How has The Joint Commission transformed since you started in 2008?

The work that we’ve done in robust process improvement (RPI) with LEAN and Six Sigma, and organizational change management has really transformed us as a company. We listen carefully to our customers to understand their needs, and then we create products and services to try to fulfill those needs. One example is Primary Care Medical Home Certification where physicians, nurse practitioners, psychologists and others can work in ambulatory care settings and manage populations of patients. There’s a lot of focus on the patient and the family.

How has The Joint Commission impacted health care?

Our primary contribution, is the ability to look ahead, identify risks for our customers, and give them strategies to be able to eradicate or at least reduce the risk. Also, we are oriented toward clinical management by the healthcare providers we work with. We will look at the perspective of the physician, the advanced practice registered nurse, the physical therapist and so on, and ask, ‘How does their work fit into clinical quality and safety? How does that all come together?’

In the large spectrum of health care, what makes ambulatory care unique?

Ambulatory care is critically important. Much of what we used to do, say, 20-25 years ago in an acute-inpatient setting, can actually be done safely in ambulatory with the right infection control management, medication management and protocols around the practitioners. I’ve had the great fortune of working with a number of our ambulatory customers. Many of whom are working across the continuum to lead patient population health management for chronic disease and illness. One example is the CVS Minute Clinics that are scattered all across the United States, which we’re fortunate enough to accredit. Today you can go to a clinic that’s just one town away, open 16-18 hours a day, and get seen by a credentialed, advance-practice registered nurse who is working with protocols under the auspices of the individual state licensure act. Who would have thought of that years ago?

More About 1980...Broadening the Accreditation Spectrum

- Appoints Elizabeth Flanagan as director of Accreditation Program for Ambulatory Health Care (AP/AHC)
- Expands the survey eligibility criteria to allow the accreditation of college or university health services
- Establishes 24-hour hotline to field urgent questions from its accredited organizations

The Joint Commission

- Six US embassy aides escape from Iran with Canadian help
- Ronald Reagan elected president
- Summer Olympics held in Moscow
- Winter Olympics held in Lake Placid
- Voyager I reaches Saturn, returning data on its many moons, as well as its more than 1,000 rings
- John Lennon is shot dead in New York City
- Ted Turner launches CNN, the first all-news network
- Best Picture: "Kramer vs. Kramer"
- Unemployment: 7.1%
- Cost of a first-class stamp: 15 cents
- Album of the Year: "52nd Street," Billy Joel

The World

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Have something to share about the past 40 years?

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