

The Joint Commission Lab Focus

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Program update

Margaret Peck, M.S., M.T. (A.S.C.P.), executive director of the Laboratory Accreditation Program resigned in May. Peck had led the program since 2005. While The Joint Commission works through a transition plan, we have a team of dedicated professionals in place to answer any questions. The lab team includes:

Evelyn Choi, M.S., M.T., (A.S.C.P.), business development specialist, can answer your questions about the accreditation process and preparing for the [initial survey](#). She can be reached at echoi@jointcommission.org or (630) 792-5866.

Jeff Conway, M.P.H., manages the laboratory account representatives. He can be reached at jconway@jointcommission.org or (630) 792-5717.

Kathleen Steffens, M.A., M.T. (A.S.C.P.), field director, oversees the education and supervision of the lab surveyors. She can be reached at ksteffens@jointcommission.org or (630) 792-5785.

Megan Sawchuk, M.T., (A.S.C.P.), and **Cherie Ulaskas, M.A.S., M.T., (A.S.C.P.)**, are associate directors in the Standards Interpretation Group. Contact them if you have questions about laboratory requirements or the periodic [performance review](#). Send a query to the [online question form](#) or call (630) 792-5900.



Joint Commission lab accreditation helps Silver Cross reach the top

Silver Cross Hospital, a 304-bed acute care hospital in Joliet, Ill., has been named a Thomson Reuters (formerly Solucient) 100 Top Hospitals® National Award Winner for the past five years. Patients at these hospitals have higher survival rates, are less likely to have complications, report greater satisfaction, and are cared for in a safer environment. Denise DeMattie, M.T. (A.S.C.P.), has been laboratory operational manager at Silver Cross for 29 years. She spoke with us about the link between Joint Commission accreditation and being named a top hospital.



DeMattie
DeMattie

Do you associate your ranking as a Top 100 hospital with being Joint Commission accredited in the lab and hospital?

Yes. To be in the Top 100, you must demonstrate quality in everything. So if we can make quality improvements in the laboratory, that helps us be a better hospital and meet the Thomson Reuters criteria.

What is the advantage of having both your lab and hospital accredited by The Joint Commission?

When your laboratory and hospital are accredited by The Joint Commission, employees are focused on the same requirements and work to hit the highest level of quality. Also, it is easier to follow one set of standards.

How did your organization benefit from the joint survey?

Having The Joint Commission survey both the lab and the hospital better integrates the two because laboratories are often segregated from other departments. The tracer methodology helped other departments develop a better understanding and appreciation for what we do.

For example, in one of the tracers, The Joint Commission surveyor followed a unit of blood from order to actual transfusion. At each step he ensured that we were conforming to the standards. This is critical because transfusing blood is one of the most important procedures we do, and it was a way for us to see that everyone from the lab to the nursing staff was meeting the highest standards.

What did your staff learn from the surveyor?

Our surveyor was excellent! Because he surveys in labs all over the country, he was able to provide examples of what other organizations are doing so we could make improvements.

If you have questions about Joint Commission Laboratory Accreditation or how your lab can start the accreditation process, contact Evelyn Choi, business development specialist, at echoi@jointcommission.org or (630) 792-5866.

newsline

Scoring changes

Changes have been made to scoring and criticality levels of some elements of performance (EPs) in the *Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Laboratory and Point-of-Care Testing* based on comments from customers, surveyors and staff. The revisions are listed in the May and June 2009 issues of *Joint Commission Perspectives*. Some changes are effective immediately, others will go into effect July 1, 2009. For more information, see the [Requirements](#) page.

Account rep opening

The Joint Commission is looking for an Account Representative Trainee who will serve as the key point of contact for laboratory accredited organizations. This entry level position will be working under the direct supervision of an assigned mentor. Applicants should have a bachelor's degree, preferably in a health or ancillary health discipline, one to three years of experience in an organized health care setting and computer proficiency. For more information, visit The Joint Commission [Careers](#) Web site.

Web site testimonials

Would your organization like to be featured on the home page of The Joint Commission [Web site](#)? We are looking for interested, enthusiastic customers to talk about the benefits of Joint Commission laboratory accreditation. It's a wonderful way to showcase your lab and it offers an excellent opportunity to share your accreditation success story. If you are interested in participating, please send an e-mail to Pamela Schumacher, *Lab Focus* editor, at pschumacher@jointcommission.org.

Accreditation workshop

Megan Sawchuk, M.T. (A.S.C.P.)

Associate director, Standards Interpretation Group

Q. Is there a requirement that sharps/needle boxes or containers be mounted on the wall in patient rooms?

A. No. The Joint Commission does not specify that sharps/needle boxes or containers be wall mounted. The organization can perform a risk assessment to determine whether the wall-mounted sharps container poses a risk to occupants of the room. When conducting the assessment, include input from infection control, risk management, and the safety officer. In addition to the patient population, it is also important to consider whether visitors (perhaps with small children) can access the containers.

For guidance on the placement of the containers refer to the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) and [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\)](#) guidelines.

Q. Is pass/fail documentation acceptable for recording blood warmer alarm checks?

A. No. Although pass/fail documentation is commonly used for other biomedical equipment, it is not acceptable for blood warmer alarm checks. Standard EC.6.20 requires that the actual temperature of the plates or effluent at which the alarm sounds should be recorded.

If you have further questions, please complete an [online question form](#) or call the Standards Interpretation Group at (630) 792-5900.

Resources

Audio conference

Using Tracers to Achieve Results, July 27, 2009

Learn how to prepare for the tracer process and use it as a day-to-day management tool to improve the quality and safety of health care services provided to the patient.

Order code: DEP765, \$199

Publications

2009 E-dition for Laboratory and Point-of-Care Testing

Single user license order code: ELB09H, \$297

Site license order code: ELBS09H, \$1,485

2009 Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Laboratory and Point-of-Care Testing

Order code: CLSM09, \$265

2009 Laboratory Accreditation Standards

Order code: LSM09, \$110

2009 Accreditation Process Guide for Laboratories

Order code: APGL09, \$119

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Contact us

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