

Spotlight on Success

The Alden Network



How The Alden Network strengthened patient transitions, enhanced emergency preparedness and reduced readmission rates.

At Alden, we are committed to helping our patients successfully transition from hospital, through rehabilitation to home. We do this by striving for excellent care and quality outcomes. Our key quality priorities in pursuing and maintaining accreditation were reducing readmission rates, improving process variability, and minimizing risks to provide patient-centered care. We believe a collaborative, solutions-focused process would better position us for success. That's why Alden chose to pursue both Joint Commission accreditation and Post-Acute Care (PAC) Certification.

Q: Why pursue a more rigorous external validation of Alden's care delivery rather than a state survey?

A: At Alden, we have a number of key quality priorities—from reducing readmission rates and process variability across our many locations, minimizing risks and providing patient-centered care. Achieving these goals often becomes more challenging when organizations care for a large number of high acuity, short-stay patients.

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Cassi Williams, MSHR
Corporate Director of
Education and Training

We believe a collaborative, solutions-focused process would better position us for success in these areas. That's why Alden chose to not only pursue Joint Commission accreditation, but PAC Certification as well.

Also, during a state survey experience, inspectors look to identify issues but generally don't share best practices we find so valuable. Joint Commission surveyors help identify our strengths and proactively address risk areas by building on what we are already good at. This is a more efficient approach to performance improvement for us.

Q: How has achieving PAC Certification specifically impacted your business?

A: The achievement enables us to show data that drives confidence in our organization, resulting in greater referrals and more beds filled. Additionally, our return-to-hospital rate has dropped measurably since achieving PAC Certification.

Q: Has Alden made any process enhancements as a result of the accreditation experience?

A: Yes, three important enhancements come to mind. Through preparation and collaboration with our surveyors, we are able to incorporate cultural competencies to deliver a more patient-centered care experience for patients, and their loved ones.

In preparation for the survey, we also implemented a follow-up discharge call program to strengthen care transitions and care partner confidence. We now provide a more seamless patient transition between our hospital referrers, home health agencies, and durable medical equipment provider partners.

Finally, during the survey, we identified a need to implement an active shooter plan as part of our overall emergency preparedness plan. The surveyor shared best practices, policies, and drills they had encountered at other high-performing organizations. We now have a more comprehensive program for training and competency as a result.

Q: How does The Joint Commission support you throughout the accreditation cycle?

A: The Joint Commission offers great support between visits, touching base with us every couple of months. The phone calls and emails allow us to stay up-to-date on current standards and best practices. In addition, we consistently refer back to the standards to identify areas of quality improvement at our facilities.

RESULTS



INCREASED EFFICIENCY

Increased referrals, more beds filled and a decrease in return-to-hospital rates.



IMPROVED HANDOFFS

Seamless patient transition between care settings.



ENHANCED TEAMWORK

Surveyors identified potential strengths and helped proactively address risk areas.

For more information on Joint Commission Nursing Care Center Accreditation, please call (630) 792-5020.

