Why Do Pathologists Choose Joint Commission Lab Accreditation for Their Organizations?
Nearly 21,000 and counting…

The Joint Commission is the largest accrediting body in the United States, accrediting and certifying almost 21,000 organizations including hospitals, laboratories, physician’s offices, outpatient settings, long term care facilities, home care, and behavioral health settings. The Joint Commission also certifies specific programs such as patient blood management programs, primary stroke programs, palliative care programs, and health care staffing firms.

Because The Joint Commission views health care as an integrated spectrum, its goal is to unify the whole organization behind the pursuit of quality in patient care. This means that the standards across all programs are consistent. If a hospital is Joint Commission accredited, the foundation needed to meet many of the standards should already be in place.

The lab is an important piece of that patient care, not merely a unit isolated from the direct clinical care areas. The surveyors, who are all experienced laboratorians, use tracer methodology to evaluate the performance of processes. They use their expertise in laboratory management and their experiences from the many labs they survey to provide a survey process that not only evaluates the laboratory but also provides education for the staff.

Dedicated Pathologist Advisory Council

The Joint Commission has a Pathologist Advisory Council which meets quarterly to provide the pathologist’s perspective on improving the value of our laboratory accreditation program, the standards, the survey process, and environmental influences. Membership consists of nationally known pathologists and pathologists from our accredited laboratories.
Quality-based with a patient focus for more than 30 years

Our Laboratory Accreditation Program, which is the second largest lab accreditor that CMS approved for all specialties and subspecialties, is cost effective with no required reciprocal surveys and provides:

• Broad standards that are not prescriptive and do not dictate to pathologists how to practice but rather help to guide quality systems
• Employed surveyors, including pathologists, with extensive training on laboratory accreditation standards and regulatory requirements
• Electronic standards that can be sorted by specialty for easy reference
• A system-oriented survey which includes more of the pre-analytic and post-analytic processes by inclusion of the patient chart

• The tracer method which follows flows and integration and is not just a checklist of compliance
• Lab Advantage – A partnership with API and ASCP which provides a discount on accreditation and ASCP educational opportunities
• Free tools to assist with survey readiness and continuous compliance
Strong stakeholder relationships in the industry

The Joint Commission works closely with many laboratory organizations such as the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC), and Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI). Because The Joint Commission is not competing for the loyalty of members, it reaches out to a variety of other professional organizations for their expertise to assist in accreditation standards development. The result is expertise from organizations such as the American Society for Microbiology (ASM), Association for Molecular Pathology (AMP), American Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics (ASHI), the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology (SART) and others who serve on our Professional and Technical Advisory Committee.

Meet our pathologist surveyors

In keeping with The Joint Commission’s commitment to consistent and thorough evaluation of risk by using employed surveyors, there are pathologists available for lab surveys upon request. These physicians are extensively trained in the Joint Commission’s standards and are located around the country to avoid any competitive interests or institutional biases.
Jim Harker, M.D.

“I survey to learn something new from each hospital. There is no one right way!”

Dr. James Harker is currently a resident of Illinois and is a staff pathologist and director of anatomic pathology at Rockford Memorial Hospital in Rockford, Illinois. He is board certified in anatomic and clinical pathology and is currently licensed in Illinois as a medical doctor. Dr. Harker has also completed an M.B.A. and a master’s degree in health law. He has also been president of the medical staff, and chair of risk management at Provident Hospital of Cook County and the executive editor of a peer-reviewed pathology journal. Dr. Harker has been a Joint Commission pathology specialist since 2001.

Rick Michaelson, M.D.

“Surveying for The Joint Commission provides me a unique opportunity to learn from my peers and to share knowledge with them.”

Dr. Rick Michaelson is currently the chief of pathology and medical director of laboratories at Saint Thomas Rutherford Hospital in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He also is president/CEO and founder of PathLab of Middle Tennessee, P.C., also of Murfreesboro. Dr. Michaelson received his medical degree from the Medical University of South Carolina and did his post graduate training at Barnes Jewish Hospital and Washington University School of Medicine. He also trained at North Carolina Baptist Hospital and Wake Forest University, Bowman Gray School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He is board certified in anatomic and clinical pathology. He has been a pathology specialist with The Joint Commission since 2001.
June Olson, M.D.

“The reason I survey for the Joint Commission lab program is due to the level of training specifically geared to laboratory medicine and laboratory science.”

Dr. June A. Olson received her undergraduate degree in chemistry at Colorado State University, medical degree from the University of Colorado, and residency training at the University of Utah. A cytology fellowship was completed through Case Western Reserve University with fine needle aspiration training completed at the Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm, Sweden. She is board certified in anatomic and clinical pathology with a sub-specialty board certification in cytology. She is currently the regional medical director of Providence Laboratories in Oregon. Her previous positions include chief of staff, Legacy Mount Hood Medical Center, medical director of Legacy Mount Hood Medical Center Laboratory, medical director for Legacy Health System clinical chemistry division, and director of cytology for Providence Portland Medical Center and Kaiser Permanente in Oregon. Dr. Olson started as a pathology specialist with The Joint Commission in 2011. In 2012 she completed the additional training necessary to be able to survey all areas of the laboratory.

Laurence Sherman, M.D., JD

“I survey because I value participating in a consistent, professional, and educational approach in the field.”

Dr. Laurence Sherman is a former medical technologist, with a medical degree from Albany Medical College, and a doctor of jurisprudence degree from Loyola University. He is board certified in internal medicine, clinical pathology and transfusion medicine, and is Professor Emeritus at Northwestern University Medical School, where he still participates in compliance and ethics activities. Dr. Sherman is a past president of AABB, and was also active with CAP, ASCP, American Society of Hematology, the American Heart Association and other organizations. He has published on coagulation, blood transfusion, and laboratory risk management. He surveys for the laboratory and hospital programs. Dr. Sherman has been a Joint Commission surveyor since 1998 and surveys all areas of the laboratory.
Alejandro Zuretti, M.D.

“I survey for The Joint Commission because I enjoy being part of a team of full time professional surveyors with vast and varied expertise on the field.”

Dr. Alejandro R. Zuretti is a graduate of the National College of Buenos Aires and received his medical degree from the University of Buenos Aires with post-graduate training at The Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York. He is currently the director of clinical laboratories and vice chair of pathology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York. He was previously the chair of pathology and laboratories at Nassau University Medical Center in East Meadow, New York, a major academic affiliate of the North Shore Long Island Jewish Health System, as well as associate professor at Hofstra School of Medicine and the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine. His previous positions included director of laboratories at Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center in Brooklyn and attending pathologist at St. Vincent’s Medical Center in Manhattan. He has been published in the Archives of Pathology, American Journal of Clinical Pathology, Journal of Virological Methods, World Journal of Oncology, American Journal of Clinical Oncology and the American Journal of Gastroenterology. Dr. Zuretti has been a pathology surveyor with The Joint Commission since 2011. In 2012 he completed the additional training necessary to be able to survey all areas of the laboratory.