Accreditation for
Cardiovascular Center of Excellence
Eligibility Verification

Accreditation provided by
American Heart Association®
in partnership with
American College of Cardiology
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Introduction
The American Heart Association in collaboration with the American College of Cardiology introduces the Accreditation for Cardiovascular Center of Excellence program. Accreditation by the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology demonstrates a hospital’s commitment to providing high-quality, multidisciplinary cardiovascular systems of care where the patient is the center of all decision making.

The **AHA/ACC Accreditation for Cardiovascular Center of Excellence (CVCOE)** builds upon the ACC suite of cardiac accreditation services and is nationally recognized as having established data-driven processes and performance measures demonstrating quality cardiovascular care. The standards set the framework for a program that provides high-quality, evidence-based, guideline driven, patient-centered care with access to the broad scope of cardiovascular care services required to diagnose, treat, rehabilitate, support, and educate the patient.

Mission Statement
The mission of the AHA/ACC Accreditation for Cardiovascular Center of Excellence is to improve CVD outcomes and optimize the patient and caregiver experience by forging partnerships with high-quality healthcare institutions to incorporate best practices founded on established evidence-based cardiovascular treatment guidelines and by fostering Systems of Care collaboration.

Benefits of CVCOE Accreditation to Hospitals

**Public Awareness**
Hospitals with the Cardiovascular Center of Excellence Accreditation receive public recognition of commitment to high quality care. Accredited programs gain local and national exposure through AHA and ACC’s marketing efforts and the Find an Accredited Cardiovascular Center Near You tool, ensuring providers the accredited hospitals demonstrate adherence to national performance measures.
Structured Care
The CVCOE Accreditation offers cardiovascular programs a model to ensure best practices and evidence-based medicine are implemented in a standardized fashion for the delivery of cohesive, standardized, consistent, multidisciplinary cardiovascular care. The standards require facilities to create meaningful processes for implementation of patient-centered care.

Quality Improvement Measures
Participation in AHA and ACC’s quality improvement registries provide access to numerous quality reporting tools.

CVCOE Accredited programs can compare provision and timeliness of care, and improve performance based on nationally recognized quality measures and standards of cardiovascular care.

Access and integration across these registries will allow the accredited facility to:

- Monitor and report outcomes
- Determine patterns of care
- Identify disparities in care
- Focus on areas for quality improvement initiatives

Extensive Data & Analysis
Accreditation provides extensive facility based patient data to use for internal quality improvement, administration and research. Hospitals can use this information to submit proposals to participate in research studies developed to address important issues in cardiovascular care treatments and outcomes.

Recruiting
CVCOE Accreditation will serve as a recruitment tool for physicians and other medical professionals by demonstrating the institution’s mission of quality.
Benefits for Patients and Community
Facilities gaining the Accreditation for Cardiovascular Center of Excellence can claim the following benefits to communities they serve:

- **Care Decisions**: Promotes increased participation in care decisions by patients and family members.
- **Quality Treatment**: Shows that accredited programs are dedicating resources to provide quality treatment and supportive care services to cardiovascular patients.
- **Recommended Treatments**: Guarantees patients access to important components of treatment recommended by the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology.
- **Standards of Care**: Verifies standards of care created by reputable national organizations.
- **Multidisciplinary Teams**: Ensures a multidisciplinary cardiovascular team is involved in the planning and coordination of cardiovascular patient care.
- **Clinical Research**: Informs about clinical research studies and trial options.
- **Cardiac Prevention**: Collaborates with communities to provide cardiac prevention and educational events.
- **Quality Care**: Shows dedication to quality cardiovascular care that is available close to home.

Value to Payers
The AHA/ACC Cardiovascular Center of Excellence accreditation demonstrates the following:

- **Best Practices**: Provides external validation an accredited facility is performing at the highest level with adherence to best practices and the latest evidence-based medicine.
- **Commitment to Quality**: Demonstrates a commitment to quality for patients, providers, payers, and policymakers.
- **Optimal Treatments**: Focuses on a system of care that ensures optimal treatment and outcomes.
- **Care Assessment Information**: Meets the requirements of payers and insurers to provide necessary information for the internal assessment of quality care.
- **Quality Improvement**: Improves quality, care coordination, and compliance with national care guidelines.
Program Overview

Key Terms
The following terms are used to describe the accreditation requirements and materials:

- **Capstone**: the over-arching comprehensive accreditation also referred to as Accreditation for Cardiovascular Center of Excellence.
- **Cornerstones**: the four (4) pillar accreditations, some with multiple designations, which are the components in the eligibility requirements for CVCOE accreditation.

The illustration below shows how the Cornerstones support the CVCOE Accreditation.
Accreditation Standards
Accreditation Standards are split into two sections:

1. Cornerstone Requirements
2. Line Item Criteria

Cornerstone Requirements
Each hospital must have three of the four Cornerstone Accreditations, or be in the process of obtaining the accreditation to apply for Cardiovascular Center of Excellence accreditation. Chest Pain Center is a mandatory cornerstone. The hospital must have or be working toward two of the following additional accreditations to apply: Heart Failure, Atrial Fibrillation or Cardiac Cath Lab.

The hospital must demonstrate all prerequisite cornerstones are in good-standing for the Site Survey to be scheduled.

There are two types of Cornerstone accreditations accepted for CVCOE:

- ACC/AHA Cornerstone Accreditations
- Other accrediting organizations’ chest pain, heart failure, atrial fibrillation, or cath lab accreditation or certification. Note: This option will require:
  o Additional line item criteria to align accreditation with the ACC/AHA Cornerstone Accreditation (criteria will be released in future updates), and
  o Upon expiration of the other accrediting organization’s accreditation, the hospital will need to acquire an ACC/AHA Cornerstone Accreditation, which is required in addition to or in lieu of the other accrediting organization’s accreditation, as a condition of maintaining CVCOE status.

