

The Competitive Advantages of Home Care Accreditation with The Joint Commission

A vital strategy for financial, clinical and operational success



The Joint Commission

 Home Health Care News



The Competitive Advantages of Home Care Accreditation with The Joint Commission: A vital strategy for financial, clinical and operational success

There is something deeply personal about care in the home. Patients need to trust providers to enter their home to give them the care that they need, without having to sacrifice any of the quality or safety they'd experience as an inpatient.

Home care providers know that the key to navigating this path is making their industry's math work for them: balancing the cost of care, a staffing shortfall and the need to tailor operations to value-based models, all while being constantly evaluated by patients and family members. How can providers grow their market share in a competitive industry while steering through these potential roadblocks?

The answer: home care accreditation from The Joint Commission. The Joint Commission helps providers improve their outcomes, build consistency, and reduce risk. Accreditation also helps deliver the dependable, value-based care that's essential in today's payment landscape.

In this white paper, you will learn how Joint Commission accreditation helps home-based care providers move the needle in three key areas:

- ✔ **Safety and quality**
- ✔ **Financial success**
- ✔ **Clinical success**



Moving the needle on safety and quality

How Joint Commission accreditation impacts home care performance excellence

Joint Commission accreditation is a home care provider’s roadmap to delivering quality care, while strengthening operational performance. Accreditation itself is made up of two main factors: the standards that provide the operational framework, and the survey that demonstrates a provider’s performance against those standards.

But how exactly does The Joint Commission make a demonstrable difference in quality, safety and efficiency for home care providers? “Simply put, no one knows home care like The Joint Commission,” says Patrick Phelan, National Sales Leader, Post-Acute and Ambulatory Services in the Division of Business Development, Government & External Relations at The Joint Commission. “Our Gold Seal is a distinction of quality that’s recognized worldwide. We’re proud to be synonymous with the strongest safety and quality standards in home care.”

“ I’ve dealt with The Joint Commission for many years, and I really enjoy a lot of the surveyors’ knowledge and expertise.”
— MARK MIKHAEL
CHIEF PHARMACY OFFICER, CAREPATH RX

What Our Customers Say

Customer Loyalty Scores: 2022 Results					
97.6%	97.6%	96.9%	96.6%	96.1%	94.7%
Positive overall accreditation experience	Positive impact on ability to provide safe, high-quality care	Positive impact on ability to provide safe, high-quality care	Benefit from the external validation of organizational performance	Found educative value in their accreditation survey	Would recommend Joint Commission accreditation to a colleague
Rating of 7 or higher on a 0-10 scale. Results of 2022 Customer Loyalty and Satisfaction Survey from Joint Commission accredited Home Care organizations.					

The Standards

Developed by home care clinicians and nationally recognized experts, Joint Commission standards are considered the industry benchmark for quality and safety. The comprehensive structure of the standards addresses the many facets of both clinical and non-clinical areas that are vital to home care agency operations.

“I believe in the program. I believe that the minimum standards equalize everyone, and then the above-and-beyond standards are what show your commitment and dedication to the organization and to the patient,” says Angel Vargas, Vice President of Care at Home for Kaiser Permanente. “We can always do bare minimum, and accreditation allows you to go above and beyond.”

The Survey Process

Organizations voluntarily invite and partner with The Joint Commission to come into their organization every three years to evaluate their operations to improve the quality of care, efficiency, and effectiveness of their services. Through the on-site survey process, surveyors go deeper into an organization’s facilities and workflows than state health inspectors to ensure that the care and operations meet the standards’ benchmarks.

The Joint Commission’s surveyor team is made up of seasoned industry experts with extensive hands-on clinical and operational backgrounds, and they know how to support providers while troubleshooting common obstacles. All surveyors are employed in-house, and they’re continually trained to serve as collaborative best-practice educators during the survey experience, allowing them to bring more field-tested leading practices to help drive actionable insights.

“I’ve dealt with The Joint Commission for many years, and I really enjoy a lot of the surveyors’ knowledge and expertise,” says Mark Mikhael, Chief Pharmacy Officer, CarepathRX. “Even if there are things that may not be applicable to the standard, they share some of those pearls of wisdom just for better patient outcomes. That has always been very valuable input to improve the program.”

The onsite survey process...

