

Spotlight on Success

Fellowship Community



Joint Commission Nursing Care Center Accreditation and Disease-Specific Care Certification set Fellowship Community apart in today's competitive skilled nursing environment

The leadership team at Fellowship Community, a long term care facility in Lehigh Valley Pennsylvania, has chosen Joint Commission accreditation since 1997 to help ensure high safety and quality standards for their residents.

Q: Why did you choose The Joint Commission for Nursing Care Center accreditation?

A: A few members of our administration came from a hospital environment, so we understood the value of Joint Commission accreditation to patient safety and overall quality. We feel The Joint Commission holds us to higher standards than other surveys. The process of getting accreditation and maintaining it is designed to foster team spirit and really build staff morale. Everyone is involved in the process improvement effort. It also sends a clear message throughout the organization that you are committed to improvement. Accreditation has helped us achieve our goals and strengthen our continuing journey to excellence.

Q: What would you say has been the single biggest benefit to having accreditation and certification from The Joint Commission?

A: The Joint Commission encouraged us to take a look at our processes, not at the individuals within the organization. The Joint Commission taught us to look outside of ourselves and the people. By doing that you create an environment that isn't about retribution but about improvement. You really can look at a process, get everyone's viewpoint of how that process impacts the individuals – nurses, nursing assistant, activities assistant, administrators, quality, and the patient. Then together we find the solution to improve our patient safety and quality.

“We believe in the concepts and the process of The Joint Commission. The Joint Commission talks about a journey to patient safety and quality, and we believe that as well, we call it our journey to excellence. Because of our commitment over the past 20 years we are now recognized for our efforts as a 5 star facility by CMS and received recognition by *U.S. News* and *World Report*.”

Donna Conley, COO
Fellowship Community

Q: Why did you further pursue Disease-Specific Care Certification for Congestive Heart Failure?

A: Through accreditation we really began examining all of our data. We noticed that there was room for improvement in our re-hospitalization rates within 30 days. We further recognized that a lot of those readmissions were respiratory related incidences and we knew a large percentage of those were preventable. Most skilled nursing facilities don't have Disease-Specific Care certification and we aren't tied to a cardiovascular division of a hospital, so we needed a structured path to achieve our readmission goals. We believed the Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) certification could give us that path.

We assembled a team from across the organization to develop organizational and nursing practice goals as well as understand what the intent of the disease-specific care standards. Together, we worked very hard to achieve certification and have been able to lower our readmission rates for CHF.

Q: How does your organization prepare for The Joint Commission accreditation survey?

A: We include representation from our entire organization on a quality council. Each department understands what our organization goals are and everyone works together to achieve those goals. We have an interdisciplinary approach—we work together as a team. It isn't one person doing it all and telling others what to do. Process improvement and quality standards are ingrained in all of our people. We have standards and all of our employees feel it is their responsibility to deliver those high standards.

We also use the surveys to learn. In our 20 years of accreditation, we have learned something from every survey. Joint Commission surveyors teach us along the way and they are very transparent about opportunities and what we are doing well.

RESULTS

Our advice for other long term care facilities seeking accreditation



INCREASE EMPLOYEE MORALE

Joint Commission accreditation and certification helped us to grow as a company and increase employee morale.



USE YOUR ENTIRE TEAM

We found success by including all employees in their quality journey. As a team, you have better collaboration and can achieve the best possible outcomes for each patient.



BE SURVEY READY—EVERY DAY

Living the concepts of quality improvement and patient safety enable our staff to be survey ready every day. Accreditation and certification has helped us achieve our goals and strengthen our continuing journey to excellence.

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

