Updated for 2018: Accreditation learning modules now available via Relias

Eight online learning modules that provide step-by-step details on Joint Commission requirements for Nursing Care Center Accreditation, Post-Acute Care Certification and Memory Care Certification have been updated for 2018. The updates reflect The Joint Commission’s most current accreditation and certification standards and survey process.

Also new is the availability of the modules to subscribers to the Relias Learning Management System (RLMS); the online platform enables subscribers to easily assign courses and track and manage course completions. This new offering is available thanks to an expanded partnership between The Joint Commission and Relias. The modules remain available to non-subscribers on Relias’ Joint Commission Academy platform.

The course series is titled “Joint Commission Accreditation and Specialty Certification Requirements: A Roadmap to Performance Excellence.” Each hourlong module explores a Joint Commission standards manual chapter, with an accreditation expert guiding the learner through content and tips for standards compliance. It is designed for nursing home administrative and clinical leadership and staff, at individual facilities, as well as in corporate/system positions. Each module includes:

- Guiding rationale for requirements and how they are structured.
- Expectations for successfully demonstrating standards compliance.
- Documentation, such as what is required and when.

Users will receive one continuing education (CE) credit for completing each of the new modules:

- An Overview of the Process
- Environment of Care, Emergency Management & Life Safety
- Provision of Care, Treatment and Services and Medication Management
- Leadership and Human Resources
- Infection Prevention and Control, National Patient Safety Goals & Information Management
- Record of Care, Rights and Responsibilities of the Individual, Performance Improvement & Waived Testing
- Post-Acute Care Certification
- Memory Care Certification

Learn more and see a demo on how to access the modules through the RLMS. Access the modules via the Joint Commission Academy.

New, more user-friendly accreditation reports

In response to customer feedback, The Joint Commission redesigned its accreditation reports to be more user-friendly. The new survey report format is now in effect for all surveys, including for the Nursing Care Centers (NCC) Accreditation program.
The report highlights the most relevant information about surveys, outcomes, and required follow-ups. Additional requests included in the updated reports are:

- Removing unnecessary white space
- Removing repetitive text
- Prioritizing and grouping findings by severity
- Highlighting Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services’ (CMS) Condition-Level and Standard-Level findings
- Offering report sorting and filtering

Organizations will be able to access a PDF of their accreditation reports on The Joint Commission Connect extranet. It is presented in landscape orientation and uses tables to succinctly deliver key information.

Additionally, the report is available in a Microsoft Excel format. Read more to find out about accessing the Excel format. For questions, contact your organization’s assigned account executive.

**Patient Safety Systems chapter available for NCC manual**

The Patient Safety Systems (PS) chapter for The Joint Commission’s Nursing Care Centers Accreditation program is available on The Joint Commission website. The chapter also is in the *2018 Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Nursing Care Centers*. The PS chapter does not contain any new requirements; it describes how existing requirements can be applied to achieve improved safety. It also is intended to help all health care workers understand the relationship between Joint Commission accreditation and safety.

The PS chapter first was available to hospitals in the 2015 accreditation manual. Now, health care leaders at all Joint Commission-accredited organizations can follow the proactive approach outlined in the chapter to design or redesign a patient-centered system that aims to improve quality of care and patient safety.

The PS chapter is focused on three guiding principles:

- Aligning existing Joint Commission standards with daily work in order to engage patients and staff throughout the health care system, at all times, on reducing harm.
- Assisting health care organizations with advancing knowledge, skills, and competence of staff and patients by recommending methods that will improve quality and safety processes.
- Encouraging and recommending proactive quality and patient safety methods that will increase accountability, trust, and knowledge while reducing the impact of fear and blame.

View the chapter.

