

# The Joint Commission LTC Update

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## Executive Director

*Two momentous events occurred recently that I'm eager to tell you about. First, the [Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare](#) launched in September with the aim of addressing health care's most critical safety and quality problems. "Transforming" is an essential part of the name because one of the goals of the Center is to provide knowledge and practices that will transform health care into a high-reliability industry with safety rates comparable to air travel or nuclear energy (see article on this page).*

*Second, The Joint Commission has refreshed its mission statement and added a vision statement (see article on page 2). The revised mission statement emphasizes the twin aims of:*

- Thorough evaluation against Joint Commission standards.
- Effective motivation of organizations to use the results of that evaluation to drive improvement.

*The new vision statement is stated as a vision for the health care industry, not just The Joint Commission enterprise. If you have any thoughts about these new developments, please send them to me at [gzimmermann@jointcommission.org](mailto:gzimmermann@jointcommission.org).*

*Gina Zimmermann, M.S.*



## 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.

## New LTC team ready to serve you

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



LTC team: Mike Martino, Jo Koinange and Sharon Belardinelli

"We now have a team of account executives specifically for long term care accreditation who provide support on a variety of topics, from standards to the e-App to the PPR," says Mike Martino, Long Term Care team manager.

According to Martino, the realignment signals a renewed focus on customer needs. "Everyone who works with long term care customers — whether account executives, field directors, 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 reach their goal to provide safe, high quality care for their residents," Martino adds. If you have questions, contact Martino at [mmartino@jointcommission.org](mailto:mmartino@jointcommission.org) or (630) 792-5719.

## Standards Q&A

Nancy Gorman M.S., R.N., NHA  
Field Director, Surveyor Management and Development

**Q. Will my long term care organization automatically receive a decision of Conditional Accreditation if we neglect to notify The Joint Commission that we have been designated a “Special Focus Facility?”**

**A.** Yes. In order to get a complete picture of the care provided at your organization, Joint Commission surveyors gather information from various sources, including CMS’ Nursing Home Compare list. This list will show if your organization has the [Special Focus Facility](#) status, so it is very important that you quickly notify your account executive. This requirement applies to all accredited long term care organizations and is covered in APR.05.01.01, EP 3: *The organization notifies The Joint Commission when it is designated by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) as a Special Focus Facility prior to public announcement of its designation by CMS.*

If your organization is designated a Special Focus Facility, send an e-mail or a letter to your account executive. Keep a printed copy for your files so that when your surveyor inquires about it, you can produce the notification. This notification does not automatically trigger any action by The Joint Commission. However if you neglect to notify us, your organization’s accreditation status would be jeopardized.

For more information, contact your account executive at (630) 792-3007.

## Revised 2010 NPSGs

The Joint Commission has revised the 2010 National Patient Safety Goals and some changes are effective immediately. The changes were made partly in response to concerns from the field about the resources needed to comply with NPSGs that have become more specific and detailed over time. Currently, The Joint Commission is reviewing the role of NPSGs and how they are developed. See all the 2010 NPSGs on The Joint Commission [Web site](#).

## Refreshed mission, new vision statement

The Joint Commission has updated its mission and vision statements to more accurately reflect the business, purpose and values of The Joint Commission.

### Mission

*To continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value.*

### Vision

*All people always experience the safest, highest quality, best-value health care across all settings.*

## Staffing effectiveness review, Part II

The Joint Commission is conducting a second [field review](#) of revised staffing effectiveness requirements for the Long Term Care program. This round of revisions includes further refinements made in response to comments from the first field engagement, which was conducted in the spring. Comments will be gathered through **October 7, 2009**. For more information about this field review, see the August 5, 2009 issue of [Joint Commission Online](#).

## Resources

### Publication

**2010 Portable Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Long Term Care**

Order code: PCLTC10, \$265

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

### Free chapter updates

The Joint Commission’s revised standards, rationales and elements of performance for the Phase II programs of the Standards Improvement Initiative (SII) are now available [online](#). The standards take effect January 1, 2010 and have been placed online to provide all LTC organizations time to become familiar with the new language, new order of the chapters, and renumbering of the standards. Also posted is an outline for each chapter and a history tracking report that shows the relationship between old and new standards.

### Social media links

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