Executive Director
Health care reform was definitely the hot topic last year when President Obama signed legislation overhauling the nation's health care system, guaranteeing access to medical insurance for tens of millions of Americans. Some of the provisions went into effect immediately, while others, such as pay for performance, will take longer to implement.

Also known as "value-based purchasing," this model rewards physicians, hospitals, medical groups, and other health care providers for meeting certain performance measures for quality and efficiency. This particular provision of the new health care law prompted two Chicago area long term care facilities to become the first organizations to seek and achieve Joint Commission certification (see article on this page).

For those not familiar with this type of designation, certified programs must demonstrate a systematic approach to care delivery and a commitment to performance improvement through ongoing data collection and analysis. The discipline and self-assessment inherent in meeting these requirements creates a road map to improving patient care quality. In an era of health care reform, certification can be one way of distinguishing your long term care organization from the crowd. If you are interested in learning more about certification, send your inquiries to dscinfo@jointcommission.org.

Certification a strategic advantage for two LTC facilities
Claremont Rehabilitation and Living Center, Buffalo Grove, Ill., and Forest Villa Nursing Care, Niles, Ill., are the first long term care organizations in the country to be certified under The Joint Commission's Disease-Specific Care Certification Program. Tim Fields, senior vice president, Strategy & Development of NuCare Services Corp., which manages the facilities, discusses the strategic ramifications of the certifications.

Why did these long term care facilities seek certification?
The health care landscape is changing because of health care reform. The focus is on the process, systems and management of disease states. Hospitals want to prevent unnecessary readmissions, and they are looking for providers on the post acute care side who can take care of complex patients. Joint Commission certification allows us to talk to hospitals using the same language and the same quality management processes. Certification objectively shows that we have a quality program.

What certifications did the facilities seek and why?
Claremont was certified for wound care, orthopedic rehabilitation and pulmonary rehabilitation and Forest Villa was certified for wound care and orthopedic rehabilitation. A large part of our business is treating geriatric patients; the average age is 75 to 80. However, patients are with us only a couple of weeks because we provide post acute care. We chose to certify those services that the majority of our patients use. Many need hip replacements, treatment for falls and wound care. In addition, we started a niche program for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and pneumonia, which are two of the biggest causes for readmission to the hospital within 30 days.

Continued on page 2

ABCs of certification
The Joint Commission's Disease-Specific Care Certification Program evaluates clinical programs across the continuum of care. Joint Commission accredited organizations may seek certification for virtually any chronic disease or condition. The certification process addresses:

- Compliance with consensus-based national standards
- Effective use of evidence-based clinical practice guidelines to manage and optimize care
- An organized approach to performance measurement and improvement activities

Certified programs that successfully demonstrate compliance in all three areas are awarded certification for a two-year period. To maintain certification, the cycle repeats with an on-site review conducted every two years and an intracycle conference call in the intervening years to review ongoing compliance and progress.

For more information, contact the Disease-Specific Care Certification Program at dscinfo@jointcommission.org, or call (630) 792-5291.
Certification for LTC...continued from page 1

What does certification mean for your patients and your staff?
For patients, it means they can get world class care right in their own back yard. For the staff, they worked hard for the designation and they are very proud to be working at the first long term care facilities to be certified. We couldn’t have achieved certification without their hard work and dedication.

How does Joint Commission certification tie in with your accreditation?
Because we are already accredited, we are familiar with Joint Commission standards, terminology and the review process. We see certification as a way to use a third party to verify that we’re doing what we’re supposed to be doing. Joint Commission accreditation is a known quantity and hospitals appreciate it.

Any tips for other long term care facilities considering certification?
Don’t be afraid of certification. It’s a way to make your facility stand out and The Joint Commission provides the resources you need to achieve the designation. When you’re evaluating certification, take a look at the needs of your community. Talk to physicians and hospitals to find out what the hot button issues are for patient care. The issues won’t be the same in every area.

Mobile version of the website
To make it easier for customers to access information, The Joint Commission has created a mobile version of its public website, www.jointcommission.org. Please note that this mobile website does not include The Joint Commission Connect extranet. A future redesign of the extranet will include some mobile capabilities, including a mobile application that will enable health care organizations to log on from a mobile device to check if The Joint Commission is coming for survey.

Standards Q&A
Ed Smith, R.N., M.S.N, associate director

Q: Our facility serves two populations – short term acute care patients and long term custodial residents. We have nurse practitioners and physician assistants providing medical level services and writing orders for both these populations. Do we need to “credential” these practitioners the same way we credential physicians?

A: It depends on state law and your organization’s policies and procedures. All licensed independent practitioners practicing at an accredited long term care facility must meet the requirements of HR.02.01.04: The organization permits licensed independent practitioners to provide care, treatment, and services. This new standard becomes effective January 1, 2012 and replaces the 2011 standard HR.02.01.03.

A licensed independent practitioner is defined as “an individual permitted by law and by the organization to provide care, treatment, and services without direct supervision.” If either the law or your organization restricts the practitioner from practicing independently, then HR.02.01.04 is not applicable.

Nurse practitioners are considered independent in some states. Even if your state has authorized nurse practitioners to practice independently, your policies and procedures must specify that they can practice independently. Physician assistants are not permitted to practice independently in any state, so there is no requirement for credentialing. They can be managed the same as other clinical employees.

Take note...
Publication
2012 Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Long Term Care (CAMLTC)
Order code: CLTC12, $265/$332 (accredited/non-accredited)
To order, go to Joint Commission Resources or call (877) 223-6866.

See you there!
Long term care staff will be at:
LTC 100 Regional Roundtable, Philadelphia, Pa., Nov. 8-9
Healthcare Capital Conference, Washington, D.C., Dec.7-9
American College of Health Care Administrators, Las Vegas, Nev., Dec. 9-11

E-App enhancements
The Joint Commission will take a phased approach to the launch of the enhancements to its electronic application for accreditation (E-App). The launch will begin in October and continue through the end of the year. Organizations will be notified about their launch date and specifics via e-mails to the CEO and accreditation contact. The e-mails will include any changes related to submission dates for the organization’s E-App. Questions can be directed to e-app@jointcommission.org.

Free monograph
Download a free monograph, “Improving and Measuring Osteoporosis Management,” containing quality management techniques and draft performance measures for both inpatient and outpatient populations.

Contact us
Long Term Care Accreditation
(630) 792-5235
LTC Account Executive
(630) 792-3007
Standards Interpretation
(630) 792-5900
Customer Service
(630) 792-5800
Pricing Unit
(630) 792-5115

©2011 Published by the Department of Communications, Long Term Care Accreditation Program, Oakbrook Terrace, IL, (630) 792-5235, www.jointcommission.org