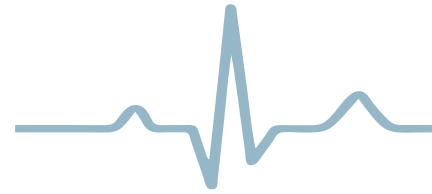


HealthBeat

SPRING 2024



Rochelle Sjoberg, CHRO
Ely-Bloomenson
Community Hospital

"Every employee wants to feel valued. When they do, they are more engaged and motivated to be productive."

EBCH's employees are so important. We cannot achieve great patient care or support the community without them. A key part of this is employee recognition.

Since an employee survey was conducted in 2018, when EBCH's employee engagement level was in the 16th percentile, we've been on a trajectory toward better engagement.

"We reviewed all feedback and made changes," said Sjoberg. "We wanted to consolidate all recognition opportunities and chose the Bucketlist platform for this."

Bucketlist helped EBCH launch multiple recognition opportunities in one place on a social media-like

platform, and EBCH also hosted the first Annual Employee Awards in December to honor employees who had been recognized for their work.

EBCH has now jumped to the 95th percentile in employee engagement, surpassing the national average.

Another safeguard for employee and patient satisfaction is the Service Excellence program, which includes Advisors and Ambassadors who set an example of dedicated, professional care. They bring concerns to leadership, host workshops and training sessions, develop patient-forward policies and more.

Another example of commitment to employees and patients is



continuing education support, which helps employees receive degrees and certifications.

"One example is our LPN to RN program that allows employees to continue their professional growth," Sjoberg explains. As part of this program, employees can maintain their insurance coverage with school hours counting as work credit.

Sjoberg reflected on the growth she's seen in her 23 years with EBCH.

"The team here has been through so many challenges and has come through them all. With support from our CEO and board, and with our amazing frontline team, we can achieve anything – the sky is the limit."

REFLECTING A UNIQUE COMMITMENT TO CARE

SERVICE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM TAKES PATIENT CARE TO NEW HEIGHTS

In 2018, EBCH embarked on a transformative journey with the Service Excellence program. The objective was clear: become the provider and employer of choice, offering a healthcare experience that exceeds expectations.

Service Excellence as an Initiative

Through the Service Excellence program, EBCH envisions a workplace where employees actively choose the hospital and enjoy their work, confident in the knowledge they'll provide excellent care. The program relies on members of clinical and non-clinical staff who step into roles, known as Service Excellence Advisors and Ambassadors, and then embody desired behaviors to influence the work culture.

Radiologic Technologist and Service Excellence Super Coach Brianna Crawford, RT (R)(M) (CT)(ARRT), shed light on the program's significance. Crawford started as an Advisor when the program began, then became an Ambassador the following year. After that, she was asked to be a Service Excellence Super Coach.

"We've seen a direct correlation between employee engagement and a better patient experience. A happy, valued team member delivers high-quality, consistent care versus an unappreciated team member who may not. It's that simple," Crawford said.



Patti Banks & Heidi Schiltz

Advisors and Ambassadors

Service Excellence Advisors attend monthly Synergy Meetings to talk with CEO Patti Banks, and they serve as the eyes and ears of the organization. They bring forward any rumors, questions or concerns and then work to get them addressed. Advisors also lead workshops on customer service topics and implement best practices.

Typically, Service Excellence Ambassadors were once Advisors who also taught workshops, but as Ambassadors, they focus on supporting Advisors. They also attend a Synergy Meeting every quarter.

Both Advisors and Ambassadors are charged with setting an example of the behaviors EBCH expects and with creating a work culture that benefits both employees and patients.

In Their Own Words

"We work to reach common goals like a positive work culture, kind and caring service, safety and compliance, responsible finances, growth and more."

- Leah Hiller, Patient Access Representative and Service Excellence Advisor

"The program provides tools to all employees to help enhance communication skills, patient care and coworker interactions, and teamwork between departments."

- April Howe, Medical Laboratory Technician, ASCP, and Service Excellence Advisor

"I identify strategies to better EBCH's atmosphere for patients and employees. In the past, I've been involved in new employee orientations and have helped to create solid foundations for new staff to build upon."

- Jenny Dodge, Laboratory Assistant and Service Excellence Ambassador

"Throughout the year, Advisors and Ambassadors promote the program and keep momentum moving forward, with the goal of helping EBCH become the hospital of choice for our community."

- Tiffany Zemke, Clinical Educator/ Infection Preventionist and Service Excellence Ambassador

"It's a lead-by-example role. We've worked to increase professionalism at EBCH, not only for our patients' benefit but also to set a higher standard of respect and professionalism among our coworkers."

