



THE POWER OF
PARTNERSHIP

45 CEO Success Stories Reshaping the Patient Experience

Our Partners Say It Best

Dear Healthcare Leader,

We're often asked for references. In the spirit of full transparency, we thought—why not share what every one of our hospital and community health center partners has said about working with us?

This report brings together authentic voices from leaders across the country who have partnered with us in our three-year Service Excellence Initiative—a proven pathway to becoming the employer and provider of choice.

You'll also notice the logos of two nationally recognized authorities that validate patient experience excellence. Many of our partners have already earned, or are on their way to earning, these prestigious 5 Star ratings:

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) – The gold standard in 5 Star quality and patient satisfaction, measured through HCAHPS and other experience surveys.

National Rural Rating System (NRRS) – The recognized program honoring rural and critical access hospitals for outstanding patient satisfaction.

We invite you to see for yourself the measurable difference our clients are experiencing—and imagine what this transformation could look like in your own organization.



A stylized, handwritten signature of Brian Lee in blue ink, set against a light blue background.

Brian Lee CSP, HoF

CEO & FOUNDER,
CUSTOM LEARNING SYSTEMS

OUR MISSION

Creating a 5 Star Culture of Healing Kindness

Our proven Service Excellence Initiative equips leaders and caregivers with the skills, tools, and inspiration to deliver consistent, patient-centered excellence. Together, we build cultures where teams thrive, and patients feel genuinely cared for.



Our Partner's Reviews

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4	Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs)	13	The Accelerated Staffing Fix™
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Critical Access Hospitals (CAH)

Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital

ELY, MN



We Have Moved From Being a Shadow of a System

"Our 5 Star Designation has strengthened our brand. We have moved from being a shadow of a system to being the trusted source for medical services and advice. This rating is proof that we are qualitatively equal and can compete with others."

They Gave Us the Tools to Transform Our Culture

"Don't be afraid to try it! There is never a wrong time to do this. As CLS helps you make positive changes. They gave us the tools to transform our culture and enabled us to create a 5 Star patient experience culture. When we started our Press Ganey employee engagement survey was at the 16th percentile Last year we were at the 96th percentile."



PATRICIA BANKS, CEO



Memorial Hospital of Carthage

CARTHAGE, IL



The CLS Approach for Front Line Leadership is Truly the "Secret Sauce".

"CLS helped launch our path toward a 5 Star patient experience culture. Every hospital in this country should be 5 Stars. There are great consultants in this space however the Brian Lee and the CLS approach for front line leadership is truly the "secret sauce". The impact of turning 5 Star is beyond anything I expected."



ADA BAIR, CEO



Grand River Health

RIFLE, CO



Life Changing for our People's Personal Lives

"The entire CLS Initiative has been so transformative for the Hospital The enthusiasm and excitement are palpable, and you would have a revolt if we stopped doing it. It's been life changing for our people's personal lives and affects their home relations in a very positive way. It's also created a career path for front line. We now see the leadership potential in people you would not normally notice. So many of our promotions now come from our frontline leaders. It's huge. Morale is so much more positive."



JIM COOMBS, CEO

Allen Parish Community Healthcare

KINDER, LA



Peer to Peer Empowerment With Actual Enthusiasm

"The CLS Service Excellence Initiative has been worth every red cent. I like it that it trains people from the bottom up, peer to peer empowerment with actual enthusiasm."



JACQUELINE REVEL, CEO



Fall River Health Services

HOT SPRINGS, SD



The Results are Our Highest Financial Margin Ever

"CLS is an investment. Communication is a huge issue with our 360 employees. I used to hear "nobody knows what's going on". What CLS has done for us is get us aligned to make things happen in an organized way through 'OASIS' teams, DOI'T improvements engaging everyone. It's shifted the responsibility to team members to be invested and involved. It brought us together in trenches and broke down the silos. We now have engaged people which = engaged patients. Engagement has caused our patients to use us much much more. The results are our highest financial margin ever. We have moved from an annual turnover last year of 43% to 27% last year."



