

## **Joint Commission Online becomes weekly e-newsletter**

Beginning with the July issue, *Joint Commission Online* will publish weekly. *Joint Commission Online* will consolidate all Joint Commission enterprise news. Readers can expect a new issue each Wednesday with news from both The Joint Commission and Joint Commission Resources. This change is being made to decrease the number of e-mails you receive from The Joint Commission enterprise, as well as to make the news you receive more relevant and timely. (Contact: Caron Wong, [cwong@jointcommission.org](mailto:cwong@jointcommission.org))

## **Patient safety**

### **Standards help reduce risk of transmitting H1N1 influenza**

The Joint Commission has many standards that, if appropriately followed, can reduce the risk of transmission of H1N1 “swine” flu in U.S. health care facilities. The Joint Commission participates in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) daily briefings regarding the H1N1 outbreak and expects accredited organizations to review their emergency management plans, particularly those related to preparing for an influx of potentially infectious patients. The Joint Commission further strongly encourages health care organizations to:

- Assess current levels of supplies of equipment and medications that may be needed to treat an influx of patients.
- Check the [CDC Web site](#) daily for the latest information on H1N1.
- Work closely with the local health department.

Organizations should use The Joint Commission’s infection control standards to prevent the possible spread of the H1N1 virus. These standards address topics such as the use of personal protective equipment, hand hygiene and proper cleaning of medical equipment, devices and supplies. For individuals concerned about swine flu, The Joint Commission’s Speak Up™ educational campaign on infection control offers the following practical advice:

- Clean your hands thoroughly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze and cough.
- If you are sick, avoid close contact with others and stay home.
- If you visit a doctor’s office or health care facility, make sure that your health care providers wash their hands or wear gloves.

(Contact: Robert Wise, [rwise@jointcommission.org](mailto:rwise@jointcommission.org))

## **Accreditation**

### **Field review of potential revisions to NPSGs and Universal Protocol**

Potential revisions to the National Patient Safety Goals and the Universal Protocol are available for field review through June 23, 2009. The success of the Standards Improvement Initiative (SII) demonstrated a way to thoroughly review the current NPSGs. The SII process will be used to clarify language and make sure that the NPSGs and Universal Protocol are relevant to the settings in which they apply. As a result of the extensive review that the NPSGs and Universal Protocol are undergoing this year, **there will be no new NPSGs developed for 2010**. To access the field review, visit the [Web site](#). (Contact: Carol Gilhooley, [cgilhooley@jointcommission.org](mailto:cgilhooley@jointcommission.org))

## **Customer service**

### **RPI making progress at The Joint Commission**

The Joint Commission’s internal Robust Process Improvement (RPI) initiative, which began in mid-2008 to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of internal processes, and to better meet customers’ needs and expectations of value, is making substantial progress. “The Joint Commission enterprise is undergoing a significant transformation,” says Anne Marie Benedicto, executive vice president, Support

Operations and Chief of Staff. “The Joint Commission is committed to improving its business processes so that it can better help accredited organizations deliver safe, high quality care.” Currently, RPI projects are in varying stages of completion and include:

- Pilot testing a project aimed at improving the consistency of interpretation of standards and elements of performance. A “power pack” of resources on how to comply with complex standards and National Patient Safety Goals will be available to customers in the fall.
- Conducting “Work Outs” that focus on making The Joint Commission’s internal systems and processes more efficient and effective. Examples of Works Outs include:
  - increased flexibility and customization of survey agendas
  - improved scheduling practices
  - improved turnaround time for survey results posting on the Joint Commission Connect extranet

The Joint Commission’s RPI “toolkit” includes a variety of methodologies, including Lean Six Sigma and change management. While The Joint Commission supports the use of process improvement methodologies in health care, it does not require the use of a specific methodology. RPI is enterprisewide, encompassing The Joint Commission and its affiliate, Joint Commission Resources. (Contact: Anne Marie Benedicto, [abenedicto@jointcommission.org](mailto:abenedicto@jointcommission.org))

## Public Information

### New on Quality Check

The Joint Commission’s [Quality Check](#) Web site has new National Quality Improvement Goal [information](#) for the reporting period October 2007-September 2008. Changes include:

- A placeholder appears for Children’s Asthma Care (CAC-3), Home Management Plan of Care (HMPC) Document Given to Patient/Caregiver. Rates will be available on the next quarterly release.
- AMI - 6 Beta-blocker at Arrival was removed since it was retired in March.

