



**THE FUTURE OF
HEALTH CARE IS
IN THE HOME**

**HAVING JOINT COMMISSION-ACCREDITED BRAND
PARTNERS IS A VITAL PART OF THE PROCESS**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered a global public health emergency that presented an enormous number of unforeseen challenges – especially for the elderly and disabled, who found this time to be particularly difficult to access daily necessities, receive the adequate health care they require, and navigate the rapid changes in a continued state of uncertainty. It was also challenging for the family members of these at-risk individuals to provide support and comfort to their loved one(s) without running the risk of exposing them to the virus. For those receiving care at an assisted living community/nursing home or requiring in-person doctor visits, their probability of exposure was significantly higher. Since the elderly, disabled, and hospice care patients generally suffer from chronic illness or critical conditions, they are the most vulnerable to COVID-19.

The pandemic has confirmed that the future of health care is in the home – where the most at-risk individuals are safer, happier, and most comfortable. As such, it is crucial that any organization you may partner with has the appropriate accreditations to provide quality care in the home.

This position paper will explore how The Joint Commission sets the standard for home health care organizations to provide quality care and safety for their patients – along with the importance of ensuring any potential partner your organization may work with has this accreditation.

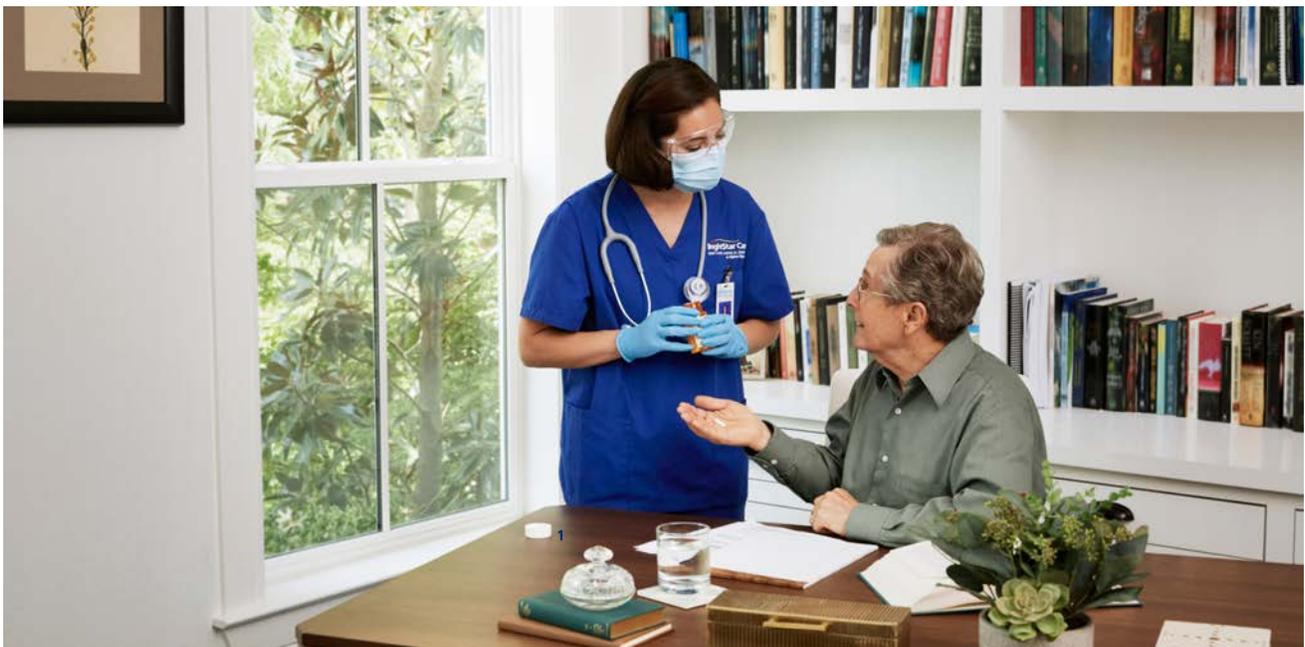


HOME HEALTH CARE PARTNERSHIP

According to data from Specialty Health care Solutions (SSRx), home health care has proven to reduce hospitalization and readmissions for the elderly and other high-risk populations. This study also found that over the years, health care organizations, on average, have lowered Emergency Department (ED) visits up to 70% through home health care partnerships. As part of an overall strategy to seek solutions for vulnerable patients, partnering with a home health care organization can improve patient satisfaction, prevent medication mismanagement, and negative post-discharge outcomes – ultimately reducing hospital readmissions.

TechCrunch reported that while in-home care currently accounts for only 3% of the health care market, it will grow to more than 10% over the next decade. COVID-19 has accelerated the preference for hospital care in the home care setting. It is expected that more services will be rendered in the home than in institutional settings, making quality home health care more important than ever.

