Behavioral Health Care Accreditation

- Launched in 1969, The Joint Commission began accrediting providers of programs/services for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Expanded in 1972 to include evaluation and accreditation of organizations providing mental health and addiction services

Today, The Joint Commission accredits more than 3,000 organizations under the Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Behavioral Health Care. Behavioral Health Care Accreditation is available to organizations that provide a wide range of community-based services and programs within a variety of settings across the continuum of care.

Organizations eligible for Behavioral Health Care accreditation provide the following types of care, treatment, and services in a variety of settings that include:

- Addictions/substance use disorder
- Behavioral health homes
- Case management
- Child welfare
- Community-based settings
- Corrections-based
- Crisis stabilization (24-hour acute care setting)
- Eating disorders
- Family preservation and wraparound services
- Forensic services
- Foster care and therapeutic foster care
- Home-based
- Mental health
- Methadone/opioid treatment programs
- Outdoor/wilderness-based behavioral services
- Outpatient counseling
- Partial hospitalization, day treatment, adult day care, and intensive outpatient services
- Prevention and wellness promotion services
- Psychiatric rehabilitative services
- Residential/group homes
- Shelters
- Special populations, including children, youth, veterans, and persons with intellectual disabilities
- Technology-based
- Therapeutic schools (both day and 24-hour)
- Transitional, supervised or supportive living
- Vocational rehabilitation

Accreditation Requirements
Joint Commission accreditation requirements address the organization’s performance in specific areas, and specify requirements to ensure that care, treatment and services are provided based on quality and in a safe manner. A
trauma-informed, recovery/resilience-oriented philosophy and approach to care, treatment and services is embedded in the requirements. The Joint Commission develops its requirements in consultation with behavioral health care experts, providers, measurement experts, as well as individuals served. The Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Behavioral Health Care is available for purchase in both hardcover and electronic format. There are additional requirements specific to the unique needs of medication-assisted opioid treatment programs, foster care programs and certification requirements for health homes operated by behavioral health care organizations.

Accreditation process
The Joint Commission’s accreditation process concentrates on operational systems critical to the safety and quality of care, treatment or services provided to the individual. Surveys are conducted by experienced and licensed behavioral health care professionals, including psychologists, social workers, professional counselors, behavioral health care nurses and administrators. Many Joint Commission surveyors are actively working in a range of behavioral health care settings.

Benefits of accreditation
Joint Commission behavioral health care accreditation provides a framework to help manage risk and enhance the quality and safety of care, treatment and services. Recognized by state regulatory agencies in all 50 states and the District of Columbia in over 250 forms of legislation, accreditation can be a useful tool to demonstrate compliance with state regulations or licensure requirements. Joint Commission accreditation also is a condition of reimbursement for certain insurers, including Medicaid and commercial payers. The process provides a customized, intensive review, and enhances staff recruitment and development.

Optional certification
Behavioral Health Home Certification is an optional certification to recognize organizations that coordinate and integrate all health care needs of a population served. The optional certification goes above and beyond what is required for accreditation and provides additional recognition as a health home.

Cost of accreditation
The on-site survey fee is paid at the end of the on-site survey and covers survey-related direct costs. The on-site fee for a small organization starts at $3,200. The annual fee, which is based on an organization’s volume and type of services provided, is due each January and covers Joint Commission accreditation-related services. Annual fees for behavioral health care organizations start at $1,875 and are adjusted based on the number of individuals served, the types of services and programs provided, and sites of care, treatment or services. The Joint Commission Connect extranet includes a fee calculator to help estimate annual subscription billing costs for current customers. For more information about pricing, contact The Joint Commission’s Pricing Unit at 630-792-5115 or pricingunit@jointcommission.org.