

# Ambulatory Health Care Surveyor Spotlight



## Q&A with Beth Hogan, MSN, RN, CASC, CNOR, CGRN, CNAMB

Beth Hogan has spent her entire career in the health care field. After working as a registered nurse, clinical nursing educator, and clinical director of nursing in an ambulatory surgery center (ASC), she became an ambulatory care surveyor for The Joint Commission in March 2021.

Beth feels fortunate to have had opportunities in education, serving at the national level with the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) and the Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates (SGNA) as well as the state level speaking on the RN to BSN movement within New York State. She is a valuable resource within the ASC community.

Beth has dabbled in stand-up comedy and clowning but prefers to stick to her day job. Her goal is to provide the health care community with a holistic health care approach that utilizes empathy, knowledge, and laughter.

### **Q: Tell the readers about your role as a Joint Commission ambulatory health care surveyor.**

**A:** I assumed my role as a surveyor in a part-time capacity, working two weeks per month or 3 to 4 days per week (with an extra week as needed). This means I perform approximately 60 to 70 survey days a year.

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**Q. How have your previous roles prepared you to be an ASC surveyor?**

**A:** As an employee of a Joint Commission-accredited organization, I took an active role in several Joint Commission surveys. I have worked in a few outpatient centers as a team lead before I was offered a director position in a GI center. My leadership roles and experience as a nurse and nursing educator have contributed to my desire to teach. At heart, I am an educator and I appreciate that as a Joint Commission surveyor, I can help facilities across the country improve patient care and collaboration. Being a surveyor doesn't feel like work — it feels more like a gift.



**Q. What made you decide to become a surveyor?**

**A:** I was participating in an ongoing survey at my organization, and the surveyor said she was impressed by my knowledge of the standards. She asked if I was interested in becoming a surveyor. I didn't pursue this option at the time because it involved travel and my kids were young, but I revisited the possibility during the pandemic — and here I am!



**Q. Do any particular survey experiences stand out in your mind?**

**A:** It's always fun to go into high-performing organizations — those with good leadership and a cohesive team — and help them identify something that can be improved. I love taking such organizations to an even higher level.

I remember that once during a survey of a high-performing GI ASC, I pointed out the manufacturer's instructions for use for drying an endoscope, which this organization were following. The team understood the finding and we had a very good discussion on the topic. This verbiage was brought up to the manufacturer, and the response was that they would be revising the manufacturer's instructions for drying endoscopes.



**Q. What do like most about working for The Joint Commission?**

**A:** I love how collaborative the cadre of surveyors are with each other. Even when you're performing a survey by yourself, you are never alone — a Joint Commission resource is just a phone call, email, or text away.

I also enjoy seeing that “aha!” moment that happens when people have learned something new and important, and physicians, facility directors, and staff who say that they have never seen the issue in that way before.

Plus, I really like that not only do I learn new things from the experienced people in the organization, but that I have the opportunity to share best practices from one organization with people working at other organizations.

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**Q. Is there anything else you want to add about your experience working at The Joint Commission?**

**A:** Working as a Joint Commission surveyor allows me to travel throughout the country and experience places in a way that I might not otherwise do. When in a new city, I always try to find a fun or entertaining local venue to visit. In just 1-1/2 years, I have travelled to 20 states, and I always discover something interesting. I have certainly taken advantage of the amazing opportunity my job offers to see more of the U.S.! And I make it a point to ask the people in the organizations I am surveying for their suggestions on places to visit in the area.



**Q. What sets Joint Commission surveyors apart from other surveyors?**

**A:** In a nutshell ... our collaborative nature is the single characteristic that distinguishes us from our competitors. Our transparent, collaborative, educational approach means we work together within the organization to achieve high reliability in patient care, not just during the survey but ongoing as a resource to our partners.

We perform surveys in the manner in which we would want to be surveyed ourselves. We respect the survey participants for their knowledge as they respect us for ours. We make sure to acknowledge the contributions and hard work provided by all the staff members at the organization.

The Joint Commission survey is also more detailed than other organizations’ surveys, which means that we help health care organizations reach a higher standard of care. That our surveys are more challenging is widely recognized in the industry, and this can lead to better patient and organizational outcomes.



**Q. How has the Joint Commission survey process evolved over the years?**

**A:** It has become more collaborative and educative. We treat the survey as less of a “gotcha” mentality and more as a learning experience. When we have a finding, it is an opportunity to begin a discussion, asking the participants about their process and how it might be improved. The idea is to foster thinking about how they can meet the standard in a way that ensures safe and high-quality patient care.



**Q. What advice would you offer an ASC preparing for its first Joint Commission survey?**

**A:** First, read and familiarize yourself with the standards. You want to understand what the survey is looking for and be able to demonstrate how your organization is meeting the standards.

Next, make good use of relevant resources. Speak to other leaders about their Joint Commission surveys and their experiences. Consider trading places with another organization and conducting a mock survey of their facility while someone from that organization does one in yours.

Try to find a mentor to help with your preparation. For example, you might talk to an infection control specialist at a relevant association or local hospital.

**The Joint Commission recently did an ROI study that proved that for each dollar invested in Joint Commission accreditation, an organization sees that dollar returned and realizes an additional \$6.28 in benefits as a direct result of accreditation. Several key areas of return were identified, including financial, improvements and efficiencies, risk and safety, and staffing.**



**Q. Why do you think Joint Commission accreditation has such a positive impact on these areas?**

**A:** Hiring and onboarding employees is expensive, and Joint Commission accreditation helps increase retention rates, which not only improves morale, but it also reduces costs. The Joint Commission is committed to assuring a culture of safety with our partners.

At one facility, I helped an administrator think outside the box by suggesting that two half-time positions be combined into one full-time job, which helped the organization retain a valued employee. The extra set of eyes the Joint Commission surveyors provide can only benefit facilities in not only identifying known and unknown risks but providing resources for support, best practices, and experiences other organizations have showcased.

As a Joint Commission surveyor, I have been able to help facilities reduce costs. In one case, I pointed out that when renewing a maintenance contract, the contractor should be made aware of the fact that several endoscopes failed early on, and that that should not increase their rates.

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#### BIOGRAPHY AND FUN FACTS



**Beth Hogan, MSN, RN, CASC, CNOR, CGRN, CNAMB**

Field Representative

THE JOINT COMMISSION

Beth Hogan currently resides in upstate New York. She surveys ambulatory organizations throughout the United States within the full scope of the Joint Commission's Ambulatory Programs.

Ms. Hogan also works as a Clinical educator at Glen Falls Hospital, serving as a resource in the nursing education department. Prior to joining The Joint Commission, Ms. Hogan was the Clinical Director of Nursing at Northern GI Endoscopy in Glen Falls, NY. In addition, she has over 40 years of experience as a Registered Nurse.

Ms. Hogan earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master of Science in Nursing from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, AZ, as well as a Diploma in Nursing from St. Mary's School of Nursing in Amsterdam, NY. On a lighter side, Ms. Hogan possesses a Certificate in Clowning from the Academy of Performing Arts. She entertains her friends and family with her clowning and balloon animal-making skills on special occasions.

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**Learn more about the value of Joint Commission ambulatory surgery center accreditation for your organization. Visit us at [www.jointcommission.org/ahc](http://www.jointcommission.org/ahc) or write us at [ahcquality@jointcommission.org](mailto:ahcquality@jointcommission.org).**

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