The Joint Commission will offer an optional Behavioral Health Home (BHH) certification product for organizations accredited under the Behavioral Health Care Accreditation Program effective January 1, 2014. This certification product focuses on coordinating and integrating behavioral and physical health care for individuals with serious mental illness, children with serious emotional disturbances, adults with developmental/intellectual disabilities, and patients in opioid treatment programs.

People with serious mental illness die, on average, 25 years earlier than the general population, according to the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors. While suicide and injury account for about 30% to 40% of this early mortality, 60% of premature deaths in persons with serious mental illness are due to medical conditions such as cardiovascular, pulmonary, and infectious diseases. The Joint Commission’s behavioral health home initiative represents an important step in addressing this long-standing issue.

Joint Commission BHH certification requirements align with the three types of behavioral health home recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Coordination and integration are essential in all three types, which are as follows:

1. Co-located partnership: The behavioral health care organization provides the behavioral health care services and arranges for partner health care providers to offer some basic primary physical health care services on site.
2. Facilitated referral: The behavioral health care organization provides the behavioral health care services and has processes to ensure the coordination of primary physical health care provided off site.
3. In-house: The behavioral health care organization provides the behavioral health care services and some of the primary physical health care services.

The BHH model is a coordination and integration model rather than a delivery model. By emphasizing the need to coordinate and integrate care, the BHH requirements are designed to help decrease the high rates of morbidity and mortality experienced by individuals with serious mental illness and other behavioral health conditions. In addition, because the BHH model is new to the behavioral health care field, The Joint Commission expects this certification product to evolve as the behavioral health home concept matures nationally. Joint Commission–convened expert panels agree that the BHH standards are robust, but not so prescriptive that they preclude innovation by capable organizations.

The Behavioral Health Home certification product includes 84 new requirements in the following chapters:

- “Care, Treatment, and Services” (CTS)
- “Environment of Care” (EC)
- “Human Resources” (HR)
- “Information Management” (IM)
- “Leadership” (LD)
- “Performance Improvement” (PI)
- “Record of Care, Treatment, and Services” (RC)
- “Rights and Responsibilities of the Individual” (RI)

Organizations can view the new requirements, which are designed to be individual-centered, comprehensive, coordinated and integrated, accessible, and performance-based, on The Joint Commission’s Prepublication Standards webpage at http://www.jointcommission.org/standards_information/prepublication_standards.aspx. The requirements will also appear in the 2013 Update 2 to the Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Behavioral Health Care (CAMBHC) and 2014 CAMBHC as well as the fall 2013 E-dition® update for behavioral health care organizations.

For more information, please contact Lynn Berry, project director, Department of Standards and Survey Methods, at lberry@jointcommission.org or The Joint Commission Behavioral Health Care Accreditation Program at BHC@jointcommission.org.

References