The Joint Commission’s Advanced Certification for Palliative Care program evaluates hospital-based palliative care programs that deliver care to a defined patient population. Since the program’s launch on September 1, 2011, customers have identified a need for greater clarity in the palliative care certification eligibility criteria. As a result, The Joint Commission clarified the eligibility criteria to include a note regarding hospice patients as well as an additional clarification about the direction and coordination of palliative care, treatment, and services. The revised eligibility requirements are shown in the box below (new text is underlined, deleted text is shown in strikethrough). While they are effective immediately, the revised requirements will be published in fall 2012 in “The Joint Commission Certification Process” (CERT) chapter of the 2013 Palliative Care Certification Manual.

For more information, contact David Eickemeyer, associate director, Certification, at deickemeyer@jointcommission.org or 630/792-5697.

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**CLARIFICATION: Eligibility for Advanced Certification for Palliative Care**

The Joint Commission’s Advanced Certification for Palliative Care program evaluates hospital-based palliative care programs that deliver care to a defined patient population. Since the program’s launch on September 1, 2011, customers have identified a need for greater clarity in the palliative care certification eligibility criteria. As a result, The Joint Commission clarified the eligibility criteria to include a note regarding hospice patients as well as an additional clarification about the direction and coordination of palliative care, treatment, and services. The revised eligibility requirements are shown in the box below (new text is underlined, deleted text is shown in strikethrough). While they are effective immediately, the revised requirements will be published in fall 2012 in “The Joint Commission Certification Process” (CERT) chapter of the 2013 Palliative Care Certification Manual.

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**Revisions to General Eligibility Criteria for Palliative Care Certification**

**Applicable to Advanced Certification for Palliative Care**

Effective immediately

Any palliative care program may apply for Joint Commission certification under the standards in this manual if all the following requirements are met:

- The palliative care program must be in the United States, operated by the U.S. government, or operated under a charter of the U.S. Congress.
- The palliative care program is provided within a Joint Commission–accredited hospital. All types of hospitals are eligible, including children’s hospitals and long term acute care hospitals.
- The palliative care program provides the full range of palliative care services to hospitalized patients, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
  - Palliative care programs must have team members available to answer phone calls nights and weekends and the ability to come to the hospital to see patients 24 hours a day, 7 days a week when necessary to meet patient and family needs.
  - Palliative care programs must be able to provide the same level of palliative care services during nights and weekends as during normal weekday hours.*
- The palliative care program must have served a minimum of 10 patients, and have at least one active patient at the time of its Joint Commission on-site review.†
- The palliative care program has the ability to direct the clinical management of patients and coordinate care directs and coordinates the provision of palliative care, treatment, and services for program patients (i.e., that is, writes orders, directs or coordinates activities of the patient care team, and influences composition of the patient care team).
- The palliative care program follows an organized approach supported by an interdisciplinary team of health professionals. A dedicated unit or dedicated beds is not required.
- The palliative care program uses a standardized method of delivering clinical care based on clinical practice guidelines and/or evidence-based practice.
- The palliative care program uses performance measurement to improve its performance over time. Four months of performance measure data must be available at the time of the initial certification on-site review.

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* Palliative care programs are not required to have palliative care team members physically present in the hospital 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
† Hospice patients are eligible for inclusion in the minimum patient count only if they were receiving inpatient palliative care from the program prior to transitioning to hospice care. These patients may be selected for tracer activity during the on-site review, with the reviewer focusing on the episode of inpatient palliative care that occurred closest to the time of hospice transition.