Communication guidelines for Joint Commission Certified Primary Stroke Centers, Certified Comprehensive Stroke Centers, and Advanced Certification in Heart Failure Programs

The following communication guidelines have been developed by The Joint Commission to provide guidance to Joint Commission Certified Primary Stroke Centers, Certified Comprehensive Stroke Centers, and Advanced Certification in Heart Failure Programs for promoting their advanced certification using The Joint Commission’s Gold Seal and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association (AHA/ASA) designated certification marks. These guidelines will assist primary stroke centers and heart failure programs to appropriately portray their certification in the most credible and accurate manner. Any questions about these guidelines should be directed to Denise Tucker, professional relations and speakers bureau coordinator, at (630) 792-5633 or dtucker@jointcommission.org.

Publicity and promotion

• Your Joint Commission certified primary or comprehensive stroke center or heart failure program can use any of the following statements when publicizing and promoting your advanced certification.
  
  o [Name of certified primary or comprehensive stroke center or heart failure program] has attained advanced certification by The Joint Commission. This means that this [center or program]:
    ▪ provides the next generation of [stroke or heart failure] care
    ▪ has met and seeks to maintain The Joint Commission’s high standards in providing stroke or heart failure care

• Your Joint Commission certified primary or comprehensive stroke center or heart failure program should not use the following words to describe your certification: only, best, leading, better, etc. For example, “… only certified primary stroke center or heart failure program in this city.”

• You can begin publicizing and promoting your certification beginning February 1, 2012.

Use of The Joint Commission Gold Seal of Approval® and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association (AHA/ASA) designated certification marks

Use of The Joint Commission Gold Seal of Approval® and the AHA/ASA designated certification marks on print and electronic materials is permitted and encouraged, provided that you adhere to the following guidelines. In addition, the Gold Seal and the AHA/ASA designated mark must be used together and placed in close proximity to each other. However, a minimum of one-quarter inch of blank space should surround the Gold Seal and the designated mark (an area of non-interference).

Using the Joint Commission Gold Seal®:

• The elements of the Gold Seal must remain in the same proportional relationship as provided.
• Do not change the format of the Gold Seal or separate the symbol or graphic from the words.
• Do not add graphic elements or devices to the Gold Seal, including other words or slogans.
• The Gold Seal is reproduced using a four-color process and should be reproduced in that four-color process on websites and external signage. The Gold Seal may be reproduced in any color on certain printed materials. These materials include newspaper and other advertisements, stationery, business cards, fliers, brochures, newsletters, posters, tent cards and promotional items such as coffee mugs and T-shirts.

For more information or to obtain the Gold Seal, contact Denise Tucker, professional relations and speakers bureau coordinator, at (630) 792-5633.
Using the AHA/ASA designated marks:

- Please review the AHA/ASA’s Advertising, Public Relations and Branding Guidelines For Performance Recognition Hospitals for appropriate use of the designated marks. These guidelines and access to the downloadable designated marks are available only from your organization’s Joint Commission Connect extranet.
- You are required to agree to the AHA/ASA’s terms and conditions for using their designated marks.
- The trademarked American Heart Association’s Heart and Torch mark must never be used.

**Celebrate your certification**

There are many ways to celebrate your certified primary or comprehensive stroke center or heart failure program certification. The following suggestions may be useful to you.

- Conduct a news conference with your local media. Invite reporters to meet with your CEO, medical director, quality assurance/improvement director and other key staff members.
- Inform key audiences of your certification, including employees, volunteers, physicians, nurses, community leaders, benefactors, health plans, local employers, business coalitions, referral sources, and government agencies as well as state associations, nursing societies and other health care and professional associations of which you are a member.
- Include information regarding your certification in your patient literature or on your website.
- Include an announcement or feature story in your internal and external publications.
- Encourage your leaders to speak about your certification at conferences and in other venues. Display your certification in a poster or banner placed in a prominent place in your organization or on a billboard or exterior building sign.
- Display pamphlets, posters and table tent cards in your organization.