



About Life. About You.[™]



**What keeps you
up at night?**



Building Avita's Nursing Workforce

Objectives

- ❖ Identify strategies for developing high school programs to strengthen nursing career interest and future nursing recruitment.
- ❖ Describe evidence-based components of nurse residency programs that improve retention and job satisfaction.
- ❖ Apply practical tools with limited resources to meet organizational nurse staffing needs.



Meet the Team



Kathy Durlinger, MBA, RN
Vice President
Chief Nursing Officer



Aimee McKenzie BSN, RN
Director of Education
Department & Training
Center



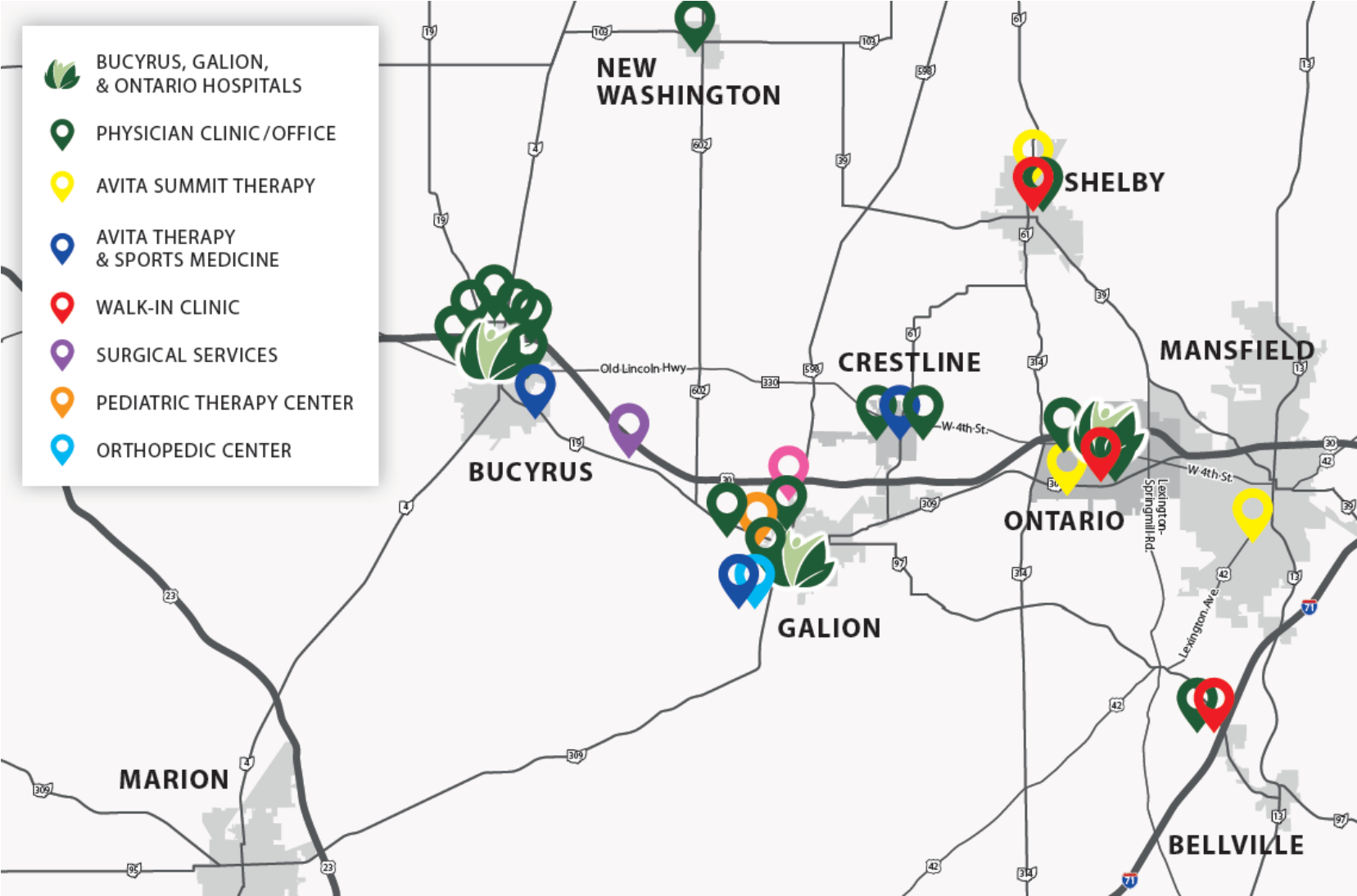
Jessica Geyer, MBA
Director of Recruitment &
Engagement