Hospitals may be working on their Cornerstone accreditations at the time they submit their application for the Cardiovascular Center of Excellence Accreditation. However, the CVCOE Desk Survey and Site Survey will not be scheduled until the Cornerstone Accreditations are awarded.
Line Item Criteria
The additional requirements focus on the following three areas.
   a. Governance
   b. Systems of Care
   c. Clinical Quality

Eligibility
Hospitals are eligible to apply for the Accreditation for Cardiovascular Center of Excellence by meeting the following general prerequisites:

- **Located within the US:** Hospital is within the United States; or any of its territories; or operated by the US government, or operated under a charter of the US Congress
- **Required Cornerstone Accreditations:** Hospital has the minimum required ACC/AHA branded cardiac cornerstone accreditations or alternate similar accreditations from other accrediting organizations in good-standing. Hospitals may apply if ACC/AHA branded or other organizations’ accreditations are in process, but the Desk Survey and Site Survey will not be scheduled and accreditation cannot be awarded until all prerequisite cornerstone accreditations are in good-standing
- **Participating Hospital Agreement:** Hospital agrees to the terms described in the Participating Hospital Agreement

At the time of accreditation renewal, the ACC/AHA branded cornerstone accreditations will be required. We encourage hospitals who have not received all or any of the three cornerstone accreditations to pursue the ACC/AHA branded cardiac service line area specific accreditations.

In addition to the general eligibility requirements outlined above, the hospital’s cardiac service line programs, individually and collectively, must meet the standards described in the Program Overview section.

Duration of Accreditation
Accreditation is active for three years from the date the accreditation is awarded or renewed.
Application Procedure

1. **Eligibility Verification**: Download the *Eligibility Verification* document from the American Heart Association Accreditation website: [http://www.heart.org/cardiacaccreditation](http://www.heart.org/cardiacaccreditation)
2. **Eligibility Information**: Review the eligibility information on the website and in the downloaded eligibility document.
3. **Create Account**: Enter initial hospital information in the fields provided on the American Heart Association’s Accreditation Web Portal. See the Create Your Account section for instructions on creating your account.
4. **Log In Information**: The AHA Representative reviews the initial account information to determine eligibility. The AHA Rep sends the following information to the hospital’s primary contact, if the hospital meets eligibility requirements.
   a. Login credentials
   b. Standards manual
   c. Fee information
   d. Participating Hospital Agreement
5. **Online Application**: The hospital completes and submits the online application via the American Heart Association’s Web Portal.
6. **Submit Supporting Documentation**: Any documentation supporting the standards found in the Standards Manual may be uploaded using the AHA Web Portal.
7. **Completed Participating Hospital Agreement**: The hospital will submit their completed agreement form using the e-Sign application. Applications will expire one year from the date received by the AHA.
8. **Invoice Process**: The invoice process begins when the Participating Hospital Agreement is fully executed.
9. **Payment**: Once payment is received, the application survey process begins.
10. **Desk Survey**: The AHA Representative reviews the hospital supporting documentation to determine if the pre-site review requirements are fulfilled. If there are any questions, the AHA Representative schedules a call, on a mutually agreed upon date, to resolve documentation questions.
11. **Initial Survey Preparation**: If all outstanding questions are resolved during the conference call, the AHA Representative completes the initial survey preparation.
12. **On-Site Survey Scheduled**: The AHA Representative contacts the hospital’s primary contact to schedule the on-site review. The hospital receives advance notice of the on-site review.

**Postponing or Canceling Survey:**
In the event the hospital desires to postpone or cancel a scheduled survey, the hospital must provide a 30-day advance notice giving the reason for the request.
Creating Your Web Portal Account

1. Click the **Create Account** link at the top of the screen.

2. Enter the following information in the form provided:
   a. **Hospital Primary Contact**
   b. **Alternative Contact**
   c. **Hospital ID information**

3. Complete the form and click the **Create Account** button at the bottom of the screen.

You will receive an email confirmation of your account request submission. If approved, the Primary Contact will receive an e-mail containing the **User Credentials** to log into the portal. In addition, the applicant will also receive the Standards Manual, Fee Information and the Participating Hospital Agreement. This process will be completed within three business days.
Appendix A: Checklist
Eligibility Information Checklist
Use this sheet to collect the information needed to create your hospital’s online account.

☐ Read through the Eligibility requirements, to verify your hospital is eligible for the accreditation.

☐ Hospital Primary Contact Information for the accreditation process contact person.
   ☐ First Name ________________________________
   ☐ Last Name ________________________________
   ☐ Title ________________________________________
   ☐ Email ________________________________________
   ☐ Telephone Number ☐ Extension __________________________
   ☐ Cell Phone ________________________________
   ☐ Password ________________________________

☐ Alternative Contact Information for someone if the primary contact person is unavailable.
   ☐ First Name ________________________________
   ☐ Last Name ________________________________
   ☐ Title ________________________________________
   ☐ Email ________________________________________
   ☐ Telephone Number ☐ Extension __________________________
   ☐ Cell Phone ________________________________

☐ Hospital Information needed to validate the eligibility status.
   ☐ American Hospital Association ID # ____________________________
   ☐ Hospital Name _______________________________________________
   ☐ Address ___________________________________________________
   ☐ City ☐ State ☐ Zip ____________________________________________

☐ Complete and click the Create Account button to submit the form online.