Certification

Health Care Staffing Services program to shift permanently to off-site review

After receiving a positive response from certified health care staffing services (HCSS) firms, The Joint Commission is planning to permanently implement an off-site review process for the certification program starting Jan. 1, 2022. The off-site review process was created in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The option for an on-site review will not be available for HCSS customers after Jan. 1, 2022. In addition, organizations unable to meet the technology requirements for an off-site certification review will not be eligible to apply for or seek recertification. Organizations can reapply for certification when they have the technology required for the off-site review process.

To participate in an off-site review, HCSS firms must:

- Sign a contract amendment to permit virtual surveys, which can be found on the organization's Joint Commission Connect site under the “Review Process” tab in the “Contracts” section.
- Conduct the review using Zoom as the meeting platform. All organization representatives participating in the off-site review must be able to download the Zoom application to the device(s) they are using for the review. All participants also must be able to share video through a built-in or external camera device.
- Have all documents required by the standards available electronically for viewing using the share screen capabilities of Zoom. This includes items such as contracts and personnel files. Any paper documents needed for the review must be scanned for viewing electronically, using the share screen capabilities of Zoom.
- Have a Microsoft email account to access a secure SharePoint folder accessible only to the organization and the assigned Joint Commission reviewer. They also will be provided with a list of documents required for the off-site review that must be uploaded no later than 72 hours prior to the first day of the review.
- Participate in a 30-minute dry run call with an account executive to test the technical capability for the off-site review. During this call, the account executive will ensure that the organization can share screens, access the SharePoint folder, test video capabilities, and review the Zoom video functionality.

The Joint Commission will continue to provide the primary certification contact a courtesy advance notice seven business days ahead of the scheduled review date by email for a recertification review. For an initial review, the primary certification contact will receive an advance notice of 30 business days before the scheduled review date by email. All notices are posted under the “Notification of Scheduled Events” link on the organization's Joint Commission Connect site.

Questions regarding these program changes may be directed to the organization’s account executive.

Revisions made for ventricular assist device program

Beginning Jan. 1, 2022, The Joint Commission will implement several changes to the requirements in its Advanced Certification for Ventricular Assist Devices (VADs) program, which includes changes based on the December 2020 decision memo released by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The Joint Commission also is making updates based on best practices in organizations that provide VADs.

View the prepublication standards.
Quality and safety

Journal: Implementing universal screening to identify suicide risk in pediatric patients
In a 2019 survey, it was revealed that 17.2% of high school students in the United States had seriously considered suicide in the past year, with nearly half of those students (7.4%) reportedly attempting it. While health care providers are in a prime position to identify teens at risk for suicide, many do not.

A new study in the August 2021 issue of The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety – “Implementing Universal Suicide Risk Screening in a Pediatric Hospital” – details the development and implementation of a hospital-wide program to identify teens at elevated risk for suicide and to connect them with services. Patients 12 years and older were screened for suicide risk using the Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ) at Children’s Mercy Kansas City, which includes two emergency departments, three urgent care clinics, and several ambulatory clinics. The Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) was used in mental health areas.

During the first year of screening, 138,598 screens were completed and 6.8% of screens were positive for elevated suicide risk. Any positive screens prompted a social worker to complete a more thorough assessment and determine next steps for those patients not being evaluated by a mental health care provider. Social workers also completed outreach to patients in the weeks following a positive screen.

The study authors concluded that “early involvement of stakeholders and hospital leaders and a robust response plan were essential to successful implementation of the suicide-screening program.”

Also featured in the August issue are:
- Root Cause Analysis of Adverse Events Involving Opioid Overdoses in the Veterans Health Administration (White River Junction VA Medical Center, White River Junction, Vermont)
- A Comprehensive Departmental Care Review Model: Requirements, Structure, and Flow (Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota)
- A Clinic-Based Quality Improvement Initiative to Increase Screening for Gonorrhea and Chlamydia in Adolescents (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina)
- A Quality Improvement Initiative to Reduce Rejected Laboratory Samples and Enhance Specimen Acceptability (Hamad Medical Corporation, Doha, Qatar)
- Developing Tools to Enhance the Adaptive Capacity (Safety II) of Health Care Providers at a Children's Hospital ( Nationwide Children's Hospital, Columbus, Ohio)
- Comparison of Patient Experience with Telehealth vs. In-Person Visits Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Northwestern Medicine, Chicago)
- Addressing Referrals to Dental Specialists (Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota)
- 2020 John M. Eisenberg Patient Safety and Quality Award recipients
  - An Interview with David M. Gaba
  - Saving Lives: The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Rapid Naloxone Initiative
  - Implementation and Effects of a Team-Based Quality Improvement Training Program Across a Health System: The Northwestern Medicine Academy for Quality and Safety Improvement

Access the Journal.

Resources

Up in the blogosphere with The Joint Commission
Dateline @ TJC — New Digital Learning Center: The DLC, a subscription-based platform, aims to provide health care organizations with a wide range of Joint Commission Resources (JCR) digital education and publication products. Learn more in a blog post by the JCR global education team.

Learn more about Joint Commission Resources’ offerings online or call 877-223-6866.