

## Facts about The Joint Commission

**Mission:** *To continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value.*

**Vision:** *All people always experience the safest, highest quality, best-value health care across all settings.*

Founded in 1951, The Joint Commission seeks to continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value. The Joint Commission evaluates and accredits more than 17,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States. An independent, not-for-profit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation's oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care. To earn and maintain The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval™, an organization must undergo an on-site survey by a Joint Commission survey team at least every three years. (Laboratories must be surveyed every two years.)

The Joint Commission is governed by a 29-member Board of Commissioners that includes physicians, administrators, nurses, employers, a labor representative, health plan leaders, quality experts, ethicists, a consumer advocate and educators. The Board of Commissioners brings to The Joint Commission diverse experience in health care, business and public policy. The Joint Commission's corporate members are the American College of Physicians, the American College of Surgeons, the American Dental Association, the American Hospital Association, and the American Medical Association. The Joint Commission employs approximately 1,000 people in its surveyor force, at its central office in Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois, and at a satellite office in Washington, D.C. The Washington office is The Joint Commission's primary interface with government agencies and with Congress, seeking and maintaining partnerships with the government that will improve the quality of health care for all Americans, and working with Congress on legislation involving the quality and safety of health care.

### Accreditation and certification services

The Joint Commission provides accreditation services for the following types of organizations:

- General, psychiatric, children's and rehabilitation hospitals
- Critical access hospitals
- Home care organizations, including medical equipment services, hospice services
- Nursing homes and other long term care facilities
- Behavioral health care organizations, addiction services
- Ambulatory care providers, including group practices, office-based surgery practices
- Independent or freestanding clinical laboratories

The Joint Commission also awards [Disease-Specific Care Certification](#) to organizations that provide disease-specific care and chronic care services, and an advanced level of certification is offered for: chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart failure, inpatient diabetes, primary stroke centers, lung volume reduction surgery, and ventricular assist device for destination therapy. The Joint Commission also has a Health Care Staffing Services Certification Program.

### Benefits of Joint Commission accreditation and certification

- Strengthens community confidence in the quality and safety of care, treatment and services
- Provides a competitive edge in the marketplace
- Improves risk management and risk reduction
- Provides education on good practices to improve business operations

- Provides professional advice and counsel, enhancing staff education
- Enhances staff recruitment and development
- Recognized by insurers and other third parties
- May fulfill regulatory requirements in select states

For more information, see the fact sheets on “[Benefits of Joint Commission Accreditation](#)” and “[Benefits of Joint Commission Certification](#).”

### **Standards and performance measurement**

Joint Commission standards address the organization’s level of performance in key functional areas, such as patient rights, patient treatment, medication safety and infection control. The standards focus on setting expectations for an organization’s actual performance and for assessing its ability to provide safe, high quality care. Standards set forth performance expectations for activities that affect the safety and quality of patient care. If an organization does the right things and does them well, there is a strong likelihood that its patients will experience good outcomes. The Joint Commission develops its standards in consultation with health care experts, providers, measurement experts, purchasers, and consumers.

Introduced in February 1997, The Joint Commission’s [ORYX®](#) initiative integrates outcomes and other performance measurement data into the accreditation process. ORYX measurement requirements are intended to support Joint Commission accredited organizations in their quality improvement efforts. Performance measures are essential to the credibility of any modern evaluation activity for health care organizations. They supplement and help guide the standards-based survey process by providing a more targeted basis for the regular accreditation survey, for continuously monitoring actual performance, and for guiding and stimulating continuous improvement in health care organizations. Some accredited organizations are required to submit performance measurement data on a specified minimum number of measure sets or non-core measures, as appropriate, to The Joint Commission through a Joint Commission listed ORYX vendor (also known as a performance measurement system). For more information, see “[Facts about ORYX](#).”

### **Education and information**

[Joint Commission Resources](#) is a global, knowledge-based organization that provides innovative solutions designed to help health care organizations improve patient safety and quality. An affiliate of The Joint Commission, JCR is the official publisher and educator of The Joint Commission. JCR provides expertise on the many issues organizations face in a challenging health care environment through a variety of product and services including: education programs, publications and multimedia products, its Continuous Service Readiness program, comprehensive health care consulting and custom education, and accreditation and consulting for organizations abroad. The Joint Commission and JCR maintain strict policies that prohibit The Joint Commission from sharing any confidential information about accredited organizations with JCR. The fact that an organization has obtained services from JCR is kept completely separate from Joint Commission accreditation decisions.

The Joint Commission’s [Quality Check® Web site](#) is a comprehensive guide to health care organizations in the United States. Joint Commission accredited and certified organizations are easily identified by The Joint Commission’s [Gold Seal of Approval™](#). Quality Check includes each accredited organization’s most recent Quality Report. This report provides: detailed information about an organization’s performance and how it compares to similar organizations; the organization’s accreditation or certification decision and the effective dates of the decision; programs accredited and certified by The Joint Commission, and programs or services recognized by other organizations; compliance with The Joint Commission’s National Patient Safety Goals; special quality awards; and, for hospitals, performance on National Quality Improvement Goals. For more information, see “[Facts about Quality Check® and Quality Reports](#).”

### **For more information**

The Joint Commission [Web site](#) includes an extensive directory; just click on “Contact Us.” The general phone number is (630) 792-5000 and the Customer Service number is (630) 792-5800.