Facts about Joint Commission accreditation standards

Joint Commission standards are the basis of an objective evaluation process that can help health care organizations measure, assess and improve performance. The standards focus on important patient, individual or resident care, and organization functions that are essential to providing safe, high quality care. The Joint Commission’s state-of-the-art standards set expectations for organization performance that are reasonable, achievable and surveyable.

New for 2010! Comment on a standard

The Joint Commission Web site includes an online form that allows customers and other interested parties to comment on current standards. The form allows for constant customer and stakeholder feedback on the standards. This new feature is a product of The Joint Commission’s Robust Process Improvement (RPI) initiative to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of internal processes and to better meet customers’ needs and expectations of value.

Standards development process

Joint Commission standards are developed with input from health care professionals, providers, subject matter experts, consumers, government agencies and employers. They are informed by the scientific literature and approved by the Board of Commissioners. New standards are added only if they relate to patient safety or quality of care, have a positive impact on health outcomes, and can be accurately and readily measured. The standards development process includes the following steps:

- Emerging quality and safety issues suggesting the need for additional or modified requirements are identified through the scientific literature, or discussions with the Patient Safety Advisory Group (PSAG), professional associations, consumer groups, accredited organizations, or others.
- The Joint Commission prepares draft standards using input from external task forces, focus groups and experts.
- The draft standards are reviewed by field-specific Professional and Technical Advisory Committees (PTACs) and the Standards & Survey Procedures (SSP) Committee, a committee of the Board of Commissioners.
- The draft standards are distributed nationally for review and made available for comment on The Joint Commission Web site.
- If indicated, the draft standards are revised and again reviewed by the appropriate experts and PTACs.
- The draft standards are approved by the SSP Committee and reviewed by the Board for final comments.
- The approved standards are published for use by the field.
- Once standards are in effect, ongoing feedback is sought for the purpose of continuous improvement.

Standards manuals

Each accredited organization receives a free print copy of the applicable standards manual, in addition to access to the electronic E-dition.

For more information

To see the latest initiatives, improvements and FAQs about Joint Commission standards, go to the Web site.