

The Joint Commission Home Care Bulletin

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Executive Director

Maybe John Lennon said it best, "Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans." For almost two years, I have enjoyed working with so many of you in my role as executive director of the Home Care Program. Unexpectedly, I will be leaving my position to help care for a sick parent. That work will require greater flexibility than my current schedule can accommodate. Thankfully, I will remain with The Joint Commission on a part-time basis and continue to support the program.

We have accomplished much over the past few years. I must acknowledge the efforts of the Home Care Advisory Groups and the Home Care Professional and Technical Advisory Committee. Thank you for your valuable input.

Looking forward, we are stepping up our training processes as part of The Joint Commission's internal improvement efforts, and using robust process improvement methods like Lean, Six Sigma and change acceleration. The Joint Commission is tackling a number of projects to improve the accreditation process, including customer service, standards development and communication.

My goal is a seamless transition in the home care leadership at The Joint Commission. With Margherita's appointment (see related article), I know I am leaving you in talented, capable hands. As always, thank you for your inspiring dedication to quality care for your patients.

Debra Zak, Ph.D., R.N.

New home care executive director

Margherita C. Labson, R.N., has been appointed executive director of The Joint Commission's Home Care Accreditation Program, effective May 1. Labson will communicate with prospective and existing customers and national and state organizations regarding The Joint Commission's approach to safety and quality improvement.

From 1995 until late 2007, Labson was a home care surveyor for The Joint Commission. Most recently, she was associate director for the home care program. She has specialized in the provision of home care services since 1977 from both multi-operational and academic perspectives. She has extensive

knowledge in the legal, regulatory and accreditation requirements for the scope of home care programs provided in the United States and Puerto Rico.



Labson has a bachelor's degree in Nursing from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pa., and a master of science degree in Health Care Administration from Nova Southeastern University, Davie, Fla. She can be reached at (630) 792-5284.

CMS renews The Joint Commission's deeming authority for hospices

The Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has renewed The Joint Commission's deeming authority for hospice organizations for the maximum six-year term allowed.

The six-year designation means that hospice organizations accredited by The Joint Commission will be "deemed" as meeting Medicare and Medicaid certification requirements and are eligible for Medicare reimbursement. According to the Hospice Association of America's 2008 Hospice Facts and Statistics report, Medicare certified hospices have grown from just 31 in 1984 to more than 3,000 in January 2008, serving more than 950,000 patients annually.

"The Joint Commission is pleased to once again receive this recognition of its national standards for the accreditation of hospice programs," says Margherita Labson, R.N., associate director, Home Care Accreditation Program. "This public-private partnership between CMS and The Joint Commission is a commitment to the quality of hospice services for terminally ill patients and their families."

The final notice announcing the approval of The Joint Commission for continued recognition as a national accreditation organization for hospices was published in the Federal Register on March 27. The Joint Commission has been granted deeming authority for hospice since 1999.



Additional unannounced survey exceptions

Additional exemptions from completely unannounced surveys take effect immediately for home care organizations. These organizations will receive seven business days advance notice of a full survey. This seven-day advance notice also applies to those organizations that currently receive five business days advance notice.

“Since The Joint Commission introduced unannounced surveys in January 2006, we’ve been looking at the impact on different types of organizations,” says Debra Zak, former executive director, Home Care Accreditation Program. “We found that unannounced surveys can

disrupt the delivery of patient care in very small home care organizations.” Here are the types of home care organizations that receive seven business days advance notice for resurveys:

- Small, non-deemed health and hospice organizations, if not part of a hospital
- Small home care organizations that provide only one service

Additional exceptions to unannounced surveys for organizations accredited under other Joint Commission programs are listed in the March 2009 issue of *The Joint Commission Perspectives*.

Extension surveys extended to 12 months for newly acquired services, sites

The timeframe for conducting extension surveys has been extended to 12 months from four-to-six months for organizations that acquire a new service, program or site. The timeframe change is being made to allow organizations a reasonable period of time to bring a new service or site up to its standard of performance. Extension surveys are conducted to ensure that the accreditation decision previously awarded to the organization is still appropriate under changed conditions. Extension surveys are still conducted during the four-to-six month timeframe at organizations that:

- Change ownership and have significant changes in the management and

clinical staff or operating policies and procedures.

- Offer at least 25 percent of its services at a new location or in a significantly altered physical plant.
- Expand its capacity to provider services by 25 percent or more, as measured by patient volume, pieces of equipment, or other relevant measures.
- Provide a more intensive level of service.
- Merge with, consolidate with, or acquire an unaccredited site, service or program that is covered by Joint Commission standards.

Compliance is E-Z with E-dition V.1.2

Version 1.2 of The Joint Commission’s electronic manual—E-dition—was recently released and includes additional home care service delivery modes. Home care organizations now have the option to select specific services and view only the applicable standards for their type of organization. New delivery modes have been added for durable medical equipment (mail order, patient resi-

dence, facility-based), prosthetics and orthotics (patient residence and facility-based), rehabilitation technology (patient residence and facility-based), and supplies (mail order and patient residence). If you haven’t accessed E-dition yet, log on to The Joint Commission Connect extranet and click on the E-dition link.

TakeNote

Accreditation Summit

On April 28-29, The Joint Commission’s Accreditation Summit will be held at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, Ill. The Summit will provide accreditation-focused solutions designed to achieve and sustain safe, quality care. A customized track will be offered for home care organizations. “A Primer for Beginners: Designing and Managing Your Accreditation Program,” will be held on April 27. For more information, visit www.jcrlinc.com or phone (877) 223-6866.

Free teleconferences for home care customers

Begin your trek toward accreditation with these free teleconferences:

- May 6, noon to 1 p.m., Joint Commission Accreditation: A Competitive Advantage for Personal Care, Private Duty and Non-Medical Providers (for first-timers only), register at www.jointcommission.org/personalcarecall
- May 12, noon to 1p.m., A Pathway to Medicare Certification for Home Health Providers: The Deemed Status Survey Option from The Joint Commission, register at www.jointcommission.org/May12HHcall

Look for us

The home care team will exhibit at the National Association for Home Care and Hospice, Los Angeles, Calif., Oct. 10-14, booth 400.

Contact us

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