Avita Health System

- ❖ Located in north central Ohio, Avita Health System is a nonprofit healthcare organization that serves citizens in Crawford and Richland Counties
- ❖ We have over 2,300 employees, including approximately 170 physicians and advanced practice providers.
- ❖ Avita Health System is comprised of two (2) critical access hospitals, one (1) prospective payment system hospital, over a dozen rural health clinics, and three walk-in clinics.
- ❖ Avita was established in 2011 after Galion Hospital purchased the assets of Bucyrus Hospital
- ❖ In 2017, Avita opened Ontario Hospital.
- ❖ In 15 short years, the organization has quickly grown from one small hospital into a regional health system that strives for continual growth, providing local care to our communities.

Service Locations

Ontario, Galion, and Bucyrus Hospitals are geographically located within a 25-mile radius.



Critical Access Hospitals

- ❖ Galion Hospital is a 25-bed critical access hospital, located in Crawford County, Ohio, with an emergency department, outpatient surgery, medical/surgical unit, ICU, Maternity, and a 10 (ten) bed inpatient rehabilitation unit. This unique critical access hospital has 24/7 emergency cardiac catheterization services for heart attack patients, along with a specialty center that offers outpatient chemotherapy.



- ❖ Bucyrus Hospital is a 25-bed critical access hospital with an emergency department, outpatient surgery, medical/surgical unit, ICU, and swing bed unit. This unique critical access hospital also has a specialty center which offers outpatient chemotherapy, along with a wound center which houses two hyperbaric oxygen chambers.

Both Galion and Bucyrus Hospitals offer imaging, laboratory services, cardiac rehabilitation, inpatient dialysis, cardiac testing, respiratory therapy, and inpatient physical therapy.

Hospital in the Mall

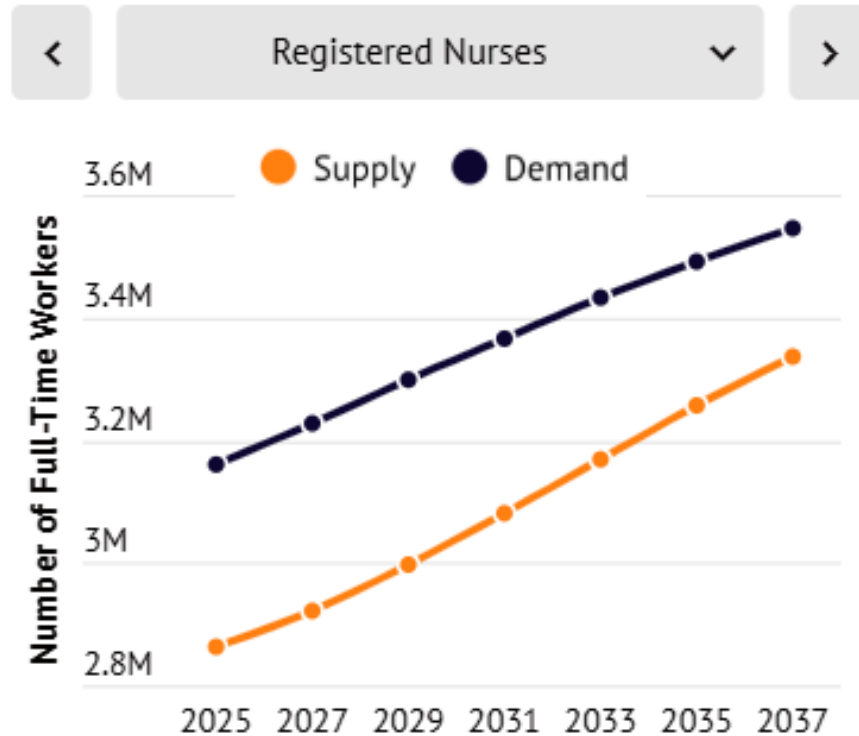
- ❖ Avita Ontario Hospital is a 38 (thirty-eight) bed, prospective payment system hospital, located in Richland County, Ohio.
- ❖ Ontario houses 2 (two) Medical/Surgical units, 2 (two) ICUs, an emergency department, LDRP, and outpatient surgery.