JEREMY SCHULTES,
CEO

Family Health West

FRUITA, CO



CLS Excels at Initiating a Positive Sustainable Culture Change

"It's all about culture. If you want to move your culture in a different direction, that's where CLS excels at initiating a sustainable positive culture change. The data in our turnover rates and exit surveys tells the story. The Evidence - lower turnover rates, staff morale and new hires the understand this is the place to work. Even more evidence, our employee's family members want to work here."



DR. KORREY KLEIN,
PRESIDENT & CEO

Rio Grande Hospital

DEL NORTE, CO



Exceptional Patient Experience is Now the New Normal

"Thanks to CLS and The Service Excellence Initiative we have seen a complete turnaround in our culture in the past 5 years, where exceptional patient experience is now the new normal. We will never stop our engagement in this initiative. We are so proud to be honored with the 5 Star designation by CMS and NRRS, as well as TOP 20 CITICAL ACCESS HOSPITAL and TOP 20 BEST PRACTICES IN QUALITY."



ARLENE HARMS,
CEO



Cook Hospital & Care Center

COOK, MN



CLS Has Been the Secret Sauce

"I highly recommend the CLS process. We have seen a big difference. We have been trying to do this for years and CLS has the secret sauce."



TERESA DEBEVEC,
CEO

Brought Our Employees Together

"The whole initiative has brought our customer service up a level up, and it's just the first year. It has brought our employees together and opened relationships between departments."



JULIE LEEMANN,
COO

Fairchild Medical Center

YREKA, CA



The Right Principles

"The CLS fundamental principles are the right ones. We've just begun the journey, and our entire leadership team is excited."



JONATHON ANDRUS,
PRESIDENT & CEO

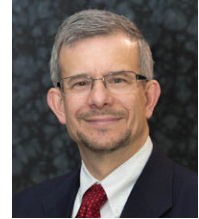
Franklin General Hospital

HAMPTON, IA



A Great Opportunity to Have a Proven Road Map

"The CLS Hospital of Choice Initiative is a great opportunity to have a proven road map to guide you and keep you on the road to a 5 Star Culture and it help you over the speed bumps."



KIM PRICE,
PRESIDENT & CEO



Edwards County Medical Center

KINSLEY, KS



With CLS, You Know They Will Make it Happen

"It's a good program. We were given the actual tools to use that were needed. With CLS, you know they will make it happen. We've seen our customer driven culture significantly improve ...not just with the patient, but also with our coworkers."



ALISHA HERRMANN, CEO

Van Diest Medical Center

WEBSTER CITY, IA



The Way They Work Together is Like Nothing I've Ever Seen Before

"The care at Van Diest Medical Center has been excellent. I've never seen nurses and aides work so well as a team. It doesn't matter if it's the night shift or the day shift, they are all such good people! The way they work together is like nothing I've even seen before."



LISA RIDGE, CEO



Hot Springs Health

THERMOPOLIS, WY



Service Excellence Has Made a Big Difference

"Service Excellence has made a big difference in our culture and transformed the way our entire team looks at the patient experience."



SCOTT ALWIN, CEO

Critical Access Hospitals (CAH)

Memorial Community Hospital & Health System

BLAIR, NE



I Wish We Had Done This 5 Years Ago

"The CLS recipe is wonderful. In a short time - 8 months - we have seen an immediate change in the way our employees are involved... We were thankful because they had been asking for change, they gave us what we need to get where we need to be. I love the engagement from everyone. I wish we had done this 5 years ago."



**MANUELA BANNER,
PRESIDENT & CEO**

Minidoka Memorial Hospital

RUPERT, ID



Front Line Engagement has had a Very Positive Impact

"The Service Excellence Advisor front line engagement has had a very positive impact on the patient's experience."



TOM MURPHY, CEO



Moore County Hospital District

DUMAS, TX



Enabled Us to Direct Everyone All in a Common Goal of Improving Care

"Service Excellence has been a comprehensive front line engagement process that has enabled us to direct everyone all in a common goal of improving care."



JEFF TURNER, CEO



Mountains Community Hospital

LAKE ARROWHEAD, CA



This is Way Above Base Line Stuff

"If you value your patients and community, then implementing an initiative like this is a must. This is way above base line stuff."



