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Patient safety

Joint Commission seeking nursing care centers for 12-month CDC-awarded contract study
In September, The Joint Commission received a 12-month contract from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to identify challenges and facilitators to implementing standardized measurement of *Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*) and other multidrug-resistant organisms in accredited nursing care centers.

In total, CDC awarded $14 million to 34 organizations in the United States as part of its *Antibiotic Resistance Solutions Initiative*.

Standardized measurement of infections is critical to improving health, enhancing patient safety, and reducing morbidity and mortality. Better monitoring of infection rates with comparative data in nursing homes, however, is needed to enhance consistency in surveillance and reporting.

To address this safety issue, The Joint Commission’s Department of Health Services Research is engaging in a study — *Implementing standardized measurement of infections in nursing homes: challenges and facilitators* — that aims to:
- Train and initiate National Healthcare Safety Network laboratory-identified event module data collection in a new cohort of nursing homes
- Measure organizational and individual characteristics and perceptions known to affect the ability to successfully implement quality improvement initiatives
- Identify challenges and facilitators to implementation and analyze these factors relative to organizational characteristics

The Joint Commission is recruiting accredited nursing care centers to take part in the project. For more information, contact Beth Ann Longo, RN, NHA, MBA, MSN, at blongo@jointcommission.org, Rene Thomas at 630-792-5161.

Accreditation and certification

JAMDA study: Joint Commission Nursing Home Accreditation predicts quality
Joint Commission accreditation is a significant predictor of nursing home quality, according to a study published in *JAMDA*, the official journal of AMDA — the Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine.

*The Joint Commission | Nursing Care Center Accreditation*
The study — “Comparing Public Quality Ratings for Accredited and Nonaccredited Nursing Homes” — compared 711 Joint Commission-accredited nursing homes with 14,926 non-accredited nursing homes using public data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Nursing Home Compare data set.

After controlling for the influences of facility size and ownership type, the findings showed Joint Commission accredited nursing homes with Post-Acute Care (PAC) Certification:

- Performed statistically better on the CMS star rating
- Had better performance than non-accredited nursing homes on each of the star rating component subscales
- Had fewer deficiencies than non-accredited nursing homes
- Were less likely to have deficiencies associated with immediate jeopardy or widespread deficiencies
- Had fewer payment denials and lower fines

“The results confirm findings from prior research in the literature, demonstrating a consistent pattern of superior performance among nursing homes accredited by The Joint Commission,” said Scott C. Williams, PsyD, director of the Health Services Research department at The Joint Commission, and lead author of the study. “We conducted the study following the redesign of The Joint Commission’s Nursing Care Center (NCC) Accreditation program in 2013 and the addition of a Post-Acute Care Certificate option, which took place around the same time that CMS modified the Nursing Home Compare Five-Star Quality Rating System in February 2015.”

“It was gratifying to see that the results continue to validate the value of Joint Commission accreditation and certification, first and foremost for the residents who deserve the best quality care and second for the organizations seeking accreditation,” Williams continued.

The Joint Commission’s NCC Accreditation program combines an enhanced patient- and resident-centered quality framework with collaborative on-site evaluation to help nursing homes proactively identify and address vulnerabilities to safeguard patients and residents. Joint Commission accredited NCC organizations also have the option to become certified for PAC or Memory Care. PAC recognizes organizations that provide advanced, rehabilitative services to patients or residents within the nursing home setting and Memory Care recognizes organizations that demonstrate competency in advanced dementia care services. (Contact: Gina Zimmermann, gzimmermann@jointcommission.org)

**Integrated Care Certification program expands to nursing care centers**

The Joint Commission has expanded applicability and updated standards for its Integrated Care Certification program. Effective Jan. 1, 2017 the program will be available to post-acute care nursing care center and home health settings. Prior to the updates, the program was applicable only to clinical integration among ambulatory, hospital and critical access hospital settings.

The updates include:

- Greater focus on functions and processes important to clinical care integration
- Promotion of common patient risk screening criteria
- Coordination of (not duplication of) case management efforts and care coordination
- Use of data to measure performance and drive improvement
- Option to include nursing care center and home health services in the scope of evaluation

Organizations certified under this program optimize patient outcomes through promotion and implementation of care coordination and collaboration among health care providers across the continuum.

