

The Joint Commission LTC Update

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From the Director

Spring is in the air and changes are afoot. I'm excited to be leading the Long Term Care Accreditation Program at The Joint Commission (see story this page), and I'll tell you why — our standards are undergoing dramatic changes as a result of the Standards Improvement Initiative (SII). Phase I of the project has been completed and you may have already noticed some improvements. Highlights include:

- *Rewritten Leadership and Life Safety chapters. We've clarified the language, eliminated redundancies, and made the standards more relevant to the long term care setting.*
- *The accreditation decision process has been revised to focus on the critical issues that pose the greatest risk to the quality of resident care and safety.*
- *The E-ditions, or electronic standards manuals, are popular with our customers. This new format makes it easy to access, search and view the standards.*

But the work is not done; more refinements will occur to the Long Term Care standards in 2009 and I hope you will share your thoughts about the planned changes. I look forward to chatting with many of you as I settle into my expanded role leading The Joint Commission's Long Term Care Accreditation Program. If you have suggestions, please contact me at gzimmermann@jointcommission.org or (630) 792-5293. I look forward to hearing from you.

Gina Zimmermann, M.S.



Zimmermann to head LTC program

Gina Zimmermann, M.S., will head the Long Term Care Accreditation Program following the resignation of Dale Johnson in mid-December. Zimmermann, who has been at The Joint Commission for 20 years, has served in the role of senior executive director of Business Development since 2001. In this role, she oversees the Joint Commission's accreditation and certification program business development efforts and the development and implementation of marketing and sales strategies.

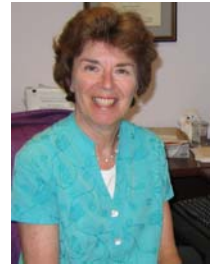


Zimmermann

"Our standards are the most rigorous in the industry, and the nursing homes that choose to be evaluated by The Joint Commission are committed to providing the highest quality care to their residents," says Zimmermann. "I look forward to promoting the value of The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of approval to the long term care field, consumers and payers."

In addition to Zimmermann, who can be reached at gzimmermann@jointcommission.org or (630) 792-5293, the Long Term Care Team includes:

- **Peggy Lavin**, senior associate director, can be reached at plavin@jointcommission.org or (630) 792-5411. Contact her if your long term care organization is interested in accreditation. "I'm here to answer your questions and help organizations with whatever they need."
- **Evelyn Choi**, business development specialist, can be reached at echoi@jointcommission.org or (630) 792-5866. Choi works closely with Lavin and can also answer your questions. "I help customers initiate the accreditation process and walk them through the steps to prepare."
- **Nancy Gorman**, long term care field director, can be reached at ngorman@jointcommission.org or (630) 792-5707. Gorman oversees the education and supervision of the long term care surveyors. "I want to know what you really think of your survey. If you have an issue with your survey or surveyor, please call me. I'd love to talk to you."



Lavin



Choi



Gorman

Field review of RI chapter

The Joint Commission is asking for feedback on proposed revisions to the Rights and Responsibilities of the Individual (RI) chapter of the *Accreditation Manual for Long Term Care*. Comments will be taken through April 14. To participate, go to www.jointcommission.org/Standards/SII/sii_chapters_to_review.htm.

NPSG changes in 2009

Retroactive to January 1, 2009, Joint Commission surveyors will not score National Patient Safety Goal (NPSG) 8 — *Accurately and completely reconcile medications across the continuum of care*. Surveyors will continue to survey the NPSG, but non-compliance will not count toward the accreditation decision.

“Medication errors continue to be one of the most frequent causes of preventable harm in health care,” says Nancy Gorman, field director, Long Term Care Accreditation Program. “So, although there will be no scoring this year, surveyors will evaluate the organization’s medication reconciliation process and collect information on the progress organizations are making toward meeting the requirements.”

The information gathered by surveyors, in addition to feedback from the field,

will be used to create an improved medication reconciliation NPSG in 2010, says Gorman.

No new NPSGs in 2010

During the next year, all current National Patient Safety Goals will undergo an extensive review process; as a result, there will be no new NPSGs developed for 2010. Instead, the Standards Improvement Initiative (SII) process will be used to clarify language, ensure that NPSGs are program-specific, delete NPSGs that are redundant or non-essential in specific programs, and consolidate similar NPSGs. Revisions to the NPSGs based on SII recommendations will be effective in 2010.

For more information, go to www.jointcommission.org/PatientSafety/NationalPatientSafetyGoals.

Top compliance issues for Long Term Care

Compliance with National Patient Safety Goal 2C and standard HR.4.10 were the most problematic areas for accredited long term care organizations in the first six months of 2008. The table below shows the areas most frequently identified as “not compliant” for traditionally accredited long term

care organizations and those using the Medicare/Medicaid Certification-based Long Term Care accreditation. The percentage denotes the number of organizations that received Requirements for Improvement. For the complete list, see the March 2009 issue of *Joint Commission Perspectives*.

Standard or NPSG with highest non-compliance rates January-June 2008	LTC accredited	Medicare/Medicaid Certification-based LTC accredited
NPSG 2C: Measure, assess, and if appropriate, take action to improve the timeliness of reporting, and the timeliness of receipt by the responsible licensed caregiver, of critical test results and values.	38 percent	50 percent
HR.4.10: There is a process for ensuring the competence of all practitioners permitted by law and the organization to practice independently.	31 percent	41 percent
NPSG 2B: Standardize a list of abbreviations, acronyms, symbols and dose designations that are not to be used throughout the organization.	23 percent	28 percent
HR.4.20: Individuals permitted by law and the organization to practice independently are granted clinical privileges.	19 percent	37 percent
HR.4.50: Clinical privileges and appointments/reappointments are reviewed and revised at least every two years.	18 percent	29 percent

Resources

Education

Joint Commission

Accreditation Summit

April 28-29, 2009, Rosemont, Ill.

Participants will receive the latest updates on requirements and the accreditation process from Joint Commission executives and program leaders. Includes plenary lectures and breakout sessions.

Publication

2009 E-dition for Long Term Care

The electronic version of the *Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Long Term Care* can be purchased as a single user license, that allows one registered user at a time to access it, or a site license that allows unlimited users from your site to access it.

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