BHC program renamed to Behavioral Health Care and Human Services Accreditation

In recognition of how The Joint Commission’s Behavioral Health Care (BHC) Accreditation program goes beyond behavioral health services to include human services — services that address meeting human needs to improve the overall quality of life for individuals — the program has been renamed to the Behavioral Health Care and Human Services Accreditation program.

The BHC program has made several enhancements this year, including adding nearly 90 new and revised requirements related to child welfare services, which went into effect on Sept. 13. These requirements address various services for children and families at risk including:

- Adoption
- Child protection services
- Family preservation/wraparound services
- Foster care
- Kinship care
- Respite care
- Reunification

The name of the BHC manual and its E-dition® counterpart will change to the Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Behavioral Health Care and Human Services for 2021. However, the acronym for the manual will remain CAMBHC.

Additionally, to reflect the BHC program’s name change, this newsletter has been renamed Person to Person. (Contact: Julia Finken, jfinken@jointcommission.org)

Joint Commission resuming some Behavioral Health Care and Human Services survey activities

Earlier in June, The Joint Commission began resuming some Behavioral Health Care and Human Services survey activities. The Joint Commission is committed to working closely with organizations to conduct surveys, with safety being the first and foremost priority.

Account executives are contacting organizations due for a survey to assess the impact that the coronavirus pandemic has had on their operations and their current state. The Joint Commission is reviewing a variety of factors and criteria for determining where and which organizations will be surveyed, including identifying and then prioritizing low-risk areas in which we can go in safely to survey.

Learn more about the physical distancing safety practices that are being implemented.

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Additionally, to further improve safety, The Joint Commission also has begun to use a virtual survey process for some organizations. Account executives are contacting organizations approved for virtual surveys to assess their technologic capabilities and to determine interest in participating in a virtual survey. To date, virtual surveys have been conducted with several opioid treatment programs and will be expanded to other settings.

Coronavirus updates

Q&A webinar: Get answers on key COVID-19 BHC topics
To help behavioral health and human services staff as they confront challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, Joint Commission leaders and experts have answered a variety of questions during Q&A webinars. Located on the COVID-19 resources webpage, topics addressed in the webinars ranged from safety guidelines and recommendations to infection prevention and control and more.

Joint Commission staff who participated in the July 23 Q&A were:
• Robert Campbell, PharmD, director, Clinical Standards Interpretation Hospital/Ambulatory Programs, and director, Medication Management
• Kelly McCann, associate director, Accreditation and Certification Operations
• Sylvia Garcia-Houchins, MBA, RN, CIC, director, Infection Prevention and Control
• Herman A. McKenzie, MBA, CHSP, director of engineering, Standards Interpretation Group, Division of Healthcare Improvement
• Deborah Ryan, MS, RN, senior director, Field Operations, Accreditation and Certification Operations
• Linda Seager, RN, MSN, director, Clinical Standards Interpretation Group, Division of Healthcare Improvement
• Falguni Shah, associate director, Standards Interpretation Group, Division of Healthcare Improvement
• Peter Vance, field director, Accreditation and Certification Operations
• Jennifer Welch, MBA, associate director, Accreditation and Certification Operations

Joint Commission staff also answered questions in an Aug. 27 webinar, as well as in a webinar earlier this year on preparing behavioral health organizations for the coronavirus.

Check out all the behavioral health care-specific resources concerning COVID-19.

‘Real Voices. Real Stories.’: Bretz talks usefulness of telehealth during COVID-19 pandemic
Joint Commission staff are on the front lines of COVID-19 care, and we’re sharing their experiences in ‘Real Voices. Real Stories.’

A behavioral health care surveyor at The Joint Commission, Paul Bretz, D.Min., LCSW, MHSA, also is executive director of Centus Counseling, Consulting & Education in Denver. He shared his experiences regarding the usefulness of telehealth and telemedicine during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“All of my therapists are trauma trained in a variety of ways. Some of them have in-depth training around [eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR)], Sensory Motor Integration and other cutting-edge treatment applications. These clinicians are finding very creative ways to utilize even these sophisticated therapeutic tools virtually. I would shine a light on the empirical research that has demonstrated tele-behavioral health is essentially as effective as in-person treatment. We are a true lifeline for people in this really isolating time.
“What I’m most proud of are the therapists who are maintaining therapeutic engagement with people in treatment, who really need the support at this point. I feel like our behavioral health field is already moving into clinical outcome measurement. We’re moving into evidence-based treatment modalities, and now, virtually utilizing all of that. All the things that we are putting in place in our field are working when people need it perhaps the most. So that continues to make me passionate and I find our work very, very compelling.”

Read more “Real Voices. Real Stories.”

COVID-19 resources available for BHC organizations
We hope you have found this special issue of Person to Person helpful. In this time of great uncertainty and challenges, The Joint Commission wants the health care community to know it is here to assist in any way it can.

As you continue to navigate caring for patients during this pandemic, additional resources can be found on The Joint Commission’s COIVD-19 webpage, including:

• Resources and guidance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and other organizations.
• Strategies for conserving personal protective equipment.

Check out the full list of resources.