- ❖ This campus offers 24/7 emergency cardiac catheterization services for heart attack patients, along with imaging, laboratory, cardiac rehabilitation, inpatient dialysis, cardiac testing, respiratory therapy, and inpatient physical therapy.
- ❖ In 2022, Avita Ontario Hospital celebrated an additional service line. Ontario LDRP officially opened on February 28th, 2022. The first baby was born on the opening day.
- ❖ In 2025, Avita opened the Jode Cancer Center to advance cancer care in our community.
- ❖ The center includes radiation and medical oncology, infusion therapy, imaging, lab services, and pharmacy support – all under one roof.

Supply & Demand

National Nursing Landscape



<https://data.hrsa.gov/topics/health-workforce/nchwa/workforce-projections>

❖ Projected RN shortage:

- ❖ 250,710 nurses in 2025; shortages extending into the 2030s

❖ Rural hospitals are disproportionately affected

❖ Aging workforce:

- ❖ Nearly 50% of U.S. RNs are age 45+
- ❖ Retirements outpacing recruitment

❖ Post-pandemic impacts:

- ❖ Increased burnout and workforce exits
- ❖ Migration to higher-paying travel roles

❖ Shifting workforce preferences:

- ❖ Declining interest in Medical-Surgical nursing
- ❖ Preference for weekday/day-shift roles
- ❖ Movement away from bedside care
- ❖ Growing pursuit of advanced practice roles (CNPs, CRNAs)

❖ Nurse educator shortages limit school enrollment

Financial Impact

- ❖ Average cost to replace one bedside RN: \$61,000
- ❖ High turnover contributes to:
 - ❖ Increased recruitment and orientation costs
 - ❖ Productivity losses
- ❖ Elevated labor expenses due to internal and external agency utilization
- ❖ Current agency mix:
 - ❖ 9 internal agency nurses
 - ❖ 35 external agency nurses
- ❖ Cost of external agency for the past 6 months ➡ **\$2.3 Million**





Talent Pipelines

Developing Early Talent Pipelines

- ❖ Classroom visits and tours starting in Middle School.
- ❖ High school engagement initiatives:
 - ❖ Observation Programs
 - ❖ Career Days
 - ❖ *Future Nurses of Avita (FNA)*
- ❖ Focus on local recruitment and community-based talent development
- ❖ Intentional engagement of key stakeholders:
 - ❖ Education
 - ❖ Recruitment
 - ❖ Clinical Leadership
 - ❖ Community Partnerships
 - ❖ Local Schools



Cultivating Homegrown Talent

Strategic Approach

- ❖ Partnership with **North Central State College**
- ❖ Support from **local foundations**
- ❖ Team-based, cross-functional collaboration

Tuition-Free Career Pathways

- ❖ Employee → **LPN**
- ❖ **LPN** → **RN**
- ❖ **RN** → **BSN**

Current Enrollment

- ❖ **39 total employees**
 - ❖ 21 in LPN program
 - ❖ 11 in LPN-RN program
 - ❖ 7 in RN-to-BSN program



2026 NCSC PN Graduation





Understanding the Student Nurse Programs

Preparation & Planning

- ❖ Two years of Strategic Planning
- ❖ Collaboration with Key Community Partners:
 - ❖ School Leadership
 - ❖ Junior Achievement
 - ❖ Parents/Guardians
 - ❖ Local Colleges
- ❖ Strong Leadership Commitment and Buy-In



Evidenced-Based Foundations

- ❖ High school engagement programs strengthen interest in nursing career intent
- ❖ Nurse residency programs improve transition-to-practice outcomes
- ❖ Community-based learning expands and diversifies the workforce and improves local workforce retention
- ❖ Integration of evidence-based practice (EBP) enhances professional development



