

GREAT REASONS TO PARTICIPATE IN ANFP'S

benchmarking PROGRAM



ROSEMARY AHO, CDM, CFPP

ROSEMARY AHO, CDM, CFPP works at Marquette County Medical Care Facility as the Food and Nutrition Department manager. She oversees a staff of 25 in a skilled nursing facility of 140 beds. Aho took part in a pre-recorded ACE session highlighting why she participates in the free ANFP Skilled Nursing Facility Benchmarking program and how she uses the results in her day-to-day job.

Highlights of that Q&A interview follow.

Q: Why did you choose to participate in the ANFP Skilled Nursing Facility Benchmarking Survey?

A: I became a CDM, CFPP about a year and a half before the pandemic happened and, moving jobs and all that, I didn't know where I stood amongst my peers and other facilities like mine. I knew that I needed resources or that my staffing didn't seem quite right, but I didn't have any data to back that up with, especially in skilled nursing, where there are ratios for how many CNAs or nurses have to be on the floor. What do I have to that equivalent? I am trying to feed

this many residents with this many people. It was helpful to be able to go in with the benchmarking study and say other facilities that are the same size as us, this is the staffing they have. I was kind of getting hints that maybe they felt like I was overstaffed. With the benchmarking results, I could say no, we're actually hitting average or even below average at times. We were very lucky that we didn't experience the staffing crisis that a lot of other facilities did, but we still experienced some. So especially through COVID, I was able to bring that information to my administrator and our board as things came up.

Q: How did you determine and gather the data you need from the benchmarking results?

A: A lot of it was just determining it by going question by question. The first time I opened up the benchmarking it was intimidating. Once a year it's a time to shut my door, say I can't put out any fires for the next little bit here, and I'm going to really assess what's going on in our department. I have an HR Department that handles the pay scale and such, so sometimes it's not in my daily thoughts what

my staff are being compensated for their work, and how I can advocate for them. I really just took it question by question, and if I didn't know the answer, I had to reach out and ask our Human Resources Director what we are paying our dietary aides. So, if it's intimidating for anyone gathering that data, just take it one question at a time. Some of it you're going to know, and some of it you're going to learn. I think that's another great thing as we are trying to stay competent in our roles. It's really just a once a year sit down, and let's just take collateral and see what's going on.

Q: How often do you refer to the benchmarking data?

A: I refer to the data if things come up. Maybe we are in contract and my staff or my administrator comes to me and says, "Hey, your staff is asking for this, is that really reasonable?" I can refer back to the figures. It's a one-time thing getting the data in, but then you





Register for ANFP's 2025 Benchmarking Survey Today!

Free registration for the 2025 survey, which opens March 1, is available now on the ANFP website at <https://www.anfponline.org/news-resources/benchmark-program>. There are currently two benchmarking programs available, one for skilled nursing and one for acute care. Registration is quick and you will get reminders to complete the survey when it opens March 1.

can keep going back and looking at the report.

Q: Who did you present the benchmarking data to and what was the result?

A: At no one point did I sit down with my administrator and say here's my benchmarking. What does that mean to her? But it's really been a support when looking at the budget. I can refer to the data throughout the year to say we're really doing pretty good. There are times where I [realized] there is a need for improvement. It's just really nice, how this benchmarking is, that you can go in and put the same size facility in the same region you are in. Because if you're in the Midwest, the data is not going to be

the same as if you're in the Southwest. There are different needs there, whether it's rural versus more of a city environment. You're going to be providing different things. When I need that data, when they want to see the numbers, a lot of times that's what it comes down to, especially with how funds are. If you're saying I need to hire somebody and they're saying, well we've always managed with this many people, you can look and can pull up other facilities like yours and say, well, all these other facilities, this is what they're staffing at and we're actually two full-time equivalents lower than the average for our facility type. Sometimes just those numbers are what drives the point home.

Q: Do you have any other thoughts or feedback on the ANFP Skilled Nursing Facility Benchmarking Survey?

A: I would just say don't let it intimidate you. It's really a step by step process, and ANFP will support you. You can reach out and say, I don't know this number. No one's going to take your [certification] away. The organization is about educating, supporting, and building that community. So, I think a lot of us are crawling out of isolation and rebuilding our networks, and this is a great way to do it, opening up those conversations, asking the questions, and just elevating our careers. **E**