Data from the Urban Institute projects that by 2040, 80 million Americans will be 65+ and in potential need of care to prevent overcrowding in hospitals and long-term care facilities. Moving in a direction where the future of health care involves home health care agencies and medical teams working together to streamline care coordination for patients will ensure vulnerable groups are protected and receive the care they need.



THE JOINT COMMISSION DIFFERENCE

The Joint Commission is the largest standards-setting and not-for-profit accrediting organization focused on quality improvement and safety in health care. Accreditation requires an on-site survey that assesses compliance with current Joint Commission standards, which focus on critical patient, individual, or resident care that are essential for safety and care. Additionally, it verifies quality improvement activities based on survey data results, which can help reduce the risk of error or low-quality care. Once accredited, the health care organization must meet the criteria to maintain its accreditation status every 36 months and remain in good standing. According to data collected by the CDC and Ankota, a home care tech and software company, there are more than 35,000 home care agencies in the US – 5,200 of which are Joint Commission accredited. Proving that accreditation is not easy to come by and must be maintained.

The accreditation comes with resources, webinars, and a unique data management tool (SAFER® Dashboard) that allows The Joint Commission and its accredited health care organizations to track detailed information on what areas need improvement. Allowing the health care organization to make changes accordingly ensures the highest quality care standards are consistently met. The Joint Commission helps health care organizations by establishing and maintaining a strict set of standards to help home health care providers offer safe and effective care of the highest quality and value.



PATIENT SAFETY

The Joint Commission sets rigorous annual National Patient Safety Goals that focus on patient safety issues and how to solve them. Joint Commission accreditation is the Gold Seal of Approval® when it comes to safety – and they help health care organizations organize and strengthen patient safety protocols and emergency preparedness. By maintaining these protocols and standards, health care facilities can improve inter-agency and department coordination and identify shortfalls in plans and resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed some of the most vulnerable aspects of our health care system. According to data from The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), a stunning 99.5% of America's nursing homes overseen by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) had at least one outbreak, and 74% had three or more outbreaks throughout the pandemic. GAO officials stated that a lack of PPE, staffing issues due to turnover and illness among staff made it challenging for care facilities to follow infection-control practices and maintain patient safety. These findings further assert that the safest place for seniors to age and high-risk populations to receive care is in the home.

From a BrightStar Care standpoint, consistently meeting patient safety standards ensures that our clients receive the highest standard of care. By following strict safety standards outlined by The Joint Commission and elevating our own clinical policies and procedures, BrightStar Care agencies can help lower the rate of hospitalizations, re-admissions, infection prevention, along with a lower risk of falls and decreased injuries for our clients.

PROCESS + QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

To obtain and maintain accreditation, health care organizations must incorporate Joint Commission standards and requirements into their policies, procedures, training, and regular evaluations. The Joint Commission tracks the status of protocols to ensure health care organizations have plans in place in case of emergencies and that staff is well trained. In addition, BrightStar Care has developed a detailed Ongoing Readiness Compliance Checklist for local agencies to follow to maintain accreditation. It includes daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, and annual breakdowns.

Some steps required to maintain Joint Commission accreditation include but are not limited to:

- **Monitoring state-specific requirements and legislation for patient safety**
- **New hire onboarding procedures**
- **Tracking infection prevention and control processes, policies, and procedures**
- **Staff performance reviews**
- **Annual staff training**
- **Unannounced on-site surveys conducted by the Joint Commission team**

According to a study conducted and evaluated by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), consistent evidence shows that accreditation programs improve the process of care provided by health care services. Accreditation programs like The Joint Commission improve clinical outcomes for a wide range of clinical conditions for the elderly and other high-risk groups. The NCBI also calls for accreditation programs to be supported as a tool to improve the quality of health care services overall.

BrightStar Care's more than 360 independently owned and operated agencies are either accredited or in the process of obtaining accreditation as Joint Commission accreditation is a brand standard and requirement for all franchisees when joining the brand. Franchisees also have access to brand-wide evaluation data via the proprietary dashboard that allows for swift identification of processes that need improvement at the local and brand level. This aids in developing resources, training, and education strategies for franchisees and their teams of caregivers and nurses.

This allows BrightStar Care to make necessary clinical quality or operational changes based on factual, concrete data, along with regular quality assurance evaluations. Having a third-party validator like The Joint Commission verifying that standards are met across all agencies through ongoing surveys confirms that our franchisees are operating within the highest standard of care.

Furthermore, while accreditation is standard among Medicare-certified companies, BrightStar Care is not Medicare-affiliated and instead is a private-duty home care franchise. The company holds accreditation across more than 95% of locations, further asserting the agency's commitment to elevating safety and quality client care.