Building the Nursing Pipeline Early

❖ Student Nurse Programs

- ❖ Future Nurse of Avita
- ❖ Student Nurse Intern
- ❖ Student Nurse Resident

❖ Program Focus

- ❖ Education, skills training, shadowing, and career readiness

❖ Student Impact

- ❖ Early exposure and engagement in several clinical areas
- ❖ Resume and interview preparation
- ❖ Hands-on clinical experience
- ❖ Enhancement of skills

❖ Program Outcome

- ❖ Direct pathway from high school → paid Patient Care Assistant (PCA) role → future RN employment
- ❖ Flexible schedule to support continued education and future retention



Future Nurses of Avita (FNA)

❖ **Role:** FNA/Patient Care Assistant

❖ **Eligibility**

- ❖ Junior or Senior in high school
- ❖ Successful completion of the FNA program
 - ❖ 8 evening classes over the course of school calendar year
- ❖ Good academic standing
- ❖ Letter of recommendation
- ❖ Interest in a nursing career
- ❖ Flexible hours (8 hours per week) to work around school schedule

❖ **Responsibilities**

- ❖ Observations and job shadowing under RN, LPN, or PCA supervision
- ❖ Assistance with basic patient care activities
- ❖ Support of activities of daily living (ADLs)
- ❖ Maintenance of a safe, clean care environment
- ❖ Support for the patient care team as assigned



2025 FNA Graduation



Student Nurse Intern (SNI)

- ❖ **Role:** SNI/Patient Care Assistant
- ❖ **Eligibility**
 - ❖ Enrolled or accepted into an accredited RN program
 - ❖ Flexible hours (8 hours per week) to work around school schedule
- ❖ **Responsibilities**
 - ❖ Provides direct and indirect patient care under RN or LPN supervision
 - ❖ Assists with ADLs and patient comfort
 - ❖ Maintains a safe and clean clinical environment



Student Nurse Resident (SNR)

❖ **Role:** SNR/Patient Care Assistant

❖ **Eligibility**

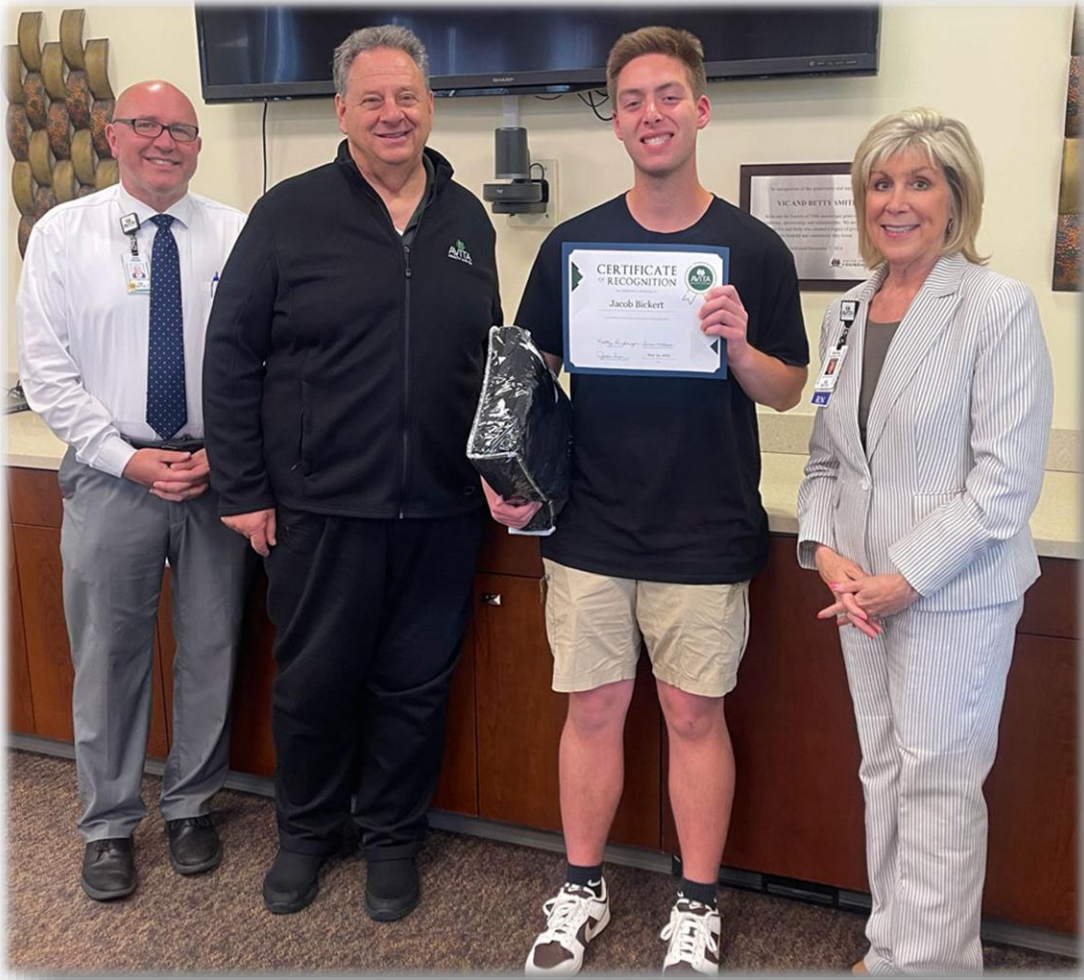
- ❖ Final semester of an accredited RN program
- ❖ Good academic standing
- ❖ Flexible hours (8 hours per week) to work around school schedule
- ❖ Eligible to apply and interview for RN open positions

