FHCHC has been accredited by the Joint Commission’s ambulatory health care program since 1999 and, says their Corporate Compliance Officer, “we are so proud of the fact that we were one of the first federally qualified health centers in the state of Connecticut to attain Joint Commission accreditation.”

FHCHC’s path to Primary Care Medical Home (PCMH) Certification began in 2015, sparked by a program assistance letter from the Bureau of Primary Healthcare. From the very start, materials from the Joint Commission proved invaluable, especially the optional Self-Assessment document. This tool is meant to help organizations conduct a self-assessment to identify gaps, which will help organizations target their efforts and prioritize where they need to be dedicating resources. And then, they’ll be able to identify a readiness date for the onsite survey.

“It is an incredibly meaningful and very meaty tool,” said their Corporate Compliance Officer. “It helped us take a look at ourselves in terms of how we involve patients in their own care, what we do to really demonstrate respect for their right to make decisions, and how to involve them with the interdisciplinary team and develop treatment plans.”
Committed to Quality

The Joint Commission’s Primary Care Medical Home option recognizes organizations providing superior access to primary care for patients and offers the potential for increased reimbursement. Built into the ambulatory on-site accreditation survey, organizations successfully completing this process will be both Joint Commission-accredited and certified as a Primary Care Medical Home.
Gaming is incorporated into the overall approach, with raffles and quizzes to engage employees, and all staff meetings are regularly held to keep readiness top of mind. The Board of Directors is kept informed, and engaged, on an ongoing basis.

The value-add that FHCHC enjoys through accreditation is the “gold seal,” as their Corporate Compliance Officer describes it.

“It means a lot to the public, patients, and the payers we are involved with, who may be outside of government-funded health programs, such as commercial insurers,” she says. “It’s a demonstrable symbol of our health center’s commitment to quality.”

Accreditation is also helped by FHCHC’s readiness for operational site visits by the state.

“The Joint Commission’s findings for PCMH and ambulatory healthcare can really help you feel confident about your ability to respond to any external regulators reviewing your operations,” said their Corporate Compliance Officer. “You can participate in those activities knowing that you’re already doing a great job.”

The use of Joint Commission Resources consultative technical or advisory services is not necessary to obtain a Joint Commission Accreditation award, nor does it influence the granting of such awards.