

Respiratory Therapy Career Ladder Model

October 2014

The Respiratory Therapy Career Ladder Toolkit was constructed to recognize and reward clinical expertise and professional growth based on established standards. This toolkit promotes accountability, autonomy and collaboration resulting in increased professional satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Additional purposes for this toolkit include the promotion of excellence in respiratory care thus enhancing quality patient care and patient satisfaction. Along with the facilitation of career advancement for therapists who choose to improve clinical skills to promote recruitment and retention efforts in hospitals and care facilities.

The intent is to use this toolkit as a template for facilities desiring to promote and implement a clinical ladder program for their respiratory therapy personnel. Modifications, as appropriate, for the facility are encouraged.

General Information

1. The Respiratory Career Development Program is a system through which the Respiratory Therapist assesses his/her practice in meeting the Professional Practice, Characteristic, and Requirement Expectations.
2. Participation in any career development program is voluntary.
3. A portfolio should be maintained and submitted to assigned committee in order to get entrance in a program.
4. Financial incentives should be paid by equal installments when applicable. The Respiratory therapist must be employed at a hospital or care facility during the pay period in which the installment is paid out.
5. A therapist who changes to an ineligible job class and has met the previous year's requirement after completing 12 months of service should only receive the first installment.
7. Participants should re-apply annually for maintenance or advancement in the program.
8. Therapists should meet all performance expectations of current level by annual feedback from assigned committee date for maintenance of that level.
9. The assigned committee should review all applications for Levels II, III and IV.
10. Criteria for the Career Development Program should be reviewed annually by an assigned committee including a Clinical Associate and Clinical Educator.
11. Any applicant may submit grievances to the manager.
12. Advancement to the next level should require the Respiratory Therapist to meet all requirements of that level by the annual application period.

Committee

The assigned committee should consist of a manager and assistant manager, at least one educator in the program, and at least 4 highly qualified respiratory therapist who have made their mark in the hospital or care facility. The committee should be responsible for:

- Reviewing, revising and making decisions on implementation issues
- Collaborating with internal compensation analysts for determination of compensation amounts
- Reviewing and deciding on proposals for new criteria or criteria to be eliminated

Respiratory Therapist Development Career Levels

Therapist I / New Graduate / New Hire / Entry Level

This level should be assigned to a therapist who is learning and incorporating the mission statement and standards of behavior of his/her hospital or care facility. This therapist should have completed the basic competencies, and provides satisfactory respiratory therapy with minimum supervision.

Required Standards

- New graduates during their first two years of experience and therapists new to a hospital or care facility from the time of hire until successful completion of a probationary period (suggesting 90 days for full-time and 150 days for part-time).

Therapist II

This level should be assigned to a competent performer, who is fully competent in all aspects of his/her job description. This therapist should demonstrate the mastery of most clinical skills and focuses on improving other skills where necessary. This skills includes assessment skills and the active assessment of respiratory therapies needed and procedures according to the respiratory protocols.

Required Standards

- Therapists with a minimum of two years of experience who has successfully completed the Respiratory Care Department competencies and the designated probationary period.
- Submit portfolio to assigned committee.

Therapist III

This level should be assigned to a therapist who has met core skills of a respiratory therapist II. The level III therapist should be a competent performer, who is fully competent in all aspects of his/her job description. A proficient therapist has progressed from a task-oriented approach to performing all clinical and interpersonal related tasks with a view of the entire patient experience/team member interaction. Optimal problem-solving skills is apparent and activities are oriented to the best possible outcome for any situation. This therapist should respond to situations with speed, confidence, flexibility, and a good attitude and is able to appropriately handle unanticipated problems or emergencies. This therapist should be viewed as a positive role model for his/her peers and consistently produces complete and accurate work.

Completion of the therapist III level should be rewarded by additional compensation.

Required Standards

- Assigned committee approval for entrance into the level and completion of the level
- Evaluation of all level, hospital or care facility competencies by assigned committee
- Satisfactory peer reviews (total of 3)

- Competency in performing highly skilled tasks such as endotracheal intubations per respiratory policies
- 100% staff meeting attendance for the 2 year period the application represents, unless excuse by assigned committee for rare or unusual circumstance
- Submit portfolio to assigned committee.

