

Facts about Primary Stroke Center Certification

The Joint Commission's Primary Stroke Center Certification Program, launched in December 2003, was developed in collaboration with the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association (AHA/ASA). As of January 1, 2011, there are more than 800 certified primary stroke centers in 49 states. Certification is available only to stroke programs in Joint Commission-accredited acute care hospitals.

The Certificate of Distinction for Primary Stroke Centers recognizes centers that make exceptional efforts to foster better outcomes for stroke care. It is The Joint Commission's first advanced certification program. Programs applying for advanced certification must meet the requirements for Disease-Specific Care Certification plus additional, clinically specific requirements and expectations. Certified primary stroke centers:

- Use a standardized method of delivering care based on the Brain Attack Coalition recommendations for establishment of primary stroke centers.
- Support a patient's self-management activities.
- Tailor treatment and intervention to individual needs.
- Promote the flow of patient information across settings and providers, while protecting patient rights, security and privacy.
- Analyze and use standardized performance measure data to continually improve treatment plans.
- Demonstrate their application of and compliance with the clinical practice guidelines published by the [AHA/ASA](#) or equivalent evidence-based guidelines.

Certification process

On-site certification reviews are conducted by reviewers with expertise in stroke care. The certification decision is based on the evaluation of standards, clinical practice guidelines and performance measurement activities. Primary Stroke Centers that successfully demonstrate compliance in all three areas are awarded certification for a two-year period. At the end of the first year, the organization is required to attest to its continued compliance with standards and evidence of performance measurement and improvement activities. To maintain certification, the cycle repeats with an on-site review conducted every two years and a bi-annual submission of an acceptable assessment of compliance by the organization.

Standards

The standards are published in the *Disease-Specific Care Certification Manual*. They incorporate the "Recommendations for the Establishment of Primary Stroke Centers" developed by the Brain Attack Coalition. The chapters address:

- Program management
- Delivering or facilitating clinical care
- Supporting self-management
- Clinical information management
- Performance improvement and measurement

Performance measurement

Certified primary stroke centers must collect and report on eight National Inpatient Hospital Quality Measures for stroke. Data are submitted quarterly to The Joint Commission through the secure extranet site no later than 45 days following the end of the calendar quarter. The eight measures include:

- Venous thromboembolism (VTE) prophylaxis
- Discharged on antithrombotic therapy
- Anticoagulation therapy for atrial fibrillation/flutter
- Thrombolytic therapy
- Antithrombotic therapy by end of hospital day two
- Discharged on statin medication

- Stroke education
- Assessed for rehabilitation

The measures and definitions are in the [Specifications Manual for National Hospital Inpatient Quality Measures](#). Certified programs must use the **current** version of the manual which is updated twice yearly. Future versions of the manual are posted six months prior to the effective date. Revisions called "Release Notes" show all the changes made to a particular version. Questions about core measure specifications can be submitted to the [Performance Measurement Q&A Forum](#).

The measures have been endorsed by the National Quality Forum and approved as a core measure set for use in the Joint Commission's ORYX program. For more information, go to the [website](#).

Government recognition of Joint Commission Primary Stroke Center Certification

As of January 1, 2011, 11 states require or recognize The Joint Commission's Primary Stroke Center Certification for designation as a primary stroke center. These include Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Texas, Virginia and Washington. For more information about government recognition, contact [Jen Hoppe](#), associate director, State Relations, (630) 792-5261.

Information available to the public

Quality Reports for Joint Commission certified Primary Stroke Centers are available on the [Quality Check™](#) website.

For more information about Primary Stroke Center certification, please visit the [website](#), contact the [Disease-Specific Care Certification Program](#), or call (630) 792-5291.