In addition, updated information has been posted on:

- HCAHPS (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Health Providers and Systems) Survey of Patients’ Hospital Experiences results for the reporting period April 2007-March 2008. The data comes from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services’ (CMS) Hospital Compare Web site.
- CMS 30-Day Mortality Measures as of December 10, 2008, for discharges for July 2006-June 2007, for heart attack, heart failure and pneumonia.

As a reminder, The Joint Commission is now using “target” measure ranges instead of national averages to reflect organization performance on measures. For more information, see the December 2008 issue of [Joint Commission Online](#) or the *Quality Check User Guide: Hospitals*. (Contact: Dawn Allbee, [dallbee@jointcommission.org](mailto:dallbee@jointcommission.org))

### Updated sentinel event statistics

The Joint Commission’s sentinel event statistics have been updated on the [Web site](#). Since the sentinel event database was implemented in January 1995 through March 31, 2009, The Joint Commission has reviewed 5,901 sentinel events. A total of 6,036 patients were affected by these events, with 4,132, or 68 percent, resulting in patient death. The 10 most frequently reported sentinel events are:

Type	Total	2008	First Quarter 2009
Wrong-site surgery	784	116	43
Suicide	715	102	17
Operative/post-operative complication	659	63	28
Medication error	503	46	11
Delay in treatment	472	82	30
Patient fall	367	60	26
Unintended retention of foreign body*	252	71	40
Assault, rape or homicide	224	41	6
Patient death or injury in restraints	192	13	3
Perinatal death or loss of function	181	32	6

\* Added to reviewable events in June 2005; data represents events reviewed since that time. (Contact: Anita Giuntoli, [agiuntoli@jointcommission.org](mailto:agiuntoli@jointcommission.org))

## In the news

### Physician and nurse executives team up to fight disruptive behavior

The American College of Physician Executives and the American Organization of Nurse Executives are joining forces to stamp out disruptive behavior. The two organizations are providing resources and guidance to foster excellence in nurse and physician relationships throughout the country. [Resources](#) include Web-based classes and a variety of on-line articles on decreasing disruptive behavior. The issue is so widespread that The Joint Commission published a *Sentinel Event Alert* addressing intimidating and disruptive behaviors in July 2008. In addition, The Joint Commission issued a statement requiring that health care organizations adopt zero tolerance policies for disruptive behavior by January 1, 2009. According to an ACPE survey, more than 95 percent of respondents said they had witnessed disturbing, disruptive and potentially dangerous behaviors among physicians on a regular basis. (Contact: Carrie Weimar, ACPE, [cweimar@acpe.org](mailto:cweimar@acpe.org) or (800) 562-8088)

## Upcoming

### National Time Out Day is June 17

National Time Out Day on June 17 aims to raise awareness of the importance of requiring the entire surgical team to pause before all invasive procedures to communicate as a group and confirm key information about the patient and procedure to help prevent errors from occurring. Sponsored by the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses, NTOD supports The Joint Commission's Universal Protocol, which urges that a "time out" precede every surgical procedure to verify the correct patient information prior to incision. NTOD is a collaboration among AORN, The Joint Commission, the American Nurses Association, The American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgical Facilities, and the Council on Surgical & Perioperative Safety. This year's event includes a video contest in which individuals and facilities are invited to submit a tape of their surgical team's Time Out to be considered for use with the AORN new Correct Site Surgical Took Kit that will be available on the AORN Web site by June 17. The AORN has also developed a poster to remind health care providers that "Every Day is Time Out Day." The poster is available on the AORN Web site or by calling (800) 755-2676, extension 1. For more information about NTOD or the video contest, visit the [AORN Web site](#). (Contact: Gayle Davis, [gdavis@aorn.org](mailto:gdavis@aorn.org))

## Extras

[Upcoming Conferences from Joint Commission Resources](#)

[2009 Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Behavioral Health Care Updates](#)

[Home Care Bulletin: Issue 1, 2009](#)

[Standards FAQ for Hospital and Ambulatory Care Programs: Admissions by oral and maxillofacial surgeons](#)

[CMS Recognizes The Joint Commission for Continued Hospice Deeming Authority](#)