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Accreditation and certification

MedStar-Georgetown University Hospital is first for Patient Blood Management Certification

MedStar-Georgetown University Hospital in Washington D.C. is the nation’s first hospital to receive The Joint Commission’s Patient Blood Management Certification — a program designed by The Joint Commission and AABB (formerly known as the American Association of Blood Banks). Patient Blood Management Certification provides a third-party evaluation of programs based on the AABB Standards for a Patient Blood Management Program, and an evidence-based approach to optimizing care of patients who might need transfusions.

“This distinction is a testament to the hard work of our associates, who promote patient safety through a comprehensive blood management program that uses internationally accepted systems and techniques,” said Michael C. Sachtleben, president of MedStar Georgetown University Hospital. “Our patients benefit from this innovative certification that recognizes our commitment to continuously improve our processes and procedures when it comes to patient-centered blood management and services.”

Through the hard work of its team to achieve certification, MedStar-Georgetown University Hospital is focusing on reducing risk for its patients and improving patient outcomes — including reducing the number of days in the hospital and readmissions.

“The certification should help to coordinate and integrate practices related to transfusion and patient care throughout the hospital,” said Heather Hurley, executive director of the Laboratory Accreditation program at The Joint Commission.

Patient Blood Management Certification promotes patient safety and quality through the implementation of practices that can help to:
- Reduce unnecessary transfusions
- Improve patient outcomes
- Reduce lengths of stay and readmissions

Watch a video of Sachtleben congratulating the hospital’s team on achieving Patient Blood Management Certification. (Contact: qualityhospitals@jointcommission.org)

www.jointcommission.org/Laboratory_Accreditation_Program
Redesigned ESC form implemented for all programs
The Evidence of Standards Compliance (ESC) form has been redesigned to help organizations focus on describing the critical aspects of corrective actions they have taken to resolve Requirements for Improvement (RFIs) and ensure sustainability of those actions. The new form was rolled out July 24.

Organizations utilize the redesigned ESC form after any type of survey that results in RFIs. The improved ESC form — redesigned as part of Project REFRESH — has numerous benefits, including:

- New formatting that clearly and concisely states expectations for successful completion.
- A simplified layout that enables organizations to provide relevant information that better aligns with proven performance improvement methodologies.
- Flexibility that allows for organizations to implement corrective actions within their unique environments; however, it also provides guidance to hone in on key elements of effective compliance.
- Provisions of clear, concise and acceptable program-specific examples.
- An enhanced focus on sustained compliance.

The ESC form is available on an organization’s Joint Commission Connect™ secure extranet site, which includes resources to aid in successful completion of the new ESC form, such as:

- Updated ESC guidelines and instructions.
- A preventative analysis resource guide.
- Specific examples for each program on acceptable ESC responses.
- Updated ESC FAQs.

Questions can be directed to your organization’s Joint Commission account executive.

Quality and safety

Journal study: Improving blood transfusion practices saves $1 million annually at urban hospital
A new study in the August 2017 issue of The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety found that interventions to decrease the need for red blood cell (RBC) transfusions at the University of California San Diego Health was associated with an annual cost savings of more than $1 million at its institution.

The study, “Transfusing Wisely: Clinical Decision Support Improves Blood Transfusion Practices,” — by Ian Jenkins, MD, SFHM; Jay J. Doucet, MD; Brian Clay, MD; Patricia Kopko, MD; Donald Fipps, MS, MT (ASCP), DBB; Eema Hemmen, MPH; and Debra Paulson, MS — found that in addition to the estimated annual cost savings, the overall rate of RBC transfusions without exclusions per 1,000 patient-days decreased from 89.8 to 78.1 percent during the intervention period to 72.8 percent post intervention at the University of California San Diego Health.

The data also showed that for a subset of patients (those who were not within 12 hours of surgery and not admitted for gastrointestinal bleeding):

- The percentage of RBC transfusions in which two or more units were used decreased from 59.9 percent at baseline to 41.7 percent during the intervention period and to 19.7 percent post intervention.
- The percentage of RBC transfusion units administered for milder anemia (hemoglobin of 7 or higher) decreased from 72.3 to 57.8 percent during the intervention period to 38 percent post intervention.