- Follows an individual’s interaction with the provider
- Offers in-depth, real-time analysis of the organization’s strengths and challenges
- Provides thorough, written evaluation with practical, evidence-based strategies





Moving the needle on financial success

How Joint Commission accreditation boosts home care quality and profitability

Profitability is too often the elephant in the home care room, and with good reason. Care providing is mission-driven, yet that care is not possible without a profitable operation. Accreditation from The Joint Commission can help home care providers reach those financial goals in three significant ways:

1. Federal/State/Payer recognitions
2. Referrals
3. Market differentiation



Path to Financial Goals #1: Federal/State/Payer Recognitions for Home Care Accreditation

Home care quality has always been under the public microscope. It's not enough anymore for operators to self-report their data to the government. Lawmakers and regulators will simply not accept a world where providers are paid to provide substandard care. As states, insurers and payers look for ways to identify and reward high-quality care, Joint Commission accreditation is commonly used as a condition of payment approval, contract eligibility and network participation. Joint Commission customers even qualify for exclusive discounts on business expenses.

How Joint Commission accreditation satisfies...

Federal Recognitions	State Recognitions	Payer Recognitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMS recognizes The Joint Commission as a deeming authority for the accreditation of home health, hospice, durable medical equipment and home infusion therapy providers, meaning TJC standards meet or exceed CMS standards. • As a result, organizations seeking Medicare approval can choose to be surveyed by The Joint Commission without being required to undergo additional state surveys, ensuring streamlined and speedy CMS reimbursement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For certain service types, Joint Commission accreditation is recognized in California, Florida, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin as satisfying the requirements for obtaining initial state license. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From fee-for-service Medicare to value-based payment models, payers want to reward home care operators that keep patients healthy and safe. Joint Commission accreditation is one of the ways these payers measure health and safety. • Various liability insurers, such as One80 Intermediaries / Manchester Specialty, offer discounts on coverage to Joint Commission accredited providers, where allowable by state law.



Path to Financial Goals #2: Referrals

Home care organizations receive most of their referrals from hospitals, which favor providers with the highest quality and safety standards. Aligning more directly with referral partners helps drive those referrals to keep business growing.

“One of the things we have resoundingly heard from franchisees that are accredited is that they’re going to get a referral from a hospital quicker,” says LaNita Knoke, RN, BS, CMCN, RPCF, former Vice President of Clinical Excellence at Right at Home, LLC. “They know who The Joint Commission is, they know they’re a gold standard. They [think], ‘If they’re Joint Commission-accredited, I don’t even have to know their standards. I know there’s an increased quality there. That’s where I want to put my patients.’”

Path to Financial Goals #3: Market Differentiation

The Joint Commission Gold Seal of Approval® is health care’s most widely recognized quality and safety distinction. Among consumers and referrers, recognition for Joint Commission accreditation is higher than anyone else, so demonstrating a commitment to the highest quality care strengthens performance both inside and outside the organization.

Consumers constantly look for ways to validate the quality of care from a home care agency. Achieving accreditation makes a strong statement to the community about an organization’s efforts to provide the highest quality services, helping differentiate providers from their competition.

Earning accreditation also allows for increased reliability of training and performance, helping providers attract and retain qualified, dedicated caregivers and staff, helping providers stand out in the crowded home care market.

“During the accreditation process, not only is there somebody from the outside evaluating the care that you’re providing, but they’re also providing you with resources. It’s priceless.”

—MINDY PRESTIA, REGIONAL QUALITY DIRECTOR,
HOME HEALTH & HOSPICE KAISER PERMANENTE



Moving the needle on clinical success

Joint Commission customers have industry-leading clinical outcomes

Joint Commission customers have the best outcomes in home care. In 2022, the journal Home Health Care Management & Practice published a validation study, comparing the clinical outcomes of Joint Commission-accredited home care providers against providers who were not Joint Commission-accredited.

The 2022 study, which confirmed the results of a similar 2018 study, examined how standardization leads to enhanced consistency, stronger employee training and reduced risk. Over three years of the study, Joint Commission-accredited customers delivered stronger outcomes compared to their peers.