❖ **Responsibilities**

- ❖ Provides direct and indirect patient care under RN or LPN supervision
- ❖ Assists with ADLs and patient comfort
- ❖ Maintains a safe and organized care environment



Program Highlights



Retaining Talent

Retention Pathway

- ❖ Structured HR Onboarding and Clinical Integration
- ❖ Dedicated Preceptorship
- ❖ RN Transition into Practice Program (RN TIPS)
- ❖ Ongoing Support and Rounding
- ❖ Eligible for Nursing Clinical Ladder at 1 year



Climbing the AVITA Clinical Ladder



Staff Development & Retention Strategies



Education & Competency

- ❖ Resuscitation and life-support certifications
- ❖ Annual competencies
 - ❖ Nursing & Surgical
 - ❖ Physician Office
- ❖ CEs and specialty education



Unit-Based Growth & Support

- ❖ Quarterly Education Capture
- ❖ Critical Care Classes
- ❖ Micro-learnings through educator rounding
- ❖ Additional classes aligned with unit needs

Leadership Engagement

- ❖ Nurse leader rounding
- ❖ Real-time coaching and feedback



Lessons Learned

- ❖ Scheduling around school and activities is challenging
- ❖ Accountability must be taught and reinforced
- ❖ Flexibility is essential for retention and success
- ❖ Communication often extends beyond standard work hours
- ❖ Students require close mentorship and reassurance
- ❖ Early professional exposure builds confidence and commitment