**MARK TURNER,
CEO**

Niobrara Community Hospital

LUSK, WY



Service Excellence is the Best Decision You Could Ever Make

"Service Excellence is the best decision you could ever make for your hospital's morale, bottom line and financial health. It's hard to explain the monetary value. When you look at the metrics, that speaks for itself."



**DANA GILLELAND,
CEO**

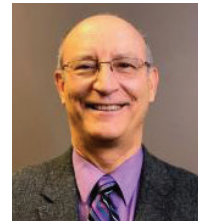
Pinckneyville Community Hospital

PINCKNEYVILLE, IL



Our Hospital Put Extra Creativity into the Service Excellence Initiative

"Change can be fun. Our hospital put extra creativity into the Service Excellence Initiative. Along with the SEI, our "extras" have resulted in engaged employees and leaders, highly satisfied patients, and a stronger bond within our community. For example- our annual Day of Caring project, Christmas Card Photo Competition (departments compete), Random Acts of Kindness Board, Traveling Trophy for Bright Ideas, Celebration Station (Cart that travels around hospital for celebrations), "Caught Caring" Cards (employee instant recognition), Walk in My Shoes Videos, SEA Badge Reel and celebrations, SEA "Class Favorites" Awards. It is about working together to promote positivity and create an environment where employees feel more connected."



**RANDALL DAUBY,
CEO**



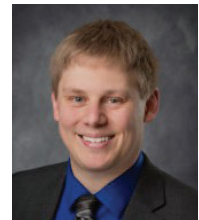
Northwood Deaconess Health Center

NORTHWOOD, ND



Camaraderie Between Departments Has Blossomed and Silos Broken Down

"CLS has caused a lot of needed self-reflection and focused us on looking at our culture and staff. There is a unanimous feeling that there have been actual improvements through hundreds of little things. Camaraderie between departments has blossomed and silos have broken down."



**BROCK SHERVA,
CEO**

Ortonville Area Health Services

ORTONVILLE, MN



This Process has Paid for Itself Many Times Over

"I would absolutely recommend the CLS Service Excellence Initiative, because patients will travel longer distances to receive better care, as competition gets tougher. We have saved costs on improved employee retention; this process has paid for itself many times over. Since achieving Five Star status, we have been hearing from new hires this is a great place to work."



**DR. ALLAN ROSS,
MD, CEO**



Pana Community Hospital

PANA, IL



The Swing Bed Growth Academy Helped Us Significantly Grow Revenues

"CLS has helped us right the ship to patient satisfaction, ad enabled us to understand and make it a priority. The Swing Bed Growth Academy helped us stabilize and improve the service line and significantly grow revenues."



**TRINA CASNER,
CEO**

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)

Salina Family Healthcare Center

SALINA, KS



Transformational in All the Ways You Can Think Of

"The CLS Initiative has been transformational in all the ways you can think of with all the good stuff, and guided us with the rough patches"



**DR. ROBERT KRAFT,
CEO/CMO**

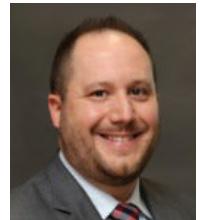
Valley Professionals Community Health Center

CLINTON, IN



Provides Strong Accountability

"Service Excellence is worth doing if you want it improve your culture and improve your structure. It provides strong accountability, and their engagement experts help us stay on track"



**TERRY "T.J."
WARREN, CEO**

CareArc

EMPORIA, KS



It's So Worth the Time and Energy

"The Community Health Center of Choice is so worth the time and energy, especially if you are stuck. It's so nice to have outside eyes looking in. It really helps get buy in from the frontline. The engagement is the Best. We had some resistance at first and that has all changed."



RENEE HIVELY, CEO

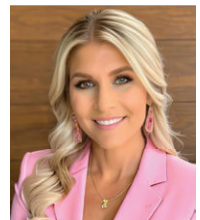
Tug River Health Association

CARTHAGE, IL



CLS Has Changed Everything for US

"Attend the HealthCare Service Excellence Conference (HCSEC) first, and then you will understand, why CLS has changed everything for us. Step one was we booked Ignite the Patient Experience, then HCSEC sealed the deal for us. Once our attendees got that personal fire, they will push administration to get going."