For more on the study or to read an accompanying editorial, access the latest issue of the Journal.
Submit your questions for the next “Ask the Experts” webinar
If your laboratory isn’t currently accredited by The Joint Commission, you may have a lot of questions about pursuing accreditation. Now is the time to submit those questions for The Joint Commission’s next “Ask the Experts” webinar taking place later this year.

Our in-house laboratory accreditation experts will answer your questions, including:
  • What do I need to do to get started in pursuing Laboratory Accreditation?
  • What are the most frequently cited standards during a laboratory survey?

Submit your question and watch for webinar details to be announced this fall.

Webinar replay: Joint Commission president on safety culture and leadership
Guidance for health care leaders on how to build a safety culture in an organization was offered at a recent webinar featuring Mark R. Chassin, MD, FACP, MPP, MPH, president and chief executive officer of The Joint Commission. A replay of the webinar — Building Your Safety Culture: A Job for Leaders — with presentation slides is available on The Joint Commission’s website.

Leadership commitment is the first and most essential requirement for attaining a safety culture. It is up to leadership to ensure that all employees feel safe in bringing up and addressing patient safety concerns.

Without this environment of trust and respect, patients are significantly more likely to experience adverse outcomes of varying degrees of severity. Therefore, leaders must embed this culture throughout their hospital, health care system or health care organization.

This webinar is a complement to Sentinel Event Alert, Issue 57: The essential role of leadership in developing a safety culture.

You also may be interested in a Take 5 podcast with Anne Marie Benedicto, vice president for the Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare, discussing the important role that health care leaders play in attaining and maintaining a safety culture — which is one of the Center’s ongoing targeted initiatives. Listen to the podcast. [5:19]

New SAFER™ Matrix Resources portal: Gateway to understanding scoring methodology
The Joint Commission has created a one-stop shop for information and resources on the Survey Analysis for Evaluating Risk™ (SAFER™) Matrix, the scoring methodology that went into effect for all Joint Commission accreditation and certification programs on Jan. 1.

The SAFER™ Matrix Resources web portal features:
  • A SAFER™ webinar replay and slide deck that discusses the conception of the SAFER™ Matrix and includes examples to illustrate key concepts.
  • A Take 5 podcast that provides a foundational understanding of the SAFER™ Matrix and related information.
  • An interactive demo video that gives a walkthrough of the new SAFER™ Matrix tool located on an organization’s secure Joint Commission Connect® website.
  • A Frequently Asked Questions video that covers some of the most commonly asked questions on this topic.
These resources will help organizations:

- Understand the overall concept of the SAFER™ Matrix and identify key elements of the SAFER™ Matrix process.
- Learn how the SAFER™ Matrix is scored in the field.
- Access details surrounding the new Evidence of Standards Compliance (ESC) fields.
- Take advantage of ongoing free educational opportunities on this topic from The Joint Commission.

The SAFER™ Matrix’s primary benefit is that it helps organizations prioritize areas of risk, what to address and where to focus resources following a survey. It provides a single, comprehensive visual representation of survey findings, in which all Requirements for Improvement (RFIs) are plotted according to the likelihood of potential harm to patients, staff or visitors, and pervasiveness of the problem — based on surveyor observations. This allows surveyors to perform real-time, on-site evaluations of deficiencies. Placement of RFIs within the matrix determine the level of detail required within each RFI's Evidence of Standards Compliance follow-up.

View the SAFER™ Matrix Resources web portal. (Contact: safer@jointcommission.org)

Learn about available resources for workplace violence prevention

Health care workers are five times more likely to be victims of violence than workers in other occupations, according to a Bureau of Labor Statistics report.

The Joint Commission promotes prevention practices in its Workplace Violence Prevention and Emergency Management Resources portals. Resources contributed to the Workplace Violence Prevention portal from the field include:

- Sample policies related to armed intruder/active shooter situations, workplace violence and assault, bomb threats and more, provided by Western Connecticut Health Network.
- A presentation from Loma Linda University Health discussing its response to the 2015 San Bernardino mass shooting, and lessons learned as a result.

Organizations are invited to submit their workplace violence prevention materials to The Joint Commission for consideration for placement on the portal. Send your contributions to wpv_info@jointcommission.org.

The Joint Commission’s outreach on this issue is part of its mission and vision to continuously improve the quality and safety of health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, across all settings. It also supports an ongoing alliance with OSHA to provide health care workers and others in the health care industry with information, guidance and access to training resources to help them protect employees’ health and safety.