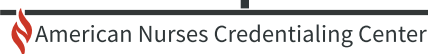


Advanced Practice Provider Fellowship Accreditation



CASE STUDY: Strengthening Workforce Readiness Through ANCC Advance Practice Provider Fellowship Accreditation

BACKGROUND

City of Hope National Medical Center, a National Cancer Institute-designated cancer hospital in Duarte, California, provides highly specialized inpatient and ambulatory oncology care.

As APP teams expanded, leadership identified a growing need for a more structured transition-to-practice model for clinicians entering specialty oncology with limited experience. In response, the organization developed an APP Fellowship and aligned it with ANCC Advanced Practice Provider Fellowship Accreditation (APPFA) standards to strengthen consistency, accountability, and workforce readiness.

CHALLENGES

The challenges were both educational and operational in scope.

- A rising number of novice APP hires required a more deliberate transition-to-practice model.
- Operational pressures favored rapid deployment into clinical roles.
- The program needed to support both nurse practitioners and physician assistants with consistency across disciplines.
- The organization did not have a dedicated APP educator, leaving design and implementation to operational and clinical leaders.
- Accreditation required formal governance, measurable outcomes, and sustained stakeholder engagement.
- The team also had to navigate leadership turnover, competing priorities, and external disruptions affecting the workforce and care environment.

“The existing orientation just was not meeting the needs of APPs with this level of experience.”

SOLUTIONS AND STRATEGIES

City of Hope responded by developing a fellowship model explicitly aligned with organizational strategy.

- Leadership established a clear governance structure and engaged executive sponsors.
- The team used accreditation guidance as a framework for quality, consistency, and accountability.
- Operational champions were appointed to coordinate implementation.
- The curriculum was standardized to support safe transition to specialty oncology practice.
- Multidisciplinary faculty were embedded to strengthen both learning and interprofessional integration.
- The model included mentoring, recurring leadership touchpoints, fellow-led improvement projects, and structured outcome tracking.
- The result was a workforce development program positioned as an enterprise asset rather than a stand-alone education initiative.

RESULTS

Within a relatively short period, the program achieved several significant implementation and accreditation milestones.

- Formal cohorts began in February 2023.
- Since launch, City of Hope has enrolled 44 fellows across 10 cohorts.
- The model adapts to hiring patterns while preserving a repeatable nine-month structure.
- Fellows receive intensive early didactic support, followed by longitudinal mentoring, professional development, and organizational integration.
- The fellowship achieved accreditation in June 2025.

“Everything that we had been doing as a team started to solidify because we knew that there was a goal.”

OUTCOMES

The fellowship generated measurable value beyond individual learner development by strengthening workforce readiness, increasing operational consistency, and signaling institutional commitment to APP practice excellence.

- **Clinician level:** since formal launch in February 2023, the fellowship has supported 44 fellows across 10 cohorts, expanding access to a structured transition model that strengthens readiness for specialty oncology practice.
- **Leadership level:** the program's repeatable nine-month structure created a more reliable framework for competency development, progress monitoring, and consistent support across hiring cycles.
- **Organizational level:** a largely budget-neutral model advanced workforce preparedness while reinforcing retention, engagement, and recognition of APP contributions, with June 2025 accreditation strengthening the program's credibility and sustainability.
- **Enterprise level:** sustained uptake across 10 cohorts demonstrated that the fellowship functions as a scalable workforce strategy, not a one-time educational intervention, with clear potential for broader adoption across sites.
- **Leadership takeaway:** when organizations invest in structured transition programs, they strengthen the clinical workforce pipeline, reduce onboarding variation, and build a more durable model for specialty practice readiness.

"Agility was the key to success."

CONCLUSIONS

This case demonstrates that structured transition-to-practice programs can function as strategic workforce investments that strengthen clinical readiness, improve operational consistency, and support high-quality care delivery. It also illustrates how accreditation can accelerate standardization, accountability, and stakeholder alignment, enabling emerging programs to mature into credible, high-value organizational assets. When onboarding is treated as a strategic lever rather than a routine orientation process, health systems are better positioned to improve retention, reduce variation, and build a more durable pipeline for specialty practice development.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Position transition-to-practice programs as workforce strategy, not solely as education.
- Use accreditation and professional standards to advance consistency, accountability, and program credibility.
- Engage executive, operational, and clinical stakeholders early, and communicate outcomes regularly.
- Protect structured learning time to support safe transition in high-acuity settings.
- Leverage multidisciplinary faculty and mentoring to strengthen both competence and professional integration.
- Track outcomes that matter to leaders, including readiness, retention, satisfaction, and scalability.
- Design programs with sufficient flexibility to adapt to leadership transition, operational pressures, and external disruption.