**ANDREA
THORNTON, CEO**

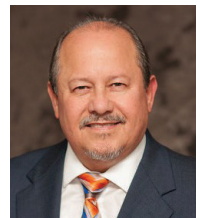
Ampla Health

YUBA CITY, CA



A New Level of Enthusiasm to Frontline Morale

"Everything is going great in our first year. The Service Excellence Advisors have brought a new level of enthusiasm to frontline morale, and we are very much looking forward to year two."



**BENJAMIN FLORES,
MPH, PRESIDENT &
CEO**

Near North Health

CHICAGO, IL



We Greatly Value the Leadership Education for Our Managers

"We have been impressed with the number of practical Skills we have gained from our CLS learning sessions. We greatly value the leadership education for our managers that took place first."



JILL ROGGEVEEN,
SENIOR PROJECT
MANAGER (left)

**DR TRISTÉ LIETEAU
SMITH, CEO (right)**

Hidalgo Medical Services

SILVER CITY, NM



We will Continue with Service Excellence into the Future Because of the Positive Impact it has Made on Our Organization.

"We held a board strategic planning meeting and had one of our SEA teams lead an Ignite the Experience workshop for the Board and Senior Team. We had all the SEAs join us for the last 30 minutes to introduce themselves and share their individual experiences and impact the workshops have had on them and the organization. The board responded very positively to the experience. This led to a strategic initiative to continue with Service Excellence into the future because of the positive impact it has made on our organization."



DAN OTERO, CEO

Community Health Center of Lubbock

LUBBOCK, TX



Our Staff Really Like the New CLS ONE AI Platform, it's Really Cool

"Our survival depends on improving the patient and staff engagement. My monthly meeting with our SEAs provides me with an invaluable communication link to the frontline. Our staff really like the new CLS ONE AI platform, it's cool. If Community Health Centers would just take the information that CLS provides and implement – they would do well."



**MICHAEL
SULLIVAN, CEO**



OUR VISION

Kindness Care Everywhere

We believe kindness is the foundation of exceptional care. By embedding compassion into every interaction, we help organizations transform the patient experience into one defined by trust, dignity, and healing.

The Accelerated Staffing Fix™

Crawford County Memorial Hospital

DENISON, IA



The CLS Accelerated Staffing Fix™ Has Been Worth Every Penny

"The CLS Accelerated Staffing Fix™ has been worth every penny, when you think about our agency/ traveler spend, its pays for itself in less than a month. The bottom line is it works!"



ERIN MUCK, CEO



Ignite the Patient Experience™

Carroll County Memorial Hospital

CARROLLTON, KY



Ignite the Patient Experience Gives You the Tools to Deliver

"For me it's all about the patient. Ignite the Patient Experience gives you the tools to deliver."



**JENNIFER LITER,
CEO, DNP, RN**

Powell Valley Health

POWELL, WY



From my Heart I feel Rejuvenated

"From my heart I feel rejuvenated. The CLS Ignite the Patient experience energized us all and generated new enthusiasm to focus on the patient experience. The CLS Accelerated Staffing Fix provided a doable roadmap to significantly improve retention and recruitment."



**ARLEEN CAMPEAU,
CNO**



Evidence Based Case Studies

A few partner examples of the transformation achieved.



Jackson County Regional Health Center

MAQUOKETA, IA



"We would not have made the gains in the patient experience had we not changed the culture. We now have systems in place to continually assess and improve. We are all about continuous improvement."



