

Spotlight on Success



Addiction Campuses

With a belief in the healing power of nature, Addiction Campuses opened their doors in 2014, offering detox, residential care, partial hospitalization, and IOP addiction services in beautiful settings. Maeve O'Neill, VP of Compliance & Ethics for Addiction Campuses, shares how achieving Joint Commission accreditation boosted efficiency, empowered staff and strengthened overall care delivery at their four sites across the nation.

Q: What drove Addiction Campuses' decision to work with Joint Commission?

A: From the beginning, achieving Joint Commission accreditation was always our goal. Our founders wanted to offer the best care and they knew that the Joint Commission standards are regarded as the most robust in the industry. I was brought in to oversee accreditation across our campuses. Throughout the preparation process, the focus was for us to become more proactive and preventative, instead of reactive.

Q. How did preparing for accreditation impact your team in their day-to-day jobs?

A: First of all, and maybe surprisingly, it helped us simplify what we were doing. For example, our policy manual used to be eight volumes and over 1000 pages. And, in many cases, it didn't reflect what was actually going on. We were able to streamline it down to one binder for each department. By going through this process, my entire team learned the importance and benefit of our policies. We also made sure of two things: If it's in the binder, you'd better be doing it. If you're doing it, it better be in the binder!



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Maeve O'Neill, VP of Compliance & Ethics, Addiction Campuses

We also realized we had some key processes that were inconsistent, potentially blocking future efforts to improve. For example, we had four different refrigerator logs at four different sites. Now they all use the same form. We can better track the data as a whole and see what's working and what isn't; you can't fix things if you don't know where the gaps are.

Once my team started to see the benefits of standardizing and simplifying, they started to feel more empowered. They started to see the Joint Commission as a touchstone in our overall improvement effort, a resource they could turn to. Now they can go to sleep knowing that, if the Joint Commission shows up tomorrow, even if someone's on vacation, we've got our bases covered.

Q: Did preparing for accreditation impact daily care delivery?

A: Not at all – the opposite, in fact. The more we simplified and standardized the processes outside of our care delivery, the less stress it put on the clinicians and staff, which allowed them to focus more fully on the needs of the individuals we serve.

Q: How was the survey day different than you may have expected?

A: Through the survey, you get exposure to so much expertise and experience that you could never accumulate on your own. My team was impressed with how approachable the Joint Commission surveyors were. Our surveyor had been to around 80 organizations before us and brought all that knowledge with (him/her). I was also impressed with how the surveyors worked so closely together: every evening, they had a conference call between our four different sites, comparing notes and identifying trends, which allowed them to focus on both the individual campuses and the organization as a whole.

Q: What surprised you the most about your Joint Commission survey experience?

A: I was surprised on the day of the survey with how relaxed our staff was. When you're deep in the thick of it, you don't really realize how much you're accomplishing and how much confidence you're building. We were able to go through the 3-4 days of the survey without interrupting care delivery at all; we had very few last minute things to do; and we experienced far less stress than I've seen in the past because of all our work beforehand. Overall, it was a great experience that has motivated us to continue our improvement efforts.



What three tips would you give an organization preparing for their first accreditation survey?



1. Don't put off prep. Review and share the standards regularly with your staff. Embrace them – they are designed to help you improve.



2. Champion your team. Tell them not to listen to war stories. My staff went from being scared and stressed to being calm – because they knew they were really prepared.



3. Ask for help. Don't ignore things you don't understand. Reach out to the Joint Commission team to figure it out. The answers are out there; they can help.

For more information on Joint Commission Behavioral Health Care accreditation and certification, please call 630.792.5771.