

## NEW IDENTITY FOR JOINT COMMISSION!!

by Dave Gourley RRT



Just as our healthcare organizations have experienced growth and evolution over the past two decades, the Joint Commission (JCAHO) has also adapted to the changing healthcare environment. Dennis S. O'Leary, MD, President of the Joint Commission for the past twenty years, has released a letter to all healthcare colleagues regarding ongoing changes at The Joint Commission. Dr. O'Leary is planning his retirement after successfully leading The Joint Commission through major expansion and changes since the 1980's. The Joint Commission Board of Commissioners has been using a document entitled, "The Now and Future Joint Commission" to create a framework for recruiting and selecting the next President of The Joint Commission.

The most visible change at The Joint Commission is the new brand identity. Originally named the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals, in 1988 the corporate name was changed to the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO, or commonly referred to in the healthcare community as "JAYCO"). In an effort to simplify the name, and acknowledge the widespread recognition in the healthcare arena, JCAHO has officially changed its name to The Joint Commission. Along with the name change, The Joint Commission has adopted a new logo and tag line. "Helping Health Care Organizations Help Patients" has replaced the old tag line of "Setting the Standard for Quality in Healthcare". These

changes in identity for The Joint Commission are meant to more accurately reflect the value of accreditation, and also, the portfolio of mission-related services that The Joint Commission has been promoting over the past decade.

If you have questions about the new brand or suggestions for further improving The Joint Commission's accreditation activities, please let us know by e-mailing us at [Brand@jointcommission.org](mailto:Brand@jointcommission.org). The "Jayco" extranet also has a new name - The Joint Commission Connect. Click on the Joint Commission Connect logo to access the extranet website.

While The Joint Commission is still recognized as the world's largest healthcare accreditation body, and maintains a distinguished reputation for its accreditation services, it became obvious over the past several years that accreditation itself was not enough to achieve the mission of The Joint Commission. "The mission of The Joint Commission is to continuously improve the safety and quality of care provided to the public through the provision of health care accreditation and related services that support performance improvement in health care organizations."

Four major categories of supporting activities have evolved over the past twenty years, in addition to healthcare accreditation: Performance Measurement, Patient Safety, Information Dissemination and Public Policy Initiatives.

Accreditation, through a thorough and relevant evaluation process, continues to be the method that The Joint Commission uses to demonstrate its "core competency". The new accreditation process, introduced in 2004 under the Shared Visions/New Pathways initiative is considered well designed at this point, although some refinements in standards are expected. The overall reaction to the new survey process, including the unannounced survey process, has been positive.

Performance measurement has been part of the Joint Commission process since 1986, and is recognized as the foundation for all quality improvement activities. The Joint Commission plans to continue working with regulatory bodies on expanded performance measurement requirements to correspond with the expanded measures recently adopted by the Hospital Quality Alliance. The Quality Check website serves as a publicly accessible outlet for performance measurement data.

Patient safety has become an increasingly important function of The Joint Commission since the early 1990s. With the Institute of Medicine's report, "To Err is Human", and several well publicized serious adverse events, the spotlight was placed on actions that The Joint Commission to ensure patient safety. This resulted in the numerous initiatives, including the Sentinel Event policy and the establishment of the National Patient Safety Goals.

Information dissemination activities are an essential part of The Joint Commission's responsibility to the general public. Disclosure of organization specific information is a catalyst to improved performance in healthcare organizations. As we hear increasing calls for transparency regarding performance and quality, The Joint Commission is well established to provide this information, beginning in 1994 with the Performance Reports.

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societies, The American Academy of Sleep Medicine, The Association of Professional Technologists and Sleep Research Society are fiscally sound, strong, and thought leaders in both the medical field and general public. It is important that we continue to support our professional societies in whatever capacity we can. Our professional societies have professional administrators and lobbyists who forward our mission and goals on a day to day basis. We must continue to support our professional societies monetarily and through volunteer work as much as possible. However at the same time we should accept the challenge and opportunities to help the general public in terms of public awareness and helping formulate public health policy. It is important to remember that helping patients was the reason why we all got into this field to begin with. Sleep disorders and sleep deprivation is still considered by many to be the largest unrecognized public health problem in this country.

I have never told Dr. Dement this but I love the old man and would still go after the largest windmill. However the reality is I cannot keep up with his energy and passion and therefore am requesting help. With the beginning of every year many of us take stock of our lives and make resolutions to improve our personal lives but wouldn't it be better if we also took stock of our professional lives and resolved to improve the lot of others? Therefore I am urging each and every one of you to become advocates for sleep in your professional societies and the National Sleep Foundation. I can promise you that you will not be paid, not be recognized, not be appreciated, but you will have the personal satisfaction of helping so many other people you will never meet.

By the way, the first week of this year I took my son to the Cleveland Museum of Art to see Barcelona, a traveling exhibit of art from Spain, which among others included paintings from Pablo Picasso. It seems that on that day long ago in 1988 I also got hooked on his art.

*Frank Roman MD is a diplomat of the American Board of Sleep Medicine and a Partner, Neurosurgery and Neurology Associates of Massillon, OH. Dr. Roman also received his law degree from the University of Akron Law School.*

*New Identity... Continued from previous page*

The newest supporting activity of The Joint Commission is the Public Policy Initiatives. Launched in 2001 with a major study of the nurse staffing crisis, The Joint Commission acknowledged some significant health care quality and patient safety issues. Each Public Policy initiative involves an expert roundtable, a national summit, issuing of a white paper, and implementation of follow-up strategies. To date, The Joint Commission has convened nine Roundtables and issued four white papers. The public policy initiatives will continue, as there is no shortage of topics in need of study and review.

This is the plan for transition of The Joint Commission's leadership over the next year. Similar to our own organizations, we can anticipate virtually continuous change in the accreditation body also. In fact, the rapidity of change is likely to increase in the short term. There has been an outcry from the general public, legislators and policy makers, and the healthcare community for a higher priority on health care quality and patient safety. This is also the plan for The Joint Commission.

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