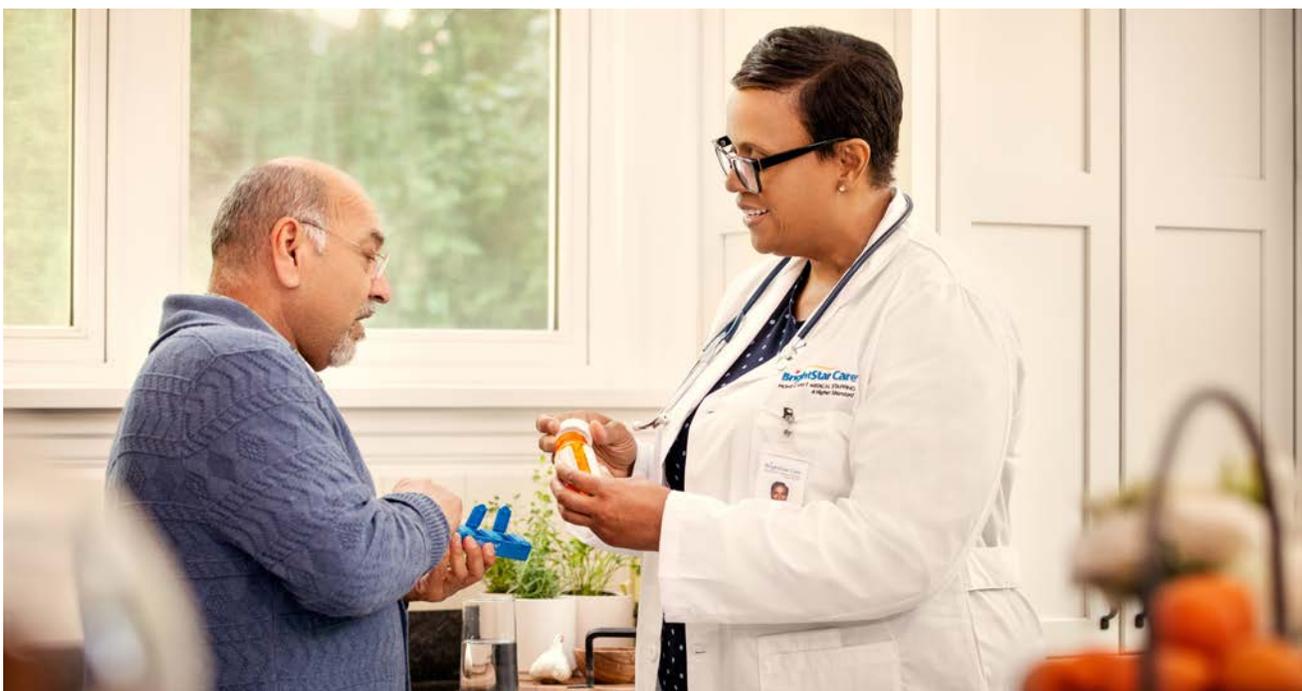


KEY TAKEAWAYS

With Joint Commission accreditation, home health care agencies can identify where improvements are needed in their processes, receive expert support, access a wealth of resources, and follow a set of quality care standards that place patient safety in the highest regard, preventing hospital readmissions and adverse events from occurring. Being accredited by The Joint Commission ensures consistency across all BrightStar Care agencies and BrightStar Care clients and partners can expect the same streamlined processes and level of care across the nation.

The Joint Commission's collaborative structure allows accredited health care organizations to provide continued education to staff and employees at the national and local level, ensuring consistency across the board so they can provide the best possible care for clients in their homes. Joint Commission-accredited organizations make minimal risk partners because they continuously adhere to Joint Commission standards. The Joint Commission's safety and clinical care standards mirror BrightStar Care's standards internally, enabling the brand to be the only home care agency to be nine-time recipients of the Enterprise Champion for Quality Award and hold system-wide accreditation for nearly a decade.

Partnering with a home health care organization that holds this accreditation brings value to all parts of the health care system, from patients and families to providers. The unmatched level of trust of a Joint Commission-accredited home care agency like BrightStar Care provides the assurance that patients are receiving the highest level of care within the industry and peace of mind knowing all locations across the country offer the same level of care and value.



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About BrightStar Care®

BrightStar Care is one of the nation's leading premium home health care and medical staffing companies providing the full continuum of care, from homecare to supplemental staffing for corporate clients such as nursing homes and physicians. Founded in 2002, we have grown to over 360 locations either open or under development, represented by over 200 small businesses across the United States since we began franchising in 2005. Independently owned and operated BrightStar Care franchise owners serve over 20,000 families through the care provided by over 15,000 caregivers and over 2,500 nurses.



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