

The Joint Commission Lab Focus

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Executive Director

I know time passes quickly, but I can't believe it's been a year since we launched Lab Central Connect™, a customer portal for Joint Commission accredited laboratories. The portal provides a centralized area on the extranet for customers to store survey-related documents. Because the documents are in one place, surveyors have more time to focus on best practice training and on-site education with you and your staff. We recently asked some of our customers and staff about their experiences with the portal; you can read their responses in an article on this page.

This year we've been developing the Patient Blood Management Certification program. This certification is a perfect example of how laboratorians and clinicians can combine their knowledge and expertise to improve patient care. The certification program provides a framework to help organizations minimize blood loss, optimize coagulation and manage anemia using evidence-based methods. It's the first certification that has been offered by the Laboratory Accreditation program.

We'd love to hear from you if you have examples of how the hospital staff and your laboratory have worked together in this area. Send your thoughts to me at jrhamy@jointcommission.org.

Jennifer F. Rhamy, M.B.A., M.A.,
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Coming soon: Patient Blood Management Certification option

The Joint Commission is developing a new Patient Blood Management Certification option for accredited hospitals to recognize those organizations that have undertaken patient blood management as an organization-wide program. This new optional certification is targeted to become effective in mid-2014.



“Patient blood management incorporates a patient-centered approach to blood conservation and blood utilization activities that occur within a hospital. The underlying philosophy of patient blood management is to provide patient care that reduces the need for transfusions by working together across disciplines,” says Jennifer Rhamy, executive director, Laboratory Accreditation. “In addition, new literature supporting restrictive transfusion practices is changing the risk/benefit equation and consequently, the approach to treating many patient populations.”

To develop the certification, Joint Commission staff conducted extensive research into the concepts of patient blood management to identify the critical issues. This included soliciting feedback from stakeholders, a technical advisory panel, and the Laboratory Professional and Technical Advisory Panel. They found that a safe, effective patient blood management program:

- Uses a multi-disciplinary, organization-wide approach to manage anemia, optimize coagulation and decrease bleeding
- Minimizes the need for blood transfusions in all patient populations from the time of admission to the time of discharge.
- Strives to improve patient outcomes

Lab Central Connect™ improves survey experience

In August 2012, The Joint Commission launched *Lab Central Connect*™, a portal designed to provide Joint Commission-accredited laboratories with a centralized area to store important survey-related documents. The portal also helps labs maintain continuous compliance with Joint Commission standards. *Lab Focus* talked with



Joint Commission customers and staff about the changes that have occurred since the introduction of the new portal.

Stan Macheichok, B.S., MT (ASCP), laboratory director, Mile Bluff Medical Center, Mauston, Wis., said *Lab Central Connect* worked well for his five-lab system at its survey earlier this year. “I used *Lab Central Connect* to document all the personnel, equipment and tests conducted at each of our five laboratories. The set up was very easy, especially from an instrument and test listing perspective. It also standardized survey preparation for all of our labs. It definitely reduced the time we spent preparing for survey.”

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Standards Q&A

John Gibson, M.A., ASCP (MT), DLM, associate director
Standards Interpretation Group

Q. Is competency required for pathologists to interpret cytology or histology slides?

A: Standards in the *Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Laboratory and Point-of-Care Testing (CAMLAB)* do not require documented competence assessment as defined in standard HR.01.06.01 for the interpretation of histology and cytology slides by certified pathologists. However, pathologists performing primary screening of gynecologic cytology slides are required to participate in a federally-approved proficiency program as specified in standard QSA.01.01.01 EP 7.

When a pathologist initially applies for privileges at a Joint Commission-accredited hospital, a period of Focused Professional Practice Evaluation (FPPE) must be initiated as outlined in the *Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Hospitals (CAMH)* at standard MS.08.01.02. This evaluation must be defined by the medical staff and must include criteria for conducting performance monitoring, the method for establishing a monitoring plan specific to the requested privilege, and the method for determining the duration of performance monitoring.

After satisfactory completion of the period of FPPE," the medical staff must evaluate pathologists by using the Ongoing Professional Practice Evaluation (OPPE) criteria as described in *CAMH* standard MS.08.01.03.

Lab Central Connect™ ...continued from page 1

Macheichok said he also appreciates the educational aspect of using the portal. "When our surveyor was here, she helped us make changes to get everything set up correctly. Now that it's loaded into the system, I only need to maintain the information and add to it as needed."

Stephanie Risinger, B.S., MT (ASCP), assistant laboratory director, West Florida Hospital, Pensacola, Fla., said using the portal improves with time and experience. "Once you get used to *Lab Central Connect*, it's a blessing. Having the portal makes it much easier to know what information you need to collect and store for the survey. During the survey, I knew exactly what the surveyor would be asking for and where I could find it."

That is exactly what *Lab Central Connect* was designed to do, says Stacy Olea, MT (ASCP), FACHE, field director for laboratory surveyors. "It can be a challenge to keep track of all the information that CLIA (Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments) requires, but the portal is a big help with that. For example, the portal shows how to list the correct specialties and personnel roles, how to document test complexity levels and, if the lab does cytology, how to complete the required workload and annual statistics. If the laboratory doesn't get these areas correct, it could lead to findings."

Teresita Stonefield, MT (ASCP), Joint Commission laboratory surveyor, sees a benefit for the organization even before the survey occurs. "*Lab Central Connect* provides me with detailed information about a lab that is not included in the E-app. It allows me to customize my approach to the lab's specific services and personnel. Information I review beforehand doesn't have to be reviewed during the survey, which allows more time for on-site education."

Take note...

Free webinar for new customers

November 7, 2013
1 to 2 p.m., CT

Why Lab Accreditation from The Joint Commission?

Learn from customers and pathologists why they use The Joint Commission to accredit their labs. Reserve your spot by sending an email to qualitylabs@jointcommission.org.

New risk assessment guidelines in 2016

According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the current Equivalent Quality Control (EQC) process for laboratories will be phased out by January 1, 2016 and new risk assessment guidelines called the [Individualized Quality Control Plan](#) (IQCP) will take its place. The Joint Commission is evaluating its requirements related to the new guidelines, and will be providing updates and educational materials to meet the new guidelines.

Publications

Coming soon: 2013 Update 2

The *2013 Update 2* to the laboratory accreditation manual will be mailed shortly. Labs will receive one complimentary print copy addressed to the CEO. If your organization does not receive the *Update* by November 10, 2013, contact customer service at jrcustomerservice@pbd.com or 877-223-6866. A new *E-dition*® will be available on the extranet in November.

Contact us

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