The Joint Commission:

Inspiring health care excellence

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

Attaining The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval™

Founded in 1951, The Joint Commission evaluates, accredits and certifies more than 20,500 health care organizations and programs in the United States. An independent, not-for-profit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation’s oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care. To earn and maintain The Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval™, an organization undergoes an on-site survey by a Joint Commission survey team every three years. (Laboratories are surveyed every two years.)

**Accreditation services**

- Hospital: General, children’s, psychiatric, rehabilitation and critical access hospitals
- Home care: Includes medical equipment, pharmacy and hospice services
- Nursing care center: Includes nursing homes and rehabilitation centers
- Behavioral health care: Includes addiction services
- Ambulatory care: Includes group practices and office-based surgery practices
- Laboratory: Independent or freestanding clinical laboratories

**Certification services**

- Advanced Certification in Disease-Specific Care
- Advanced Certification for Palliative Care
- Behavioral Health Home Certification (for behavioral health facilities)
- Disease-Specific Care Certification
- Health Care Staffing Services certification
- Primary Care Medical Home Certification (for ambulatory care facilities, hospitals and critical access hospitals)

**Setting quality standards**

Joint Commission standards are the basis of an objective evaluation process that can help health care organizations measure, assess and improve performance. The standards focus on important patient care and organization functions that are essential to providing safe, high quality care. Joint Commission standards are developed with input from health care professionals, providers, subject matter experts, consumers, government agencies and employers. The standards are informed by scientific literature and expert consensus and approved by the Board of Commissioners. New standards are added only if they relate to patient safety or quality of care, have a positive impact on health outcomes, meet or surpass law and regulation, and can be accurately and readily measured.
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Evaluating organization performance

The Joint Commission on-site survey process is data-driven, patient-centered and focused on evaluating actual care processes. The objectives of the survey are not only to evaluate the organization, but to provide education and “good practice” guidance that will help staff continually improve the organization’s performance. Joint Commission on-site surveys are designed to be organization-specific, consistent and to support the organization’s efforts to improve performance.

Advancing safety and quality

As part of its mission, The Joint Commission is committed to improving health care safety and demonstrates this commitment through numerous efforts, including:

• Sentinel Event Policy, which was revised in 2014 to incorporate contemporary patient safety concepts, including the use of more current terminology, such as defining a category of events called “patient safety events,” of which a sentinel event is one type, and using “sentinel event” to refer only to events in which death or serious harm occurred.

• Complaints from patients, their families, government agencies, the public, staff employed by organizations, and the media are used to help improve the quality and safety of Joint Commission accredited organizations. Many complaints relate to a serious patient safety concern. Complaints can be reported online, by e-mail complaint@jointcommission.org, phone 800-994-6610, fax 630-792-5636, or mail: The Office of Quality and Patient Safety, The Joint Commission, One Renaissance Boulevard, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois, 60181.

• Speak Up™ program urges patients to take an active role in preventing health care errors by becoming involved and informed participants on their health care team. First launched in March 2002, the Speak Up program features free infographics, brochures, and animated videos.

Transforming health care

Created in 2008, the Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare aims to solve health care’s most critical safety and quality problems. The Center’s participants – some of the nation’s leading hospitals and health systems – use a systematic approach to analyze specific breakdowns in care and discover their underlying causes to develop targeted solutions that solve these complex problems. In keeping with its objective to transform health care into a high reliability industry, The Joint Commission shares these proven effective solutions with its accredited organizations. The Center developed the Targeted Solutions Tool® (TST®), an innovative application that guides health care organizations through a step-by-step process to accurately measure their organization’s actual performance, identify their barriers to excellent performance, and direct them to proven solutions that are customized to address their particular barriers. Targeted solutions for hand hygiene, wrong site surgery, and hand-off communications are now available via the TST®.
Providing information to consumers

The Joint Commission has a longstanding commitment to providing meaningful information about the comparative performance of accredited organizations to the public. The Quality Check® website, www.qualitycheck.org, launched in 1996, fulfills this commitment. Quality Check includes Quality Reports on Joint Commission accredited organizations and certified programs.

Providing supportive services

Joint Commission Resources is a global, knowledge-based organization that provides innovative solutions designed to help health care organizations improve patient safety and quality. An affiliate of The Joint Commission, JCR provides expertise on the many issues organizations face in a challenging health care environment through a variety of products and services, including: education programs, publications and online software; its Continuous Service Readiness program; comprehensive health care consulting and custom education; and accreditation and consulting for organizations abroad. JCR is dedicated to helping health care organizations worldwide improve the quality and safety of patient care. For more information, visit JCR’s website or call the toll-free customer service line at 877-223-6866.

Having global impact

Joint Commission International (JCI) extends The Joint Commission’s mission worldwide by assisting international health care organizations, public health agencies, health ministries and others to improve the quality and safety of patient care. JCI was established in 1994 as a division of Joint Commission Resources, Inc. (JCR), an affiliate of The Joint Commission. JCI’s accreditation program was developed by international experts and sets uniform, achievable expectations for structures, processes, and outcomes for health care organizations. JCI offers accreditation for general hospitals and academic medical centers, ambulatory care facilities, clinical laboratories, home care agencies, nursing and rehabilitation centers, medical transport organizations, and primary care services. JCI also offers Clinical Care Program Certification for treatment of a specific disease, condition, or clinical care service. For more information, visit JCI’s website or send an email to jciaccreditation@jcrinc.com.