CMS Recognizes The Joint Commission’s Critical Access Hospital Accreditation

(OAKBROOK TERRACE, Ill. – October 19, 2011) The Department of Health and Human Services’ Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has again granted The Joint Commission deeming authority for the accreditation of critical access hospitals.

The CMS designation means that critical access hospitals accredited by The Joint Commission may choose to be “deemed” as meeting Medicare and Medicaid certification requirements. CMS found that The Joint Commission’s standards for critical access hospitals meet or exceed those established by the Medicare and Medicaid program. CMS’ notice of approval, which was published September 23 in the Federal Register, becomes effective November 21, 2011 and runs through November 21, 2017.

“The Joint Commission is pleased to once again receive this recognition for its accreditation of critical access hospitals, which are vital to the health of Americans, especially residents of rural areas,” says Mark R. Chassin, M.D., FACP, M.P.P., M.P.H., president, The Joint Commission. “This public-private collaboration between CMS and The Joint Commission creates the necessary quality and safety oversight framework for these hospitals.”

Critical access hospitals have no more than 25 acute care beds and have an annual average length of stay per patient of 96 hours. These hospitals, which are typically located more than 35 miles from another hospital, receive cost-based reimbursement from Medicare.

Accreditation is voluntary and seeking deemed status through accreditation is an option, not a requirement. Organizations seeking Medicare approval may choose to be surveyed either by an accrediting body, such as The Joint Commission, or by state surveyors on behalf of CMS. All deemed status surveys are unannounced.
In addition to critical access hospitals, The Joint Commission has federal deeming authority for advanced diagnostic imaging, ambulatory surgery centers, clinical laboratories, durable medical equipment suppliers, home health, hospice, hospitals and psychiatric hospitals.

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 19,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States, including more than 10,300 hospitals and home care organizations, and more than 6,500 other health care organizations that provide long term care, behavioral health care, laboratory and ambulatory care services. The Joint Commission also provides certification of more than 2,000 disease-specific care programs, primary stroke centers, and health care staffing services. An independent, not-for-profit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation’s oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care. Learn more about The Joint Commission at www.jointcommission.org.