



A Journey Toward Accreditation: Tri-State Surgery Center's Success Story

Participating interviewees included:

- *Chandra Stroth, MSN, RN, Administrator at Tri-State Surgery Center*
- *Ginny Daniel, BSN, RN, Clinical Director at Tri-State Surgery Center*

Organizations that view accreditation as a continual, interactive learning process with The Joint Commission harness the full potential of its benefits. Tri-State Surgery Center, an accredited single-service specialty center focused on ophthalmology, is doing just that.

The Ohio-based ASC officially opened in October 2016 and had its first Joint Commission survey the same year. Managerial staff from Tri-State sat down to share their accreditation experience with The Joint Commission.

Q. What is your role at Tri-State Surgery Center?

A [Chandra]: I am a registered nurse and the center's administrator. I also help with daily functions as needed. Before I became the administrator, I was hired as the clinical director to help facilitate the construction, accreditation, and the process for opening this ASC.

A [Ginny]: I am the clinical director at Tri-State Surgery Center and also a registered nurse. Before this role, I worked in a hospital for over 20 years. Every day at the surgery center, I help facilitate and ensure that things run smoothly and that every patient has a good experience and gets in and out safely. I love it.

“I’ve always had really good experiences with Joint Commission and wanted my ASC to hold the same accreditation, the Gold Seal of Approval from The Joint Commission.” – Chandra Stroth, Administrator at Tri-State Surgery Center

Q. Why did you decide to become accredited with The Joint Commission?

A [Chandra]: I chose The Joint Commission because of my history with the organization as a nurse and leader in the hospital setting. My experiences throughout my 20-plus years of nursing with The Joint Commission have been extremely positive.

Initially, when considering accreditation, the physician owners and surgeons asked if I had considered another organization. I said I was comfortable with The Joint Commission and wanted to stay with them. After that, buy-in was never an ongoing issue.

I’ve found The Joint Commission surveyors not only make sure that we’re practicing the standards and following patient safety and care guidelines, but they are also so good at teaching and explaining, especially when you’re trying to follow the roadmap and figure things out.



Q: What can you share about the survey experience?

A [Chandra]: The survey was specific to the ambulatory setting, which I wanted. When we first opened in October of 2016, that was my first ever initial survey as a leader working with The Joint Commission.

Over the years, my account executives with The Joint Commission have always helped answer any questions regarding the standards.

The Joint Commission website has so many resources. There’s one resource that I use frequently, and it’s the roadmap that cross-references the standards or Elements of Performance (EPs) with the CMS Conditions for Coverage (CfC). It was extremely helpful to know that we were in line with everything.

Since the initial survey, I have taken on more on the environment of care side. The engineers I surveyed with have been wonderful. I went to nursing school, not engineering school. So that has been something that I’ve had to teach myself. The Joint Commission resources and surveyors helped tremendously – I don’t know if I would have this level of knowledge if it weren’t for the available support.





A [Ginny]: I was terrified of The Joint Commission, to be honest. I didn't know what to expect. Then it turned out to be such a wonderful experience after I realized they were here to help us be the best facility we can be. I had the best experience with the surveyor. They dug deep — if you want The Joint Commission's name on your door, you should be expected to own up to everything in the book.

Working with the surveyor gave me a different perspective. I get what this is all about now. They're here for my protection and the patient's protection. They're here to make sure everything we're doing is up to the standards.

The experience made me proud of my team because we're always prepared. We just prepare ourselves daily as we work, as if The Joint Commission could walk in any day and we would be okay.

Q: What value has come from working with The Joint Commission?

A [Chandra]: An ASC was new in the area that we live in. I remember having to remind patients that we were accredited by The Joint Commission, just like the local hospitals you go to. We provide the same level of patient safety, quality patient care. It's been interesting to see how the community has accepted this ASC over time. It was a learning curve for the community. I enjoyed displaying The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval® on our front door. That was something that helped [our status within] the community.

We are located in a small tri-state area, and I think word of mouth and our reputation has helped us grow and be extremely successful in this area operating as an ASC.

We also use the standards as a framework for educating staff on why we do things the way we do. They make things more efficient and prioritize patient care and safety, which is important because we are an ASC.

Also, it is so nice to have an outside group come in. Sometimes you have to have that second set of eyes. And The Joint Commission is surveying facilities and ASCs across the nation. I like how they are in a facility, say in New Mexico, and they find a best practice. Then they distribute that knowledge to all the other ASCs they go to, which in turn helps everybody across the nation.

“As an ASC, we had to overcome the community perceptions hurdle. When we first opened, we were not looked at as being able to provide the same quality, safe patient care compared to the local hospitals.” — Chandra Stroth, Tri-State Surgery Center

Q: What advice would you offer to another ambulatory surgery center considering The Joint Commission for accreditation?

A [Chandra]: If they had the opportunity to work with The Joint Commission, I would highly recommend it. The standards manual is very helpful to me. I found it easy to follow, especially as I was learning and teaching myself as a new director for an ASC. The website offers many resources and tools. When you do have an onsite survey, you're provided with educational opportunities with your surveyors. They're always eager to answer any questions.

A [Ginny]: From being new on this side of it, I would tell people, don't be afraid of The Joint Commission, even if it's your initial survey. They're here to help. You won't get better guidance elsewhere.



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