Executive Director

When I’m not working, sailing is one of my favorite pastimes. And, in the nine years I’ve worked at The Joint Commission I have avoided using a single sailing analogy in this column. Until now.

William Shedd once said, “A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for.” It is human nature to stick with what has worked in the past. How many times do we hear, “We’ve always done it this way.”

Improvement is about looking at your services, systems and processes to determine if there is a better way of doing things. At The Joint Commission, we’re always considering how to bring more value to the accreditation process.

That’s why we are moving forward with our Primary Care Home initiative. Primary Care Home is a model of care whereby services are provided to patients by a primary care practitioner or team that increases access to its services, and tracks and coordinates a patient’s care delivered by other practitioners and facilities. The Joint Commission is exploring a Primary Care Home designation as an optional add-on to ambulatory care accreditation. The PCH option will offer organizations an opportunity to obtain both ambulatory care accreditation and PCH designation through one on-site visit.

“Our proposed Primary Care Home requirements describe key operating characteristics for transforming primary care practice so that it is more accessible, comprehensive, coordinated and patient-centered,” says Lon Berkeley, project director, Community Health Center Accreditation. “We welcome comments to help assure that we meet the expectations of providers, patients, payers, and purchasers for increasing satisfaction, improving outcomes and reducing costs. These additional requirements will apply to ambulatory care organizations that select the Primary Care Home option, and will be evaluated for compliance as part of the on-site accreditation survey process.”

Your response to this survey will help us determine whether or not the existing and proposed new requirements sufficiently address the key characteristics of a Primary Care Home. The deadline for submitting comments is March 14. Use the link below or copy and paste it into the address bar of your Internet browser:

http://www.jointcommission.org/standards_information/field_reviews.aspx

Primary Care Home field review needs you

The Joint Commission invites your feedback on proposed standards for a Primary Care Home designation as an optional add-on to ambulatory care accreditation. The PCH option will offer organizations an opportunity to obtain both ambulatory care accreditation and PCH designation through one on-site visit.

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Accreditation Summit: focus on ambulatory care

The third annual Joint Commission Accreditation Summit will be held May 3-4, in Lombard, Ill. The Summit delivers a complete update on Joint Commission standards and the survey process. This interactive, solution-based seminar is designed to provide ambulatory organizations and office-based surgery practices with practical strategies and tips that they can adapt and apply within their own organization. Attend the Accreditation Summit fair on May 3 for an opportunity to meet the account executives! For more information, or to register, visit the Joint Commission Resources website, or call JCR Customer Service, (877) 223-6866.

Have your ready to go list...ready to go

Having your ready to go list assembled at the start of your survey can help things run smoothly for both your organization and the survey team. The ready to go list includes information and documents that should be available for the Preliminary Planning Session and Surveyor Planning Session, both of which typically occur on the first day of survey. Some of the items include:

- Performance/quality improvement data
- Infection prevention and control surveillance data
- Infection control plan
- Environment of Care management plans and team meeting minutes
- Organization chart
- List of all sites eligible for survey
- List of contracted services
- List of patient appointment schedules or surgery schedules for each survey day

The complete ready to go list can be found in the Accreditation Handbook for Ambulatory Care posted on The Joint Commission website. It is also included in the handbook for ambulatory surgery centers, diagnostic imaging centers, sleep centers, urgent care centers and office-based surgery practices. In addition, the list appears in the Survey Activity Guide posted on the Joint Commission Connect extranet. It is called the Document List in the Table of Contents.

What the surveyor says

What is the purpose of a ready to go list?
"The list helps surveyors tailor the survey to the organization, and helps us be more effective and efficient," says Angelica Flores, M.D., Joint Commission ambulatory care surveyor. "The purpose of a survey is to help the organization identify risk points which might lead to compromised safety. The more prepared the organization is—by making these documents available—the more we can help during our short time there. This is particularly important in complex organizations. If I have to spend my time trying to locate the required elements of a plan to determine whether the organization even has a complete plan, there is less time to review a plan (e.g., an infection control plan) in the context of an organization’s unique characteristics, and therefore, less time for education."

"I like to compare it to a doctor’s visit. Say a patient with multiple chronic illnesses and a history of multiple hospitalizations shows up to see a new physician for the first time. The physician will be able to do so much more for the patient in that one visit if the patient brought a list of his or her medications and a copy of comprehensive, well-organized medical records to the visit."

How critical is it for the organization to provide the ready to go list?
"Surveyors can manage the survey without the ready to go list, but missing documents might lead to something being found non-compliant when it really wasn’t. This can be cleared through clarification at a later date but it is more work for the organization. More preparation will produce a better survey."

Take Note

Save the date
It’s never too early to start planning your trip to Chicago for the Annual Ambulatory Care Conference and preconference, October 3-5. Details to follow!

New! State recognition map
The Joint Commission website features a map that identifies the states that recognize Joint Commission accreditation for regulatory purposes. View the states that recognize ambulatory care accreditation.

Preventing Infection in Ambulatory Care
APIC (Association for Professionals in Infection Control & Epidemiology) publishes an e-newsletter focusing exclusively on ambulatory care. The fall 2010 issue covers topics such as flash sterilization, infection risk with cataract extraction and hepatitis in ambulatory care. View APIC’s website for a free peek at past issues.

Look for us
- Medical Home Summit, Philadelphia, Pa., March 14-16, booth 4
- American Medical Group Association, Washington, D.C., April 13-16, booth 446
- HCP Imaging, San Antonio, Texas, May 4-6
- Urgent Care Association of America Spring Conference, Chicago, Ill., May 10-13, booth 524
- Ambulatory Surgery Center Association, Orlando, Fla., May 11-14, booth 608

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