View the updated standards. The revisions also will appear in the fall E-dition® update for the Integrated Care Certification Manual. (Contact: integratedcare@jointcommission.org)
The Joint Commission, Relias Learning debut online programs for quality-focused nursing homes

The Joint Commission and Relias Learning have unveiled a set of eight online learning programs that provide a convenient way to learn the step-by-step details of Joint Commission requirements related to Nursing Care Center Accreditation, Post-Acute Care Certification and Memory Care Certification.

Each module is approximately 60 minutes in length, and the series covers the guiding rationale of Joint Commission standards and requirements, including how they are structured and what is expected to successfully demonstrate compliance and required written documentation. Learners receive continuing education (CE) credits for each completed module. The modules include:

- Module 1: Powering Performance Excellence, An Overview of the Process
- Module 3: Powering Performance Excellence in Provision of Care, Treatment and Services, and Medication Management
- Module 4: Powering Performance Excellence in Leadership and Human Resources
- Module 5: Powering Performance Excellence in Infection Prevention and Control, National Patient Safety Goals and Information Management
- Module 6: Powering Performance Excellence in the Record of Care, Rights and Responsibilities of the Individual, Performance Improvement and Waived Testing
- Module 7: Powering Performance Excellence in Post-Acute Care Certification
- Module 8: Powering Performance Excellence in Memory Care Certification

“The online learning programs provide a how-to guide in a convenient and affordable manner,” said Gina Zimmermann, executive director of Nursing Care Center Accreditation at The Joint Commission. “While the modules are a great resource for quality-focused nursing homes preparing for accreditation or certification, they also can assist those struggling with specific quality issues or needing to orient new employees to the accreditation and certification process.”

Relias Learning is devoted to providing the tools necessary to build competencies and improve outcomes across the post-acute care continuum. Providing quality care begins with a skilled and trained workforce, said Greg Ives, director of partnerships at Relias Learning. Select modules of interest or the entire series may be purchased to fit an organization’s individual and unique needs. Learn more about pricing information.

Joint Commission partners with ADA on nursing care center surveyor education module

The Joint Commission recognizes that oral health care is a fundamental piece in the quality of life of residents and patients in nursing care centers. The Joint Commission has developed an educational module “Review of Assessment, Reassessment and Restorative Service Standards” for the nursing care center surveyors reviewing the assessment, reassessment and restorative standards. The American Dental Association provided valuable insight and expertise to the oral health care portion within this module. It is important that oral health is included in the assessment and reassessment process.

New and revised nursing home regulations released by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) earlier this year highlight the need for oral hygiene, because poor oral health care has been linked to diseases such as:

- Diabetes
- Cardiovascular disease
- Arthritis
- Neurodegenerative diseases
- Nutritional deficits

By addressing oral hygiene, it may improve patients’ quality of life, as well as potentially reduce their health care expenses down the road.
AHRQ releases new web-based resource for antimicrobial stewardship in nursing care centers
The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has released a web-based antimicrobial stewardship resource for nursing homes that aims to help decrease antibiotic overuse and resistance.

AHRQ estimates that up to three-fourths of antibiotics prescribed in nursing homes are unnecessary, and their overuse can lead to antibiotic resistance and more health care expenses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that at least 2 million people in the United States are infected by antibiotic-resistant bacteria each year.

The four toolkits in this AHRQ resource provide education and strategies for Nursing Care Centers (NCCs) to implement an antimicrobial stewardship plan.

The Joint Commission also has a new standard for antimicrobial stewardship — Medication Management (MM) 09.01.01, which will be applicable to NCCs — that will take effect Jan. 1, 2017, as well as the following other resources:

- Take 5 with The Joint Commission: In this podcast, Lisa Waldowski, an infection control specialist at The Joint Commission, discusses MM.09.01.01. [3:45]
- Antimicrobial Stewardship webpage
- Speak Up™: Antibiotics – Know the Facts
- R3 Report, Issue 8 – New antimicrobial stewardship standard