

# The Joint Commission Lab Focus

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## ***Program update***

Are you looking for the opportunity to make a lasting impact on the quality of laboratory services in this country?

The Joint Commission is seeking applicants for the position of executive director for the Laboratory Accreditation Program. This person is responsible for overseeing the activities of the laboratory program, seeking out new business, representing The Joint Commission on national forums, and maintaining federal and state deeming relationships.

Applicants are required to have a master's degree with at least seven years of health care experience, and at least five years of progressive experience in a laboratory setting, including laboratory management. Knowledge of Joint Commission accreditation standards and survey process is necessary, as is experience in developing and implementing business goals and strategies. See the complete job description on The Joint Commission [Careers](#) page.



## **FDA: Dangers with GDH-PQQ tests**

In August, the Food and Drug Administration issued a warning about serious problems with GDH-PQQ (glucose dehydrogenase pyrroloquinoline quinone) glucose test strips. Despite the FDA's prior efforts to communicate the risk, the FDA received 13 reports of death from 1997 to 2009 (with six occurring since 2008) associated with GDH-PQQ glucose test strips in which there was documented interference from maltose or other non-glucose sugars contained in certain therapeutic products. These sugars can falsely elevate glucose results, which may mask significant hypoglycemia or prompt excessive insulin administration.

"Facilities that use any of the GDH-PQQ glucose test systems identified by the FDA need to collaborate with pharmacists and identify patients who may be at increased risk for falsely elevated glucose results," says Megan Sawchuk, M.T. (A.S.C.P.), associate director, Standards Interpretation. "Taking prompt action by following the FDA's recommendations and educating testing personnel can help eliminate this significant patient safety concern. Organizations might also consider educating patients, particularly those receiving therapeutic products known to contain maltose or other non-glucose sugars."

For the full set of FDA recommendations, known interfering therapeutic products and a list of GDH-PQQ glucose test strips, please go to the [FDA Web site](#).

## **CTH tackling safety, quality problems**

The Joint Commission launched the [Center for Transforming Healthcare](#) in September with the aim of solving health care's most critical safety and quality problems. The Center is using a new approach to systematically measure the magnitude of serious quality and safety problems, pinpoint their underlying causes, and develop and test targeted, long-lasting solutions.

This new approach involves the use of the same Robust Process Improvement™ (RPI) methods — Lean Six Sigma and change management processes — that other industries have long relied on to improve quality, safety and efficiency. Because RPI expertise in health care today is concentrated in hospitals and health systems, the Center is beginning its work by collaborating with a group of hospitals and systems that are expert in these methods. In the future, other types of health care organizations will be included as RPI expertise spreads.

The Center's first initiative is tackling hand washing failures that contribute to health care-associated infections that kill nearly 100,000 Americans each year. The Center is also developing solutions for hand-off communications and safeguards to prevent wrong site surgery.

### **Refreshed mission, new vision statement**

The Joint Commission has updated its mission statement and added a new vision statement to more accurately reflect the business, purpose and values of The Joint Commission. See the full text of both in the August 12, 2009 issue of [Joint Commission Online](#).

## Blood management performance measures

The Joint Commission is in the testing phase of a national project to establish blood management performance measures. This fall, volunteer hospitals will assess the draft specifications for clarity and standardization, and determine the availability and feasibility of the data elements for the 10 candidate measures listed below. The test results will then be reviewed by a technical advisory panel, which will recommend pilot measures. A “Call for Hospitals” to test the measures will be posted in late 2009.

The Blood Management Performance Measures Project is funded by unrestricted educational grants from the ITxM<sup>SM</sup> Blood Science Foundation and ZymoGenetics, Inc. More information is available on The Joint Commission [Web site](#).

### Candidate blood management measures

- Transfusion indication
- Transfusion consent
- Blood administration documentation
- Evaluation between multiple red blood cell transfusions
- Timely emergency transfusions
- Red blood cell administration
- Prophylactic platelet administration
- Plasma administration
- Preoperative testing
- Pretransfusion specimen rejections

## Lab team ready to meet your needs

Dedicated laboratory account executives are ready to provide you with the personalized customer service your organization deserves. This summer, The Joint Commission realigned its largest division — Accreditation and Certification Operations — into program-specific teams to better support the unique



Lab team: Veronica Simmons, Amy Fritz, Kitty Zlotnick, Katie Regan, Stephanie Scott, Anita Hamid

needs of each customer. “We now have a team of account executives for laboratory accreditation who are the experts on a variety of topics, from standards to the e-App to the PPR,” says Katie Regan, M.S.W., laboratory team manager.

According to Regan, the realignment signals a renewed focus on customer needs. “Everyone who works with lab customers — whether account executives or individuals from the Standards Interpretation Group — is located in the same area. Being in the same physical location allows for a cross-pollination of ideas and solutions for our customers.

“The upshot will be better customer service. We’re excited about these changes and hope this realignment ultimately helps our customers in reaching their goal to provide safe, high quality care for their patients,” Regan adds. If you have questions, contact Regan at [mregan@jointcommission.org](mailto:mregan@jointcommission.org) or (630) 792-5257.

## Revised 2010 NPSGs

The Joint Commission has revised the 2010 National Patient Safety Goals and some changes are effective immediately. Currently, The Joint Commission is reviewing the role of NPSGs and how they are developed. To see all of the 2010 NPSGs, please go to The Joint Commission [Web site](#).

### Take note...

#### Free chapter updates

The revised standards, rationales and elements of performance for 2010 for the Phase II programs of the Standards Improvement Initiative (SII) are now available [online](#) free of charge. The standards will take effect January 1, 2010 and have been placed online to give labs time to become familiar with the new language, new order of the chapters, and renumbering of the standards.

#### Publications

##### **2010 Portable Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Laboratory and Point-of-Care Testing**

Order code: PCLSM10, \$265

##### **2010 Laboratory Accreditation Standards**

Order code: LSM10, \$110

To order products, go to [Joint Commission Resources](#) or call (877) 223-6866.

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