

New for 2009: Accreditation decision methodology changes

Hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers that are surveyed this year can expect a change in the way their accreditation decision is determined.

In the past, thresholds were established for the number of standards an organization could be out of compliance with before triggering a recommendation for a conditional or preliminary denial of accreditation decision.

As part of The Joint Commission's Standards Improvement Initiative—a multiyear improvement project to enhance the standards—a new scoring model was developed that focuses on the “criticality” of survey findings rather than on the volume of findings. This new model uses the number of noncompliant standards to determine whether an organization's survey findings should

be subject to a more intense review by Joint Commission central office staff.

The revised process also evaluates the magnitude and nature of the survey findings to determine if systemic problems exist across the organization (that is, similar issues identified across multiple departments or key systems).

Program-specific thresholds, based on the size and complexity of the surveyed organization and as measured in survey days, are used to determine if the survey findings should be reviewed by the central office staff. The review can result in one of the following outcomes:

- Issue an Accreditation Survey Findings Report with or without requirements for improvement; all requirements for improvement must be addressed by the organization

through the Evidence of Standards Compliance (ESC) process.

- If the magnitude and severity of the survey findings is thought to warrant intensive follow-up with the organization, including a focused follow-up survey, a recommendation for conditional accreditation will be proposed for consideration by The Joint Commission's Accreditation Committee.

- If an immediate threat to life exists within the organization or a situational decision rule was met, a recommendation for preliminary denial of accreditation will be proposed to the Accreditation Committee for its consideration.

For more information on the scoring and decision process, call The Joint Commission at 630/792-5900.