Fulfilling Our Mission

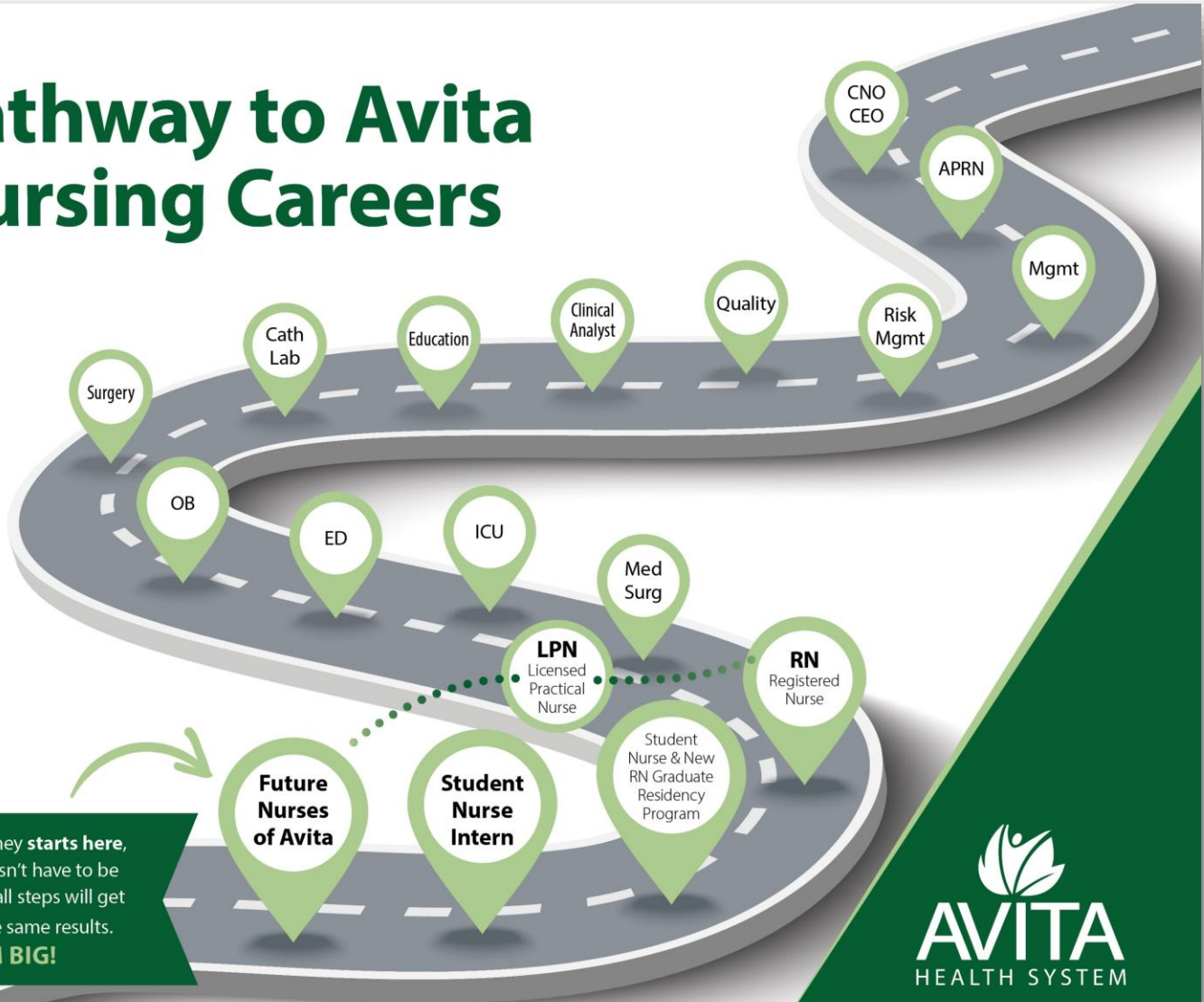
- ❖ Avita Health System exists to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve
- ❖ Developing nurses locally ensures sustainable, community-based care
- ❖ Investing early in students strengthens:
 - ❖ Workforce stability
 - ❖ Quality of care
 - ❖ Long-term community health
- ❖ These programs allow us to care for our neighbors, friends, and families—right here at home



Workforce development is not just a staffing strategy—it is a mission strategy.

Nursing Career Pathways

Pathway to Avita Nursing Careers



Your journey **starts here**, but it doesn't have to be scary. Small steps will get you to the same results. **DREAM BIG!**



Proven Outcomes

Program Completion – Where are they now?

- ❖ **30 employees** have completed the LPN program
 - ❖ Endoscopy
 - ❖ MedSurg
 - ❖ OB
 - ❖ OP/PACU
 - ❖ Pain Management
 - ❖ Physician Practices
 - ❖ Surgery
 - ❖ WorkWell (Occupational Health)
- ❖ **1 employee** has completed the LPN-RN program
 - ❖ MedSurg
- ❖ **90% retention** of LPN graduates



About Life. About You.



“This program provided more than financial assistance—it created a clear pathway for professional growth within the organization.”

— *Crystal Eyerly, RN - Revenue Cycle Clinical Nurse Reviewer*

“I was able to continue growing my career while furthering my education—without the stress of financial burden.”

— *Kinzie Lantini, LPN*

“The support from Avita and my manager made it possible to achieve my nursing goals while working full time.”

— *Tiffany Price, LPN*

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Questions?

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