



Joint Commission Provides a Truly Collaborative Survey Experience

Quality Care Begins in the Laboratory

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Q. What can you tell us about your experience with Joint Commission laboratory surveys?

Yuliya: We had very positive experiences. Both Joint Commission surveyors were knowledgeable and friendly. The survey process was extremely helpful. The surveyors looked to uncover risks that we didn't know about and then helped to educate us by offering solutions for improvement.

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Q. What is unique about the Joint Commission survey process?

Yuliya: Joint Commission’s patient-centric tracer process provides a view of how our services affect patients beyond the walls of the laboratory. For example, the tracer process follows a transfusion from the moment a low hemoglobin result is found in the lab to the moment the physician orders the transfusion to when the patient receives the transfusion, and all the other steps in between.

Q. How would you describe the Joint Commission laboratory surveyors and their experience/expertise in conducting a survey?

Stephanie: Our experience was incredibly positive and enlightening. We were pleasantly surprised by their willingness to openly discuss our processes and respond to all our questions. And we particularly appreciate that the survey provided many teachable moments. The surveyors were sincere and helped guide us through the survey process.

Reyna: Our surveyor was very knowledgeable and very reassuring. He made sure we understood that the intent of the survey was not to find mistakes but rather to provide insights that help us make our processes more efficient. He had worked as a lab director for quite some time, so he has a lot of relevant experience and firsthand knowledge. He emphasized that achieving quality is a team effort.



Yuliya: Joint Commission surveys are very positive experiences. I like that in addition to determining compliance, the surveyors’ job includes teaching and sharing. The surveyors at two different hospitals were knowledgeable and collaborative; they provide good feedback in areas that could use improvement. They brought new ideas and best practices from other laboratories that we might not have had the opportunity to learn about otherwise.

What impressed me most was that when closing, one of the surveyors pointed out to the hospital administrators that lab results account for only 20% of what a laboratory does; the other 80% is quality — meaning the quality standards behind each test. That powerful statement pointed out the essential part of laboratory operations: Our top priority is to ensure that we provide high quality, valuable test results safely and effectively.

Q. Are the Joint Commission laboratory accreditation surveys consistent across your sites and from survey to survey?

Someone: With The Joint Commission, you not only know your practices are being evaluated on the basis of unambiguous standards, but you also know that every surveyor uses the same standards and interprets them in the same way.

Yuliya: I participate in hospital surveys as well as laboratory surveys. I would say that the surveys are 98% consistent from one site to another, and from one survey to the next. Laboratory and hospital surveyors also match in their approach to the survey process, regardless of different personalities and experience. And all the surveyors are nice, knowledgeable, respectful, and eager to teach.

Q. Does the Joint Commission's SAFER™ Matrix help your organization address and prioritize corrective actions where needed? Do you have more support from quality teams because of this?

Yuliya: Yes, especially because our hospital and laboratory are Joint Commission accredited. Both areas interpret survey results in the same way via the SAFER™ Matrix, which makes it easier for hospital administrators to understand the laboratory results. Familiarity with the same matrix and the nine squares throughout the organization is very beneficial for us.

Q. In what ways do you leverage the Joint Commission resources and team support before and after the survey?

Yuliya: We like The Joint Commission's abundance of website resources. We utilize the resources to prepare for surveys and to stay compliant and excel post-survey. We especially like the information on how to prepare for a survey, new research, tools and procedures, the hot topics and webinars, all of which help us discover new tools and procedures to improve the way we work every day.

Reyna: We use the materials found on The Joint Commission website to practice on a monthly basis. In fact, we created flash cards and questionnaires to help us learn and prepare for surveys.



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Q. How does The Joint Commission with its myriad of resources lower the anxiety level surrounding a survey?

Yuliya: Surveys are always stressful, regardless of what agency is performing it. Joint Commission surveys and resources lower the stress; we feel that we will be treated nicely and the surveyors are here to educate us, not to punish us. When we prepare our staff, we explain what they are doing and why and we discuss the expectations and standards behind the procedures. That reduces anxiety and prepares staff for survey; they know why they are doing things in a certain way and can easily answer the surveyor's questions. This makes the survey more of a dialogue. Surveyors are here to teach and pass on knowledge so we can achieve better quality.

Reyna: We base our policies on the Joint Commission standards. We are confident going into a survey because we know the standards. We tell our staff that we're doing great because we're following the standards. We add that we need to be confident and not afraid to answer questions because we know we're doing the right thing. The more confident we are, the better the experience will be. We don't have anything to hide.

NOTE: LifePoint Health acquired Kindred Healthcare in December 2021. Afterward, LifePoint and Kindred launched ScionHealth. Legacy Kindred long-term acute care hospitals are now part of ScionHealth, but continue to operate under the Kindred hospital brand and the transition has had no impact on patient care.

Learn more about Joint Commission laboratory accreditation at www.jointcommission.org/lab or write to us at qualitylabs@jointcommission.org.