**REVISED: Accreditation Decisions for Organizations Undergoing Initial Surveys**

The Joint Commission accreditation process has traditionally included a range of decisions that apply to all organizations whether they are seeking to renew their accreditation or undergoing their first (initial)* Joint Commission survey. However, **effective immediately**, the decision process for any organization undergoing an initial Joint Commission survey may result in only two possible outcomes: **Accredited** or **Denial of Accreditation**.

The Joint Commission determined that simplifying and expediting the process to include only two possible outcomes for initial organizations better fits the accreditation process. Since the organizations have not been previously surveyed and accredited by The Joint Commission, the organization must demonstrate the capability to meet Joint Commission standards before they can be rendered an Accredited decision. Please note that organizations seeking to renew their accreditation are still subject to the full range of decisions: Denial of Accreditation, Preliminary Denial of Accreditation, Contingent Accreditation, Accreditation with Follow-up Survey, Preliminary Accreditation, and Accredited.

**Outcome: Accredited**

As noted in the accreditation manuals, an organization receives an Accredited decision when it “is in compliance with all applicable requirements at the time of the on-site survey or has successfully addressed all Requirements for Improvement (RFIs) in an Evidence of Standards Compliance (ESC) within 45 or 60 days following the posting of the Accreditation Survey Findings Report and does not meet any other rules for other accreditation decisions.” This policy is still in place for all organizations—including those undergoing their initial survey.

**Outcome: Denial of Accreditation**

The existing decision rules for Denial of Accreditation that still apply for organizations undergoing a resurvey have been simplified for organizations undergoing their initial survey. Essentially, organizations undergoing their initial survey that do not successfully address all RFIs in an ESC within 45 or 60 days will receive a decision of Denial of Accreditation.

During the 45- to 60-day time frame—that is, if the initial survey results in findings of deficiencies with Joint Commission requirements and/or Condition-level deficiencies with Medicare requirements—the decision for the organization is considered to be pending.

**Process Details**

Organizations found out of compliance with Joint Commission requirements during their initial survey are required to submit corrective action through an ESC. A successful ESC will then result in an Accredited decision; an unsuccessful ESC will result in a decision of Denial of Accreditation.

Organizations found with Condition-level deficiencies during their initial survey are required to undergo an initial Medicare survey. If no deficiencies—whether related to Joint Commission requirements or Medicare Conditions of Participation—are found during this initial Medicare survey, the organization receives an Accredited decision.

If Condition-level deficiencies are found during the initial Medicare survey, the organization receives a Denial of Accreditation decision. However, if the initial Medicare survey results in findings of deficiencies with Joint Commission requirements, the organization’s decision is again pending the submission of correct action through an ESC. A successful ESC will then result in an Accredited decision; an unsuccessful ESC will result in a decision of Denial of Accreditation.

An expanded description of this revised process will be published electronically for all programs via E-dition® this spring. For the ambulatory care, behavioral health care, home care, and hospital programs, the revised process will appear in print this spring in the 2015 Update 1 to the Comprehensive Accreditation Manuals. For the critical access hospital, laboratory, nursing care centers, and office-based surgery programs, the revised process will appear in print in fall 2015, as these programs no longer have a hard copy Subscription Update Service (see November 2014 Perspectives, pages 5 and 6). Questions may be directed to your organization’s assigned account executive at 630-792-3007.

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* An initial survey is defined as “an accreditation survey of an organization that has not been accredited by The Joint Commission for at least four months or an accreditation survey of an organization undergoing its first Joint Commission survey.”