Therapist IV

This level should be assigned to a therapist whose intuitions and skill derives from a comprehensive knowledge base that is thoroughly grounded in clinical experience. This therapist is system-savvy, understands the interdependence of departments, and can direct situations to maximize outcomes. Ethical reasoning and decision-making is evident. His/her ability to automatically filter irrelevant information should be evident. This therapist is a positive force in the advancement of professional practice and quality of patient care. This therapist is a positive force in the advancement of professional practice and quality of patient care. This therapist is seen as a positive Team Leader for his/her peers.

Completion of the therapist IV level should be rewarded by additional compensation.

Required Standards

- Assigned committee approval for entrance into the level and completion of the level
- Evaluation of all level, hospital or care facility competencies by assigned committee
- Above average peer reviews (total of 3)
- Competency in performing highly skilled tasks per respiratory policies
- Approved preceptor for new respiratory care team members or respiratory students on clinical rotations
- 100% staff meeting attendance for the year period spent in level III and IV, unless excuse by assigned committee for rare or unusual circumstance
- Submit portfolio to assigned committee.

Additional requirements for levels III and IV

- Acute or sub-acute Respiratory Therapist experience (minimum of 2 years for level III – 3 years for level IV)
- Completed Bachelor Degree or actively enrolled in a Bachelor program with completion of BA/BS degree expected within 4 years. **[optional]**
- Completion of Preceptor workshop with active participation in preceptor responsibilities
- Professional contributions to include but limited to, a patient satisfaction improvement initiative, work redesign project, staff development initiative, or other involvement approved by assigned committee.

Restrictions

- Any therapist seeking entrance into a higher level must be free of any previous level active disciplinary action.
- If disciplinary action is received, the therapist will be moved to the previous level and a salary adjustment will be made to reflect change of status.
- Change of status can occur at any time requirements/competencies are not maintained.
- The therapist who has been disciplined may re-apply 12 months after a change to a lower level of after achieving an overall rating of Role Model on the most recent performance review at the lower level, whichever comes first.

*The review process must include most recent performance appraisal. If significant deficiencies are noted within the appraisal, this would serve as an obstacle to being recognized as achieving a higher career path level.

Portfolios

All Respiratory Therapist of level II, III and IVs will complete a portfolio to be turned in to their assigned committee by preset deadline.

It is the responsibility of each therapist to show evidence that the criteria has been met annually. Annual is defined as twelve calendar months from October 1 through September 30. The following should be included in the portfolio:

- Current resume (to be updated annually as appropriate)
- Statement stating that you meet all the characteristics/requirements for the level that you are applying for, this must be co-signed by your Clinical Manager.
- Recommendation letter from interdisciplinary team member or level IV team member.
- All documentation that is required for the activities that the Respiratory Therapist have performed to meet competencies and criteria assigned to his/her specific level.
- Level III and IV Respiratory Therapists are to provide an official transcript showing completion or progress in Bachelor program from an accredited university
- Portfolios will be reviewed as submitted. Incomplete documentation could result in not meeting level requirements.
- All information is to be typed. Handwritten documentation will not be accepted.

MAINTENANCE OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Respiratory Therapy Career Development program policies and procedures will be reviewed annually by the assigned committee.

Substantial changes involving the Medical Center policy and compensation must be approved by Administration.

Application

Name: _____ Department: _____

Date: _____

RE: Respiratory Therapy Career Ladder Program

Dear Respiratory Therapy Program Committee:

This is an agreement between [Insert hospital or care facility name] and myself, subject to acceptance of the terms and conditions, to participate in the Respiratory Therapy Career Ladder Program.

My participation will begin on _____ and end
on _____. I plan to meet the criteria for

Level _____.

(I, II, III, or IV)

My professional goals are:

What can you offer or bring to the table for this Respiratory Therapy Department?

What would you like the committee to know about you?

I attest that I have read and understand all components of the Respiratory Therapy Career Ladder Program. I am prepared to provide all documents required verifying the criteria that has been met.

I understand that I must be actively employed at the time of any bonus payment and will be required to continue employment for the next twelve (12) months following bonus payout.

Your consideration of this request will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date

Signature of Respiratory Therapy Manager: _____ Date:

Signature of Administration: _____ Date:

Application Received Signature/Date: _____

Signature of assigned committee director