Reminder: On-site non-waived laboratory services must be accredited
As a reminder, whenever non-waived laboratory services are provided on-site — either directly or through contract — within a Joint Commission-accredited facility, a separate two-year cycle laboratory accreditation survey must also be conducted either by The Joint Commission or one of its cooperative accreditation partners (with the exception of laboratories located in the state of Washington).

To clarify, inspection of on-site laboratory services solely by the state (with the previously mentioned exception of Washington state) does not meet The Joint Commission’s accreditation policy described in the Accreditation Process (ACC) chapter of The Joint Commission’s accreditation manuals (see the “Overview: Scope of Accreditation Surveys” and the “Accreditation Policies: Tailored Survey Policy” sections). While not specifically mentioned, the requirement extends to contracted on-site lab services.

This requirement applies to the following Joint Commission-accreditation programs:
- Hospitals
- Critical access hospitals
- Ambulatory care
- Behavioral health care

For questions — including if your non-waived laboratory services complies with this laboratory accreditation survey requirement — contact your account executive at 630-792-5900.

Comment now on CLIA personnel, histocompatibility requirements
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) published a request for information (RFI) on items related to its Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) personnel requirements and histocompatibility requirements, many of which have not been updated since 1982.
The RFI seeks public comment on:

- Personnel requirements for:
  - Nursing degrees
  - Physical science degrees
  - Competency assessment
  - Laboratory training
  - Experience requirements and documentation
- Proficiency testing referral
- Histocompatibility
- Compliance and additional fees

CMS is accepting comments until March 12. The Joint Commission also intends to provide a comment on the RFI. The Joint Commission encourages its accredited laboratory organizations to share their feedback by sending an email to qualitylabs@jointcommission.org.

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

The PS chapter was first 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.

**EP Review Project Phase 4 yields more reductions**
Continuing review of the Laboratory Accreditation program manual as part of The Joint Commission’s EP Review Project Phase 4 revisions has resulted in consolidations that have led to a reduction in the number of elements of performance (EPs). The chapters reviewed were Document and Process Control (DC), Information Management (IM), and Performance Improvement (PI). These revisions will become effective in July 2018.

The EP Review Project is a multiphased component of Project REFRESH, a series of interrelated process improvement initiatives The Joint Commission has been conducting since 2016.

**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.
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. To find out more about accessing the Excel format, read the Dec. 13, 2017 issue of Joint Commission Online. For questions, contact your organization’s assigned account executive.

**Resources**

Visit with Laboratory Accreditation team at KnowledgeLab 2018

Be sure to meet with The Joint Commission’s Laboratory Accreditation Program team at upcoming industry events including the Clinical Laboratory Management Association’s KnowledgeLab 2018, May 6-8, at the Long Beach Convention Center, 300 E. Ocean Blvd. in Long Beach, California. The Joint Commission’s laboratory staff will be at Booth No. 322.

Learn more about KnowledgeLab 2018.

Spotlight on Success: Learn how laboratory accreditation helps Indiana hospital

Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center — based in Jasper, Indiana — has long utilized The Joint Commission’s laboratory accreditation to help in its mission to provide excellent health care to the communities it serves. Recently, the organization was featured in a “Spotlight on Success,” a Q&A highlighting:

- How the organization benefits through laboratory accreditation
- How the organization prepares for a survey
- What staff has learned during the accreditation process

Learn more by requesting a copy of the latest “Spotlight on Success” by emailing qualitylabs@jointcommission.org.