Executive Director

It’s been a busy year and I’m excited to share the latest news on the progress we have made on the reinvention of the Long Term Care Accreditation program. Please circle January 7, 2013, on your calendar because that’s when we announce the roll out of the reinvented Long Term Care program and the new specialty certification option. You can also check out the prepublication version of the standards on The Joint Commission’s website on that date.

We believe the changes we have made will help providers like you achieve, demonstrate and consistently maintain excellent services. During the past year, we received positive feedback from many organizations that reviewed the new standards and survey process. We thank you all for your input.

Next year to help in the transition process, we are planning a series of free webinars for currently accredited organizations. We will also have special webinars for organizations considering accreditation and certification for the first time. Look for details about these upcoming events in Joint Commission Perspectives, Joint Commission Online, and on the extranet and website. In the meantime, if you have questions, please send an e-mail to ltc@jointcommission.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

Gina Zimmermann, M.S.

Progress report: LTC Reinvention

Work on the Long Term Care Reinvention project is right on schedule, says Gina Zimmermann, executive director, Long Term Care Accreditation. “We’ve been working hard all year to make the reinvention a reality. During 2012, we rewrote the standards and revised the survey process. We also conducted learning visits, field reviews, pilot tests and phone interviews.

“The reinvented program uses a patient- and resident-centered quality framework that helps nursing facilities identify patient and resident vulnerabilities, and assists organizations in minimizing the risk of readmissions to hospitals and other care providers,” says Zimmermann.

The new program will be rolled out January 7, 2013, with an effective date of July 1, 2013. The enhancements will include:

Standards: Reflect a core set of requirements focused on key care processes that contribute to improved outcomes for all patients and residents in nursing facilities. New standards have been added to address person- and resident-centered care and the cultural transformation away from institutionalized care within the industry.

Certification of specialized services: This additional distinction will allow organizations to validate and better distinguish the caliber of their short stay, advanced services to hospital referrers (such as those within the managed care community), and to the public. Organizations will be required to meet core requirements in order to seek the new certification.

On-site survey: Surveys that include accreditation with certification will include a dedicated “Transition of Care” session and additional patient and system tracer time to better identify potential risk areas and high performing areas. There will also be increased learning opportunities for internal staff and leadership.

Surveyors: Have been specially trained and have experience in the specialty certification area.

Accreditation manual: Redesigned as a workbook that includes the reinvented standards and additional features to support overall performance improvement, including “tracer prompts” to help prepare internal staff for expected on-site activities, and documentation checklists to help organize and prioritize written materials.

Customer Advisory Council seeks nominees

The Joint Commission is seeking nominees to serve on the Long Term Care Customer Advisory Council. The council provides input on issues affecting long term care organizations. Council members must be currently employed at a Joint Commission accredited long term care organization. If you or someone you know is interested in participating, please e-mail a nomination to ltc@jointcommission.org. Include a short explanation of why you or your nominee would make a good council member, along with a contact name, title, organization, e-mail and phone number. Nominations will be accepted through January 31, 2013.
Intracycle Monitoring process coming in 2013

To help long term care organizations with their continuous compliance efforts, The Joint Commission is introducing the Intracycle Monitoring (ICM) process with the goal of helping organizations identify and manage risk. An ICM profile is now accessible on the secure Joint Commission extranet site (select the link for Intracycle Monitoring in the Continuous Compliance Tools section). The ICM Profile includes a variety of features such as accreditation status review, accreditation risk areas and standards, and the Focused Standards Assessment (FSA) tool, which replaces the periodic performance review (PPR).

Because of the changes introduced by the Long Term Care reinvention, the ICM process is being rolled out in phases. While long term care organizations will have continuing access to the ICM Profile and FSA tool, the requirement for FSA submission will be disabled throughout all of 2013. The FSA submission requirement and functionality will be restored in January 2014. The ICM process includes the opportunity for a “touch point” conference call between representatives of the organization and a member of the Standards Interpretation Group (SIG). Prior to the touch point call, the organization’s Joint Commission account executive will contact the organization to walk them through the process and to verify status information. The touch point will occur twice during an organization’s accreditation cycle, at approximately 12 and 24 months after a survey. For more information, visit the Connect extranet or send an e-mail to intracycle@jointcommission.org.

Key dates

November 12, 2012: The PPR tool changed into the FSA tool. Organizations did not lose PPR data they had entered; only the format changed. A new icon was added to draw attention to high risk standards and elements of performance. Future submissions of the FSA tool will allow the organization to submit a full FSA based upon an assessment of the risk icon standards only, rather than all standards.

January 1, 2013: Long term care organizations will not be required to submit an FSA for the entire year.

July 1, 2013: The FSA tool displays the standards associated with the reinvented long term care standards.

January 1, 2014: FSA submission will be required at approximately 12 and 24 months after the organization’s triennial survey.

Barton named field director

Tom Barton, R.N., was recently named field director for the long term care surveyors. In this role, he is responsible for the education, development, and evaluation of field staff. In addition, he works with Central Office staff to create tools for the enhancement of the role that surveyors perform.

"Before coming to The Joint Commission, I was an R.N. for 27 years, primarily as an emergency department nurse, then progressing to ED leadership. I saw firsthand how important it is to discharge patients to an organization that can provide excellent post acute care," Barton says. "I think the reinvention of the Long Term Care Accreditation program will be well received. We listened to our customers and adjusted the survey to reflect their input. They will appreciate the extra time devoted to individual tracer activity and staff education.”