CURT COLEMAN, FACHE, PRESIDENT

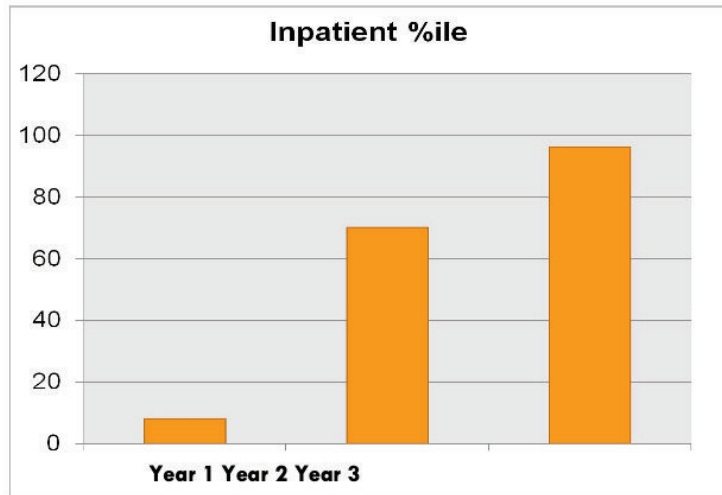
HCAHPS Scores	Starting Year July 2018 – June 2019		Year I July 2019 – June 2020			Year II July 2020 – June 2021			Year III January 25, 2022		
	Top Box	%tile Rank	Top Box	%tile Rank	Actual Increase*	Top Box	%tile Rank	Actual Increase*	Top Box	%tile Rank	Actual Increase*
HCAHPS Top Box Goals (Provider of Choice)											
Communication with Nurses	79.5	42	88.2	94	8.7	81.4	66	-6.8	92.7	99	33
Communication with Doctors	74.1	10	74.0	14	-0.1	89.1	94	15.1	89.4	95	1
Responsiveness of Staff	70.3	65	82.2	95	11.9	80.5	94	-1.7	94.1	99	5
Communication about Medicines	62.9	40	67.5	81	4.6	77.4	98	9.9	75	98	-
Cleanliness	84.5	90	82.0	87	-2.5	83.3	89	1.3	91.3	99	10
Quietness	65.2	70	72.9	86	7.7	75.0	92	2.1	86.9	99	7
Discharge Information	75.9	1	80.2	8	4.3	88.4	61	8.2	97.3	99	38
Transition of Care	49.0	28	51.6	47	2.6	44.8	17	-6.8	58	81	64
Overall	60.0	6	78	72	18	74.1	62	-3.9	91.3	98	36
Willingness to Recommend	60.6	12	68.6	41	8	70.0	45	1.4	86.3	95	50
# of Domains Increased	NA		8			6			9		
# of Responses	72		51			31			31		
Star Rating	★		★★★★			★★★★★			★★★★★★		

Lauren County Health Care System

CLINTON, SC



INPATIENT

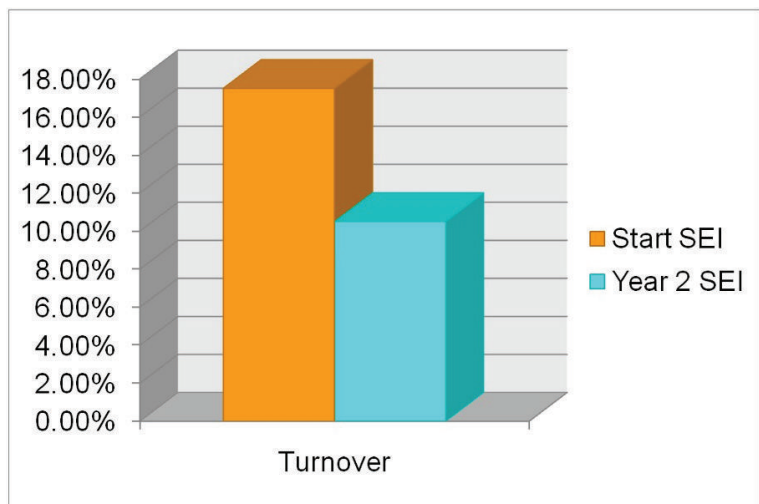


EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

2009 Employee Survey
Overall Factors

FACTOR SUMMARIES	Percent of Employees		
	Favorable	Neutral	Unfavorable
Industry-Wide Events	96%		
Work Itself	93%		
Patient Focus	92%		
Continuous Improvement	86%	8%	
Teamwork	83%		11%
Community Image	81%	13%	
Accountability	81%		12%
Senior Leadership	80%	11%	9%
Learning and Development	80%	10%	10%
Recognition and Feedback	80%	10%	10%
Department Leadership	80%	8%	12%
Total Score (105 Items)	79%	10%	11%
Staffing Directions	78%	13%	9%
Information and Analysis	78%	12%	10%
Innovation	76%	14%	10%
Unique Items	76%	12%	12%
Internal Customer Focus	74%	12%	14%
Policies	72%	10%	18%
Pay and Benefits	61%	12%	27%

TURNOVER REDUCATION



Appalachian Regional Healthcare Middlesboro ARH Hospital

MIDDLESBORO, KY

An Increase in Every HCAHPS Dimension

"I am pleased to report that we have seen an increase in every dimension of our inpatient HCAHPS survey."

