Activities submitted must have been performed in the previous 24 months.

Application Process

In order to advance to Level II, III or IV on the NPAL, the staff nurse must completely fill out an application form and develop a professional portfolio with supporting evidence demonstrating how required criteria are met for the level in which they are applying. See your Professional Practice Council representative for guidance on developing your portfolio.

Applications are accepted January 1 – January 21 and June 1 – June 21 and are to be submitted to the Administrative Assistant for the Department of Professional Practice at Box 88. Prior to submitting the application and portfolio, it must be reviewed and signed by the applicant's nurse manager. Participants in the NPAL must demonstrate their performance every other year through reapplication to maintain or advance their status on the NPAL. Failure to do so moves an employee back to Level I. Applicants may only advance to the level for which they apply. Applicants may apply to any level on the ladder.

The Professional Practice Council will review applications. The Council will recommend whether or not a participant should advance to the level for which they have applied. The committee may ask for applicant input or clarification of information submitted. The applicant will have 10 days to respond. Failure to do so results in a decline of NPAL advancement and ends the application process.

A letter regarding the level obtained will be sent to the applicant and unit manager to be stored in the employee's file. The committee review document will be shared with the applicant upon request. The level designated will remain in effect for a two-year period.

Appeal Process

The purpose of the appeal process is to ensure the standards established for the NPAL application are fairly applied to all applicants.



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Applicants who are denied may appeal the decision to the Professional Practice Chair with the initiation of the appeal process. The request for appeal must be submitted via e-mail to the Chair of the Professional Practice Council (PPCChair@bronsonhg.org). An appeal session will be scheduled as soon as possible by mutual agreement of those involved.

The Appeal Board will be composed of members of the Professional Practice Council. The Appeal Session shall be conducted according to the following guidelines:

1. The Appeal Board will convene to review the application.
2. The applicant will be invited to present their application to the Appeal Board in an open forum.
3. The Appeal Board will then review and discuss information presented.
4. The Appeal Board will make a final decision.
5. The applicant will be notified in writing from the Professional Practice Council with the final decision.

Incentives

Credits (one credit equals one dollar) to be used for professional development purposes will be awarded according to the following parameters:

- Level II status will receive 500 credits per year
- Level III status will receive 750 credits per year
- Level IV status will receive 1,000 credits per year

Credits must be used within one year of award and meet the IRS approved business expense guidelines. Items reimbursable through the NPAL program are:

- Stethoscope/mobile medical equipment*
- Conferences/Workshops – registration fees, transportation, lodging
- Certification/recertification
- Journal subscriptions
- Professional organization membership
- Tuition (taxable benefit if over the Federal limit)
- Books – text/reference
- CEUs
- Medical mission trips*
- Computer/laptop/printer – one every 5 years; replacement parts*
- Software – word processing, ect; Nursing-related software*
- Scheduling tools/PDAs/planners*

* taxable fringe benefit; reimbursed amount will be added to your pay information

Use of professional development credits is coordinated through the Department of Professional Practice. Staff will submit the appropriate paperwork to the Administrative Assistant (Box 88) to access allocated credits.

The participant's identification badge will reflect the current level achieved on NPAL. If an employee advances to a new level, Bronson will provide a new name badge. Employees who choose not to maintain an advanced level (II-IV) will have a new name badge issued indicating Level I.

Additional monetary incentives will be evaluated each year. Resources will be budgeted and allocated as finances allow.

The NPAL program will be reviewed annually by the Divisional Nursing Shared Governance Council and the Director of Professional Practice and will be modified as needed.

For questions about the Nursing Professional Advancement Ladder, please call the Director of Professional Practice at 341-6182.