

Facts about long term care accreditation

The Joint Commission's Long Term Care Accreditation Program was launched in 1966. Today, nearly 1,000 organizations offering long term care services are accredited. Organizations eligible for long term care accreditation include those with:

- Beds licensed by the state as nursing home beds, excluding intermediate care facilities specializing in care for individuals with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities.
- Beds designated as long term care beds under a hospital license, excluding beds belonging to a long term acute care hospital and hospital swing beds.
- Beds, units or facilities certified by Medicare or Medicaid as skilled nursing facility beds.
- Beds, units or facilities designated as long term care by a governmental entity, such as the Department of Veterans' Affairs or a state authority.

Benefits of accreditation

Long term care organizations seek Joint Commission accreditation as a means to improve organization performance, as well as to demonstrate their commitment to quality and safety to external stakeholders. Current research shows that long term care accreditation is a risk reduction activity that reduces the likelihood of negative patient or resident outcomes and incrementally improves an organization's performance. In addition, accreditation enhances community confidence, supports staff recruitment and education, and provides a structure for organizing business and care processes. Accreditation also allows providers to differentiate themselves in a market of more than 15,000 nursing facilities in the United States.

Standards

The Joint Commission's long term care standards in the *Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Long Term Care* address important functions relating to the care of patients or residents and the management of nursing facilities. The Joint Commission develops all of its standards in consultation with long term care experts, providers, measurement experts, purchasers, patients, residents and their families. The standards-based performance areas for long term care are:

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| ▪ Environment of Care (EC) | ▪ National Patient Safety Goals (NPSG) |
| ▪ Emergency Management (EM) | ▪ Provision of Care, Treatment and Services (PC) |
| ▪ Human Resources (HR) | ▪ Performance Improvement (PI) |
| ▪ Infection Prevention and Control (IC) | ▪ Record of Care, Treatment and Services (RC) |
| ▪ Information Management (IM) | ▪ Rights and Responsibilities of the Individual (RI) |
| ▪ Leadership (LD) | ▪ Waived Testing (WT) |
| ▪ Life Safety (LS) | |
| ▪ Medication Management (MM) | |

Survey process

To earn and maintain accreditation, a long term care organization must undergo an on-site survey by a Joint Commission surveyor(s) approximately every three years. The objective of the survey is not only to evaluate the long term care organization, but to provide education and guidance that will help staff continue to improve its performance. The survey process evaluates actual care processes by tracing patients and residents through the care, treatment and services they receive and also analyzes key operational systems that directly affect the quality and safety of patient or resident care.

Surveys are conducted by experienced long term care professionals who have at least five years of leadership experience in a long term care facility; and a strong educational background – all surveyors have master's degrees and many have doctorate degrees. Surveyors are required to complete and pass a

surveyor certification examination to help ensure the knowledge and consistency of The Joint Commission's surveyor cadre.

Accreditation options

- **Traditional long term care accreditation:** Requires the organization to be in compliance with all applicable Joint Commission long term care accreditation requirements in the *Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Long Term Care*.
- **Medicare/Medicaid certification-based accreditation:** Requires the organization to be in compliance with applicable Joint Commission standards not addressed by the Medicare/Medicaid Conditions of Participation. All Joint Commission corporate policies apply, including the sentinel event policy, accreditation participation requirements, and compliance with the National Patient Safety Goals. The accreditation certificate indicates that accreditation is substantially based on the organization's most recent Medicare/Medicaid certification survey evaluation of its long term care services.

A hospital may select either option if its skilled nursing beds are certified by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), or exclude its long term care component from the organization survey. If the hospital long term care component's average daily census is less than 20, the hospital may include its long term care component under its hospital accreditation. If the hospital excludes its skilled nursing beds from its accreditation process, the accreditation award will note that the long term care component is excluded from accreditation.

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 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. The on-site fee for a nursing home choosing traditional accreditation with an average daily census of 100-119 is \$3,215 and the annual fee is \$2,170. A nursing home of the same size electing the Medicare/Medicaid accreditation option would pay an on-site fee of \$2,275 and an annual fee of \$1,285. For more information about pricing, contact The Joint Commission's Pricing Unit at (630) 792-5115.

Long term care information available to the public

Information about the safety and quality of Joint Commission-accredited long term care organizations is available to the public at Quality Check[®], www.qualitycheck.org. This comprehensive listing includes detailed information about a long term care facility's performance and how it compares to similar organizations.

For more information, call (630) 792-5293 or visit the long term care [website](#).