- Nicki Carlson, RN, Trauma Coordinator and Service Excellence Ambassador

EDUCATION THAT EMPOWERS

Transforming Careers and Patient Care via Education and Professional Growth

EBCH is sowing the seeds of career empowerment, shaping a future where employees thrive, innovate and enhance the healthcare landscape. Through educational and professional growth opportunities, staff can achieve higher degrees and certifications – ensuring ongoing learning and growth.

Medical Imaging Success



Radiographer Tony Hernandez, RT (R)(CT)(ARRT), is an education and professional growth success story. Backed by EBCH, he achieved a Bachelor's of Science in Medical Imaging and Therapeutic Sciences from the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

"Part of this involved classes that provided education on topics like MRI safety, protocols and procedures, advanced MRI physics and clinical practice." explained Hernandez.

Achieving this degree also required him to meet prerequisites like a minimum GPA, accredited radiography degree completion, the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) board certification and basic life support (BLS) certification.

Hernandez's education has benefited EBCH by expanding outpatient MRI services to a full-time schedule and improving patient accessibility. His advanced knowledge also contributes to a more efficient patient care experience.

"I'm now eligible for managerial positions," said Hernandez. "I wouldn't have been able to receive said education without EBCH backing me financially and promoting an environment that fits my academic goals."

He also described his UGPIV Mastery certification: "EBCH is so willing to help employees with career improvement, to the point of supporting training opportunities amid other education endeavors."

A Facilities Achievement

Another example of educational and professional growth is Keith Spicer, Facilities, Second-Class Engineer, Grade C. His path to becoming a Second-Class Engineer involved coursework, tests and hands-on training, supported by higher-license EBCH engineers.

EBCH covered the cost of Spicer's books, tests and out-of-town



meals and hotels when he took the exam: "They knew I'd be able to use my past experience but also ensured I could achieve this higher-level license."

Spicer's role involves everything from fixing an ice machine and painting rooms, to repairing a dent in a door, moving furniture and plunging toilets. But his new license means he is also certified for other work.

"With this certification, I can work with hot-water boilers and low-pressure steam," he shared. "I'm able to jump in and help when the heat isn't working or when a boiler issue comes up. This leads to a better experience for everyone."

Spicer believes in lifelong learning: "If you don't learn something new every day, maybe they're not wasted days, but those days aren't as valuable. To me, it's important to learn something and find new things I can do."



CELEBRATING SUCCESS: EBCH's First Annual Employee Awards

EBCH hosted its first Annual Employee Awards event in 2023. This event spotlighted outstanding employees and underscored a commitment to a positive work environment. Leaders and award recipients attended the event in person to receive their awards, but all employees could attend the event and be eligible for recognition.

An Improvement Journey

EBCH's collaboration with Bucketlist, a third-party rewards platform, marked a pivotal moment in the hospital's employee rewards and recognition program. Bucketlist empowered staff to nominate colleagues, creating a channel to highlight remarkable work within the hospital. The ceremony also honored those who received outside local, state and national awards.

Marketing and Communications Team Leader Jodi Martin provided insights into the event's origins.

"A 2018 employee engagement survey placed us in the 16th percentile with a score of 3.92/5. The hospital made strategic changes, including a rewards and recognition program," she explained. "By 2023, results soared to the 95th percentile with a score of 4.44/5."

Beyond statistics, the mission was to recognize the tireless efforts of EBCH's team: "Our overarching goal was to give our team the recognition they deserve for doing incredible work, often under challenging circumstances."

An Inside Look

The Annual Employee Awards included categories like:

- **5-Star Service Award:** Recognition of employee complimented in a patient survey, card, letter and more.
- **Safety Award:** Monthly acknowledgment of an individual or group exemplifying a culture of safety.
- **Employee Monthly Superstar:** Nominations from teammates for employees going above and beyond.
- **Employee of the Quarter:** Recognition of employees who excel and support EBCH's mission, vision and culture.



There is also an Annual Pillar Award, granted by EBCH's Executive Team. It highlights individuals who embody the pillars of patient and employee engagement, no margin no mission, quality and safety, and community involvement.

Elevating Employee Morale

Martin emphasized it's crucial to recognize healthcare workers, particularly after the challenges they've faced during the pandemic and staff shortages.

An Annual Employee Awards ceremony will now be held every December, making it a recurring feature at EBCH. By hosting an event that acknowledges achievements and creates a culture of appreciation, EBCH has elevated its workplace environment and reinforced its mission of excellence in healthcare.