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Accreditation

Lab Central Connect® being discontinued; key features to be phased into lab application
Effective Jan. 1, 2017, The Joint Commission will discontinue the Lab Central Connect® customer portal. Lab Central Connect served as a location to store organizations’ survey-related documents. It provided for standardized entry of information required on surveys to minimize errors or surprises when the surveyors arrive.

Based on customer feedback over the last two years, The Joint Commission’s laboratory accreditation team determined a different direction will better meet customers’ needs. Previously, customers filled out the laboratory accreditation application and then entered additional information into Lab Central Connect.

Now, The Joint Commission is putting all of that information in one central location — the laboratory application. There will no longer be two separate logins, and the ease of use and time-saving aspects will benefit The Joint Commission’s accredited organizations.

Customers will now notice changes in the Lab application and be able to update the CLIA Lab Director by entering the information into the Lab application.

Other aspects of Lab Central Connect will be phased into the laboratory application over time.

Before the end of the year — Dec. 31, 2016 — organizations need to go into Lab Central Connect and:
• Make copies of everything stored in the document repository
• Export the Test System lists into either an Excel format or pdf file
• Export the personnel list into either an Excel format or pdf file

Customers will be unable to access to all information in Lab Central Connect on Jan. 1, 2017.

Learn more about laboratory accreditation. (Contact: qualitylabs@jointcommission.org)
Joint Commission no longer requiring organizations to send annual PT attestation
Starting Jan. 1, 2017, The Joint Commission will no longer require organizations to submit a signed attestation of annual verification of proficiency testing (PT). Currently, PT attestation is verified via an annual survey sent to accredited organizations by The Joint Commission.

Recently, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved The Joint Commission’s proposal to remove the following statement in a footnote for standard Quality System Assessment for Nonwaived Testing (QSA) 01.01.01, element of performance (EP) 1: “The Joint Commission annually verifies enrollment in a proficiency testing program onsite and by review of proficiency testing enrollment verification.”

Organizations should note that The Joint Commission will keep the reference to the CMS link for additional information on PT.

The Joint Commission will also continue to review the laboratory’s proficiency testing data during accreditation surveys to meet all Medicare requirements for laboratories, as well as to maintain records of the laboratory’s participation in a proficiency testing program as required by QSA.01.02.01, EP 4.

For more information, contact your organization’s account executive or email qualitylabs@jointcommission.org.

Resources

National Pathology Quality Registry from ASCP to launch in 2017
To provide laboratories with guideline-driven, quality measurement reporting procedures, the American Society for Clinical Pathologists will launch the National Pathology Quality Registry (NPQR) in 2017. The registry — currently offered at no charge to laboratories for the first year that it is in operation — will be open to any U.S.-based clinical, anatomic or combined pathology laboratory, and individual labs, hospital systems and reference labs.

As a national quality and benchmarking program, NPQR will capture data that measure adherence to clinical practice guideline recommendations, quality and performance standards, and appropriate use criteria for laboratories. The NPQR aims to be a tool for pathologists and laboratories that will help them:

- Identify areas for improvement
- Participate in government-required, pay-for-performance programs
- Create education programs

Ali Brown, MD, FASCP, medical director of the NPQR at ASCP, said this is the first registry of this kind for pathologists.

“With all the changes with the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) and the improvement activities category that has been added, we felt the time was better than ever,” Dr. Brown said. “Up until now, registries were very clinically- or primary care-focused. None of the measures really applied to pathology.”

ASCP realized early in the development of the NPQR that a huge focus would be on patient care and finding a way to bring pathology more to the forefront of direct patient care.

“We thought this would be a really meaningful way to help with lab-based quality guidelines,” Dr. Brown said.

The registry will provide participants with standard measures, as well as other materials for them to analyze performance.
The four initial categories for the registry are:
- Monitoring appropriate utilization of laboratory testing
- Improving pre-analytical processes
- Optimizing turnaround time and critical value reporting
- Assessing analytical and diagnostic accuracy

Dr. Brown said ASCP is currently seeking laboratories that want to be early adopters on the NPQR frontline, as pioneers and collaborators, for the launch.

Participants should be able to gain access to their laboratory or organization’s Laboratory Information System (LIS), in support of the goal to make the process as automated as possible.

“ASCP has been working with various LIS vendors early in the registry’s development to gain their feedback on the operability of the registry, and to explore concepts on how best to pull data from existing LIS systems,” Dr. Brown said. “There will likely be some unavoidable manual data entry for a few measures.”

“ASCP is looking forward to partnering with the laboratory community to improve the operations of our laboratories, with the ultimate goal being improved patient care.” Dr. Brown said.

Learn more about the registry or email your questions to Dr. Brown at Ali.Brown@ascp.org.

See you there!
Laboratory staff will be at the following meetings and conferences in 2016:
- California Society of Pathologist (Nov. 29-Dec. 3) in San Francisco, California