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## A look at The Joint Commission

# CMS recognizes Joint Commission ASC accreditation

Surgeons who seek accreditation for their ambulatory surgery center (ASC) from The Joint Commission can be ensured of the accreditation program's continuing "deemed" status option. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has again granted The Joint Commission deeming authority for ASCs for its maximum six-year period.

The CMS designation means that ASCs accredited by The Joint Commission will be deemed as meeting Medicare certification requirements. CMS found that The Joint Commission's standards for ASCs meet or exceed those established for the Medicare and Medicaid programs. CMS estimated in 2007 that approximately 4,600 ASCs participate in Medicare.

"This public-private collaboration between CMS and The Joint Commission provides quality oversight for ASCs, which are increasingly important as patients undergo surgical procedures in freestanding centers, that are often owned and operated by surgeons, outside of the traditional hospital setting," says Michael Kulczycki, executive director of The Joint Commission's Ambulatory Care Accreditation Program. "It is also significant that this is the third time CMS has granted The Joint Commission's ASC

program deeming authority for the maximum six-year term, sending a strong signal about its confidence in our accreditation process."

The federal government's Final Notice granting the deemed status option to The Joint Commission for its accredited ASCs was published in the *Federal Register* on November 14, 2008. The Joint Commission has been granted deeming authority for ASCs since 1996.

Accreditation is voluntary and seeking deemed status through accreditation is an option, not a requirement. Beginning in 2007, organizations seeking entry into the Medicare program must be certified initially by one of four accrediting bodies, including The Joint Commission, that have been

awarded deeming authority by CMS. For subsequent surveys, organizations 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.

Established in 1975, The Joint Commission Ambulatory Accreditation Program accredits more than 1,600 freestanding organizations that offer surgical, diagnostic/therapeutic, and medical/dental services. More information about the program is available on The Joint Commission Web site at [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org) or contact Michael Kulczycki at 630/792-5286 or [mkulczycki@jointcommission.org](mailto:mkulczycki@jointcommission.org).



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