**RESOURCES**

**Q&A with a Surveyor: Are you ready for your Joint Commission survey?**

*Editor’s Note: While this article references tips for directors of nursing services, oftentimes, others are involved in leading the efforts to prepare for a survey.*

State surveys are in the news right now, since the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) implemented a brand-new survey process on Nov. 28, 2017. However, many nursing homes must be ready for Joint Commission surveys, as well. Cheryl Frenkel, RN, MS, GNP, LNHA, a surveyor for The Joint Commission, offers directors of nursing services (DNSs) the following tips:
Know that all surveys aren’t the same
“One misperception is that a perfect state survey will guarantee a perfect Joint Commission survey,” Frenkel said. “However, some of our standards are different from what CMS requires. For example, our emergency-preparedness standards include special testing for generators, and we have a stronger focus on the education of the resident and the family.”

So, even DNSs with a sparkling record on state surveys may not be familiar with all of the Joint Commission’s requirements, Frenkel noted.

“Accredited organizations have access to our standards and elements of performance through the online accreditation manual,” she said. “Accreditation is a continuous process, and setting up the systems to be compliant with our standards will help an organization be ready for survey at all times. It will also create a facility that strives to provide the highest and safest quality for the residents.”

Get in touch if you have questions
If DNSs ever have questions about interpreting Joint Commission standards, they can always contact the Standards Interpretation Group through its online request form, Frenkel pointed out.

“This can be especially helpful if a standard seems unclear or confusing,” she said.

Practice tracers
Joint Commission surveys use a tracer methodology, with surveyors tracing a resident’s care experience to assess the facility’s compliance with the organization’s standards.

“Practicing tracers with the staff members who are involved can be very helpful,” Frenkel said. “The more one does it, the more comfortable staff will be with our survey process.”

For example, DNSs could initiate a walkthrough of a pain tracer by asking staff, “Do we have a policy? Do you know what that policy is?”

“Then, one could identify a resident who is actively being treated for pain and look at the comprehensive pain assessment to see if it was done according to facility policy,” Frenkel said. “One would also look at: How do staff record pre- and post-pain assessments? What medications were provided to this resident? How was it documented in the interdisciplinary notes? Was it addressed in the care plan?”

One common issue involving pain is that different medications often are prescribed for mild, moderate, and severe pain, noted Frenkel.

“Sometimes, we find problems when we look to see if the pain medication that was given matches the order,” Frenkel said. “For example, staff may have given the resident tramadol, the pain medication ordered for a pain score of 4-6. However, the resident actually had a pain score of 8. What the nurse gave is inconsistent with the physician order.”

Get your staff to relax
“It is normal for staff members to get nervous or flustered around surveyors,” Frenkel said. “They just need to relax and feel comfortable asking questions if they’re unfamiliar with the language the survey team uses. It’s fine to ask, ‘Could you please explain to me what you’re looking for?’ or ‘Can I think about this for a minute and get back to you?’ Encourage staff to take three deep breaths, relax for a minute, and then explain what they do each and every day.”

Have a staff member available to navigate your EMR
“Very often, the staff who document will know how to document their information, but they don’t know how to necessarily retrieve it or find other information,” Frenkel said. “In many facilities, the MDS person does the care plan, and the nurses do the nursing assessments. Staff being able to navigate all components of the EMR is a huge help to the surveyor.”
Avoid a defensive posture
“If there is a finding, try to accept it in the spirit intended; we strive to identify potential risks in your organization,” Frenkel said. “Organizations and The Joint Commission both want to ensure that residents get the safest and highest quality health care. Ensuring a culture of safety in the organization in which staff are not afraid to admit mistakes or identify a near miss is essential in one’s journey toward becoming a highly reliable organization.”

TST for Hand Hygiene available as mobile application
Users of the Targeted Solutions Tool® (TST®) for Hand Hygiene can now record their hand hygiene observations on any mobile device or tablet. The TST® for Hand Hygiene mobile application can be downloaded from the Google Play or Apple app store.

This mobile application offers several advantages, such as:
- Eliminating the need for paper copies.
- Streamlining the data entry process to minimize the number of clicks and keystrokes.
- Recording observations as they are collected, therefore reducing delays.

To use the mobile application, users will need a:
- TST® login and password
- Network connection

Learn more in a blog post by John Cullinan, director of application development and data analysis, The Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare. Questions regarding the application can be directed to cth@jointcommission.org.