Revised Criterion for Including Physician Practices in Surveys

The Accreditation Committee of the Joint Commission’s Board of Commissioners approved a revision to the “Inclusion of Physician Practices in Survey” policy in “The Accreditation Process (ACC)” chapter of the comprehensive accreditation manuals for hospitals and critical access hospitals. Previously, Joint Commission policy required that a physician practice be included in the hospital’s survey if at least one of the following two criteria were present:

1. The physician practice is included in the hospital’s Medicare cost report as a provider-based practice. This criterion aligns with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) reporting requirements, because CMS requires that all services reported on a hospital’s cost report meet all hospital Conditions of Participation (CoPs).

2. The hospital or physician practice portrays to the public that the practice is part of the hospital.

Effective immediately for hospitals achieving initial accreditation—and effective January 1, 2014, for currently accredited hospitals—the second criterion is no longer required for including physician offices in a hospital or critical access hospital survey. The revised policy, shown in the box on page 5, is included in the 2013 Update 2 to the Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Hospitals (CAMH), the 2013 Update 2 to the Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Critical Access Hospitals (CAMCAH), and the fall E-dition® updates for hospitals and critical access hospitals.

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Please note: A hospital-affiliated physician practice not included on the hospital’s Medicare cost report that requests a Joint Commission survey may choose to be surveyed under the standards for either the Hospital (or Critical Access Hospital) Accreditation Program or the Ambulatory Care Accreditation Program.

Questions about the revised policy may be directed to Gail Weinberger, MA, director, Accreditation and Certification Policy and Administration, at gweinberger@jointcommission.org or 630-792-5766.

Revised Criterion for Including Physician Practices in Surveys (continued)

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Inclusion of Physician Practices in Survey
Physician practices are included in an accreditation survey only if the physician practice is included in the [critical access] hospital’s Medicare cost report as a provider-based (that is, not freestanding) practice.