—MICHAEL SLUSHER, COMMUNITY CEO

Measure	Starting Year Jan - Dec 2016		Actual Year I Jan - Oct 2017		Actual Year II Jan - Oct 2018		% Change in %tile Rank
	Top Box	%tile	Top Box	%tile	Top Box	%tile	
Communication with Nurses	79.2	41	89.4	96	94.9	99	141.5
Communication with Doctors	85	74	88.9	91	100	100	35.1
Responsiveness of Hospital Staff	72.5	70	78.3	86	80.8	91	30.0
Pain Management/Communication	65.9	16	75.6	71	85	98	512.5
Communication about Medicines	70.8	77	76.6	94	94.4	99	28.6
Cleanliness	73	72	83.3	96	80.8	94	30.6
Quiet at Night	73	72	83.3	96	80.8	94	30.6
Discharge Info	81.7	10	92.6	87	92.3	81	710.0
Transition of Care	44.8	15	54.3	62	56.4	68	353.3
Overall Rating	49.7	44	59.3	83	92.3	98	122.7
Recommend	71.1	22	72	39	84.6	84	281.8
Total Combined Average Score				11 of 11 Domains		11 of 11 Domains	207.0

YEAR TO YEAR COMPARISON OF HCAHPS/PATIENT EXPERIENCE SCORES

Sioux Falls Specialty Hospital

SIoux FALLS, SD



OVERALL STAR RATING

Measures	Overall Star Rating
Communication with Nurses	★★★★★★
Communication with Doctors	★★★★★★
Responsiveness of Hospital Staff	★★★★★★
Pain Management	★★★★★★
Communication about Medications	★★★★★★
Cleanliness of Hospital	★★★★★★
Quiet at Night	★★★★★★
Discharge Info	★★★★★★
Transition of Care	★★★★★★
Overall Rating	★★★★★★
Recommend	★★★★★★

CHI St. Alexis Health

BISMARCK, ND



YEAR TO YEAR COMPARISON OF HCAHPS/PATIENT EXPERIENCE SCORES

Measure	Starting Year Jan - Dec 2014		Actual Year I Oct 2016 - Dec 2015		% Change in %tile Rank	Actual Year II Oct 2016 - Dec 2016		% Change in %tile Rank
	Top Box	%tile	Top Box	%tile		Top Box	%tile	
Communication with Nurses	81.9	44	82	45	2.3	87.9	88	100.0
Communication with Doctors	81.4	30	82.2	40	33.3	88.9	88	193.3
Responsiveness of Hospital Staff	72.3	64	80.7	93	45.3	78.3	86	34.4
Pain Management	74.5	48	46.8	67	39.6	75.4	54	11.1
Communication about Medicines	73.6	83	64.6	24	-71.1	68.8	54	-34.9
Cleanliness	65.2	3	78.9	62	1966.7	81.1	73	2333.3
Quiet at Night	73.1	64	68.9	43	-32.8	77.3	79	23.4
Discharge Info	90	74	91.2	78	5.4	93.3	92	24.3
Transition of Care	54.5	66	56.9	66	0.0	53.6	49	-25.8
Overall Rating	62.3	7	74	56	700.0	70.8	77	428.6
Recommend	62.3	10	81.7	82	720.0	77.9	67	570.0
Total Combined Average Score				8 of 11 Domains	309.9		9 of 11 Domains	332.5



OUR DESTINATION

Patient Relationship Experts

Our service excellence success comes from human connection. We guide healthcare organizations toward becoming true relationship experts—where every patient, family, and employee feels valued, respected, and heard.