This result remained consistent across a broad range of process and outcome measures:

- **Stronger overall performance:** Higher CMS star rating scale and overall quality rating
- **Higher quality:** Better scores on 11 of 14 OASIS HHC measures
- **Better outcomes:** Lower rehospitalization and unplanned emergency care rates

Not only critical to the clinical capabilities, these outcomes play an important role in referrals, patient satisfaction scores and value-based payment models as both public and private payers track these very metrics to determine which providers will be rewarded in their payment models.

Joint Commission home care accreditation, by the numbers

Accreditation is just one offering from The Joint Commission; there are many options available for organizations looking for more support, all based on The Joint Commission's extensive home care expertise:

- More than 70 years' experience
- More than 20,000 accredited organizations
- 4,000+ accredited home care organizations
- 100+ dedicated home care nurses, respiratory therapists and clinicians
- 4,000+ surveys per year, on average



Education and Software

High-Reliability Programs

Advanced, Disease-Specific Certifications

Community-Based Palliative Care Certifications

Accreditation



Moving the needle on operational efficiency

How accreditation from The Joint Commission helps your business grow

Joint Commission standards help providers develop strategies to address the most complex issues and identify key vulnerabilities in the patient care experience. Developed with input from health care professionals, providers, consumers and other experts, the standards ensure a comprehensive review of the patient care process.

Joint Commission accreditation helps home care providers derive measurable value from standardization of processes in four main ways:

- **Decrease patient and staff harm:** Using evidence-based practices consistently can prevent inadvertent harmful events.
- **Reduce risk of error:** Health care staffers have a long history of doing “work-arounds” and customizing approaches to their work. Standardized practices help simplify choices, reduce caregiver confusion and minimize inadvertent errors.
- **Improve staff productivity:** Standardized practices can introduce a new level of efficiency among employees, as consistent processes contribute to accountability.
- **Control costs:** Research has shown that as much as 30% of health care dollars goes to waste. Accreditation’s framework helps organizations overcome operational inefficiencies and reduce waste.

“During the accreditation process, not only is there somebody from the outside evaluating the care that you’re providing, but they’re also providing you with resources,” says Mindy Prestia, Regional Quality Director, Home Health and Hospice, Kaiser Permanente. “They’re helping you become a highly reliable organization, educate your staff or improve the outcomes for your patients. They share things that they’ve seen across the country. And I think that in and of itself is invaluable. It’s priceless.”

The power of single-source accreditation

The Joint Commission offers accreditation and certification options across the continuum of care, so providers serving multiple disciplines can work with a single accreditor. There are no set annual application periods — organizations can apply throughout the year, and most organizations are able to receive The Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval® on their first survey.

Lastly, non-prescriptive standards allow home care providers to meet requirements based on their own resources and capabilities, while allowing them to customize their processes to their own specific service area, patient population, and service line offerings.

Exclusive data management tools

Unique to The Joint Commission is its Survey Analysis for Evaluating Risk® (SAFER®) reporting. Free and exclusively available to Joint Commission-accredited organizations, these powerful and complimentary business intelligence tools allow providers to discover patterns and trends through a one-stop resource.

Included in all survey reports is the SAFER® Matrix, which plots survey findings on a matrix according to how prevalent the issue is and its likelihood to cause harm. This comprehensive visual representation of survey findings enables providers to reveal areas of higher risk and identify potential for widespread quality initiatives.

The SAFER® Dashboard aggregates survey findings at all organizational levels to provide a comprehensive view of performance. Organizations can compare metrics over time and against peers, helping them plan, allocate and deploy critical resources more effectively.

How SAFER® reporting helps providers make data-driven decisions

- **Discover patterns and trends.** View aggregate survey findings at the corporate, multi-organization* and program level
- **Performance metrics.** Compare current and historical data to help track performance
- **Data visualization.** Visual representations help users consume data more easily
- **Reporting.** Easily share data with other stakeholders without the need for manual entry
- **Compare data to your peers.** Joint Commission national accreditation comparison data is available on-demand

* as applicable





An ongoing partnership

As home care organizations grow, scale, and integrate services to meet demand, Joint Commission accreditation can strengthen their ability to deliver consistently safe, high-quality care. The Joint Commission offers the industry's most proven and trusted framework, ensuring the best possible outcomes and performance.

The team at The Joint Commission offers unmatched resources and learning opportunities for quality improvement efforts, providing ongoing support and best practices to keep your organization ahead of the pack – whatever the next clinical or operational curveball may be.

To learn more, visit:



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