Why Critical Access Hospitals Become Accredited by The Joint Commission
The gold standard

Considered the gold standard in health care accreditation, The Joint Commission has more than 60 years of experience in evaluating and accrediting health care organizations of every size, across every setting and currently accredits or certifies more than 20,500 organizations.

The majority of critical access hospitals that are currently accredited are accredited by The Joint Commission and do so to demonstrate their commitment to health care safety and quality to their patients, staff and community. The Gold Seal of Approval™, which they earn once they’ve become accredited, is widely recognized as a prestigious mark of distinction.

Why do critical access hospitals choose to become accredited by The Joint Commission?

- Helps organize and strengthen patient safety efforts and strengthens community confidence in the quality of care
- Improves risk management and risk reduction
- Preparing for the survey provides the opportunity for an in-depth review of care, quality, and safety processes and provides a framework for maintaining high levels of care
- Enhances staff recruitment and development
- Provides deeming authority for Medicare certification
- Recognized by insurers and other third parties
- May reduce liability insurance costs
- May fulfill regulatory requirements in select states
- Prestige of Joint Commission accreditation as an organizational achievement

An educative on-site experience

Your survey will include our unique “tracer” methodology during which surveyors select individual patient records to review in order to assess and evaluate compliance with selected standards and systems of providing care and services. Surveyors retrace the specific care processes that an individual experienced by observing and talking to staff in areas that the individual received care. As surveyors follow the course of a patient’s experience at your hospital, they assess compliance with Joint Commission standards.

A dedicated team

Our surveyors understand the unique challenges of the critical access hospital world, with smaller facilities, limited staff and resources and frequently aging facilities. They are professionals who strive to provide a thorough evaluation and inspiring experience that will assist critical access hospitals in improving their quality and safety processes. Your survey will be conducted by a masters prepared administrator or nurse who has experience working in or with critical access or small hospitals. Our surveyors are evaluated on their performance which includes feedback from our customers in order to ensure that your survey will be conducted with exceptional customer service and relevancy to your current health care environment.

While the surveyor team will be conducting your survey, you’ll also have an account executive who will be your “go to” person from start to finish regarding answering your questions as you move through the process and on to your next survey. They will walk you through the entire accreditation process, from submission of the electronic application to your final accreditation decision report.
Mentoring program – helping critical access hospitals help each other

The best advice on how to prepare for and what to expect from accreditation is to hear it from an organization that has already successfully achieved Joint Commission accreditation. We pair up organizations that are interested in pursuing critical access hospital accreditation with other critical access hospitals that already have gone through the process, allowing for exchange of experiences and what their challenges and successes were during the process.

An option to consider -- Primary Care Medical Home (PCMH) Certification

Primary Care Medical Home certification is an optional certification available to critical access hospitals that are currently accredited or soon to be accredited by The Joint Commission. This certification is applicable to primary care clinics and providers in ambulatory settings that are part of a critical access hospital. The certification, which is an additional 50+ requirements, focuses on care coordination and how effectively primary care providers and related professionals work together with a patient and their support system. Need more info on whether PCMH is a good fit for your hospital? Contact qualityhospitals@jointcommission.org.

Special resources provided as a benefit to your accreditation

There are many benefits to your organization before, during and after the survey process. Just some of them include:

• Access to standards assistance Our Standards Interpretation Group is available to help assist with standards questions.
• Leading Practice Library™ The Leading Practice Library is a collection of real-life solutions that have been successfully implemented by organizations. Solutions address such areas as contract oversight, environment of care rounding lists, and fall reduction risk assessment.
• Gateways to valuable information Portals for healthcare associated infections, high reliability, transitions of care and emergency management are all available to your organization at any time
• Standards BoosterPaks™ which are searchable documents that provide detailed information about a particular standard or National Patient Safety Goal area, including evidence, rationale, references and frequently asked questions.
• Targeted Solutions Tool (TST)™ and the Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare The TST™ is an online tool that can help accurately measure your hospital’s performance in relation to complex quality and safety problems, identify barriers to high quality performance, and direct your team to proven solutions that are customized to address your hospital’s specific barriers.
• Physician resources Monthly e-newsletter and dedicated section on website with valuable information for physicians that is accessible to your organization’s medical staff
• Survey activity guide A comprehensive guide providing detailed information on what to expect during each segment of the onsite survey.
• Secure, organization-specific information Each critical access hospital is provided a secure site on The Joint Commission Connect™ extranet site to receive and submit all Joint Commission information.
• E-Manual Access to the e-dition of our comprehensive standards manual which provides filtering capabilities of standards to find the standards applicable to your hospital.

As a performance improvement company, we’re here to help you. Please contact us at criticalaccess@jointcommission.org for more information.
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