New Primary Care Medical Home Option for Accredited Ambulatory Care Organizations

Patient-Centeredness and Care Coordination Key to New Model

Joint Commission–accredited ambulatory care organizations now have the option of expanding their accreditation to include the Primary Care Medical Home designation beginning July 1, 2011. The Joint Commission’s Board of Commissioners recently approved the Primary Care Medical Home option, which will help ambulatory care organizations improve care coordination, increase patient satisfaction, and enable positive patient outcomes while complementing their current ambulatory care accreditation program. “The launch of this new optional program is truly historic for The Joint Commission,” says Michael Kulczycki, executive director, Ambulatory Care Accreditation Program, The Joint Commission. “This program will help ensure that patients receive primary care services in a manner that is comprehensive, accessible, and coordinated. By focusing on carefully orchestrating care, patient outcomes can be improved.”

Patient-Centered Model

The primary care medical home is a model of care in which services are provided to a patient by a primary care clinician working collaboratively with an interdisciplinary team to do the following:

- Involve the patient in developing his or her own treatment plan and partner with the patient to achieve planned outcomes

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- Provide 24-hour, 7-day-a-week access to services, including clinical advice for urgent care needs, test results, prescription renewal requests, and same-day appointments.
- Track and coordinate a patient’s care delivered by other clinicians and facilities
- Manage care transitions and provide/facilitate access to acute care, chronic care, age and gender-specific preventive care, behavioral health needs, urgent and emergent care, oral health care, and substance abuse treatment.
- Support patient self-management

The primary care medical home is also responsible for identifying the members of a patient’s interdisciplinary team based on his or her health care needs. The patient will be allowed to select his or her primary care clinician, who, consistent with applicable law, could be a doctor of medicine, doctor of osteopathy, advanced practice nurse, or a physician assistant. The primary care clinician works with the interdisciplinary team and in partnership with the patient and family to address the patient’s primary health care needs. In addition, the patient has the right to make decisions about his or her care, obtain care from other clinicians within the team, seek a second opinion, and/or seek specialty care. “This is a proven approach to help ambulatory care organizations ensure that the delivery of primary care is very patient centered,” says Kulczycki.

New and Revised Requirements

The Joint Commission’s Board of Commissioners approved the Primary Care Medical Home option in May 2011, and it is effective July 1, 2011. The initiative provides an optional Primary Care Medical Home designation to ambulatory care organizations that are accredited or eligible for accreditation under the Joint Commission’s ambulatory care program. (Note: The Primary Care Medical Home designation will not be granted until accreditation is achieved.) The Primary Care Medical Home designation is an optional add-on to ambulatory care accreditation, which means organizations interested in obtaining the designation must comply with both the existing Joint Commission ambulatory care requirements and the additional primary care medical home–specific requirements. Some concepts addressed in the new and revised Primary Care Medical Home requirements include the following:

- Patient selection of a primary care clinician
- An interdisciplinary team working in partnership with the patient to provide comprehensive and coordinated care
- Consideration of the patient’s culture, education, and language preferences
- Support provided to patients to seek a second opinion and/or specialty care
- Patient assessment for health risk behaviors and support for self-management
- Use of health information technology to document and track care
- Disease management and population-based care
- Referral tracking and follow-up
- Patient involvement in performance improvement
- 24/7 access for urgent health care needs, prescription renewal requests, and clinical advice
- Collection, analysis, and use of data on patient perceptions of the comprehensiveness, coordination, and continuity of care

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Executive Director
Ambulatory Care Accreditation
The Joint Commission

Using Technology

Ambulatory care organizations also will need to have
the right technology and performance improvement tools in order to meet a handful of specific EPs that address the importance of a systems-based approach to quality and safety. “We considered the abundant research and expert input from the field before we carefully created the new EPs for this optional designation,” says Berkeley. “Many recommended that having the right technology for this model will facilitate a team’s ability to communicate with other providers, reduce the chances of medical errors, and more easily track a patient’s care and progress. Numerous ambulatory care organizations are already using these resources as they move toward meeting the financial incentives of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services’ new Meaningful Use Electronic Health Record program.”

Ambulatory care organizations can preview all of the Primary Care Medical Home requirements on The Joint Commission Web site at http://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/Primary_Care_Home_Posting_Report_20110519.pdf. They also will be included in the 2011 Update 2 for the Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Ambulatory Care (CAMAC) publishing in late September and the next release of E-dition® in July.

Incentives
After a successful evaluation during an on-site survey, the organization is provided an organizationwide Primary Care Medical Home designation that is valid for up to three years. In 2012, the designation will be displayed along with the organization’s accreditation information that is publicly available on The Joint Commission’s Quality Check®.

In addition, the Primary Care Medical Home designation is consistent with current health care reform efforts to improve the coordination, quality, and efficiency of health care services. “The Joint Commission is seeking feedback from Medicare and Medicaid officials and private payers to ensure that the Primary Care Medical Home standards will enable ambulatory care organizations to be eligible for enhanced reimbursement when the additional requirements of a Primary Care Medical Home are met,” says Kulczycki.

As organizations strive to meet new Accountable Care Organization requirements and Value-Based Purchasing in response to the Affordable Care Act, attaining Primary Care Medical Home designation will be a building block toward the new payment reform and care delivery model innovations, says Ann Scott Blouin, Ph.D., R.N., FACHE, executive vice president, Division of Accreditation and Certification Operations, The Joint Commission.

Joint Commission Resources is releasing a new 2012 Standards for Medical Care Including Primary Care Medical Homes manual in November 2011. This easy-to-use resource will provide all primary care medical home requirements in a spiral-bound book that can be used in meetings or for orientation and training as your organization prepares for achieving this new designation. Visit http://www.jcrinc.com/Accreditation-Manuals/MCS12/3915/ for more information.

Product information:
2012 Standards for Medical Care Including Primary Care Medical Homes
Approximately 425 pages.
Item Number: MCS12
Price: $130
Price for non-accredited organizations: $163

Well-Researched Model
The Primary Care Medical Home designation is the culmination of more than one year of work, including collecting input from The Joint Commission’s Ambulatory Care Professional and Technical Advisory Committee, community-based and other primary care providers; national and state organizations representing primary care providers; professional associations representing physicians, advanced practice nurses, and physician assistants; third-party payers; and ambulatory care surveyors. The Primary Care Medical Home requirements were also pilot tested in four ambulatory care facilities and received more than 300 submitted comments during field review.

“Accredited organizations have repeatedly let us know that this additional designation is important to them,” Kulczycki says. “We are listening to our customers. This product is our first try and, over time, we will look at how we can make enhancements to continue to meet the needs of our customers. It’s an evolving process because this is a dramatically evolving enhancement to delivery of primary care across the country.”