

# Skilled Nursing Facility Heart Failure

---

## Certification Eligibility Guide

## Table of Contents

Skilled Nursing Facility Overview.....	3
Skilled Nursing Facility Heart Failure Certification Mission Statement.....	3
Skilled Nursing Facility Heart Failure Certification Overview.....	3
Skilled Nursing Facility Heart Failure Center Certification Criteria.....	4
Certification Term & Fees.....	4
Certification Process.....	4

©2021, American Heart Association, Inc. This document is created for the sole intent and purpose of educating participants regarding the American Heart Association’s certification program. This document may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the express written permission of the AHA. This Eligibility Guide is effective beginning April 1, 2021.

## Skilled Nursing Facility Overview

### Skilled Nursing Facility Heart Failure Certification Mission Statement

The mission of the American Heart Association (AHA) Skilled Nursing Facility Failure Certification program is to improve the outcomes of patients with chronic heart failure while working with acute-care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, rehabilitation facilities, and other post-acute care providers.

### Skilled Nursing Facility Heart Failure Certification Overview

The overarching goals of the Certification encompasses the patient and provider, enhancing the relationship with local hospitals, and engagement with insurers and payors. The certification is focused on standardizing heart failure patient care and is designed to evaluate each skilled nursing facility against a professional set of criteria based on demonstrated adherence to key standards and a rigorous review process.

#### Program Goals

- Ensure evidence-based heart failure guidelines are driving decision making at all levels of care represented in the skilled nursing facility.
- Provide guidance and leadership on measurably improving care coordination and communication between and among care providers.
- Demonstrate that high levels of compliance for one or more of these entities through certification or recognition results in measurable improvements in clinical quality of care and cost effectiveness.

#### Benefits for Patients

- Provide patients with access to centers focused on treating heart failure and its comorbidities.
- Provide patients with confidence that the centers can provide the most effective treatment strategies based on current translational, evidence-based research in heart failure.
- Provide patients with assurance that the center has been vetted and is recognized by the American Heart Association, based on professional evaluation criteria designed by heart failure experts.

#### Benefits for Certified Facilities

- Promote and recognize the role and function of those facilities who are certified.
- Become a referral source for acute-care hospitals treating patients with heart failure.
- Establish a national collaborating network of American Heart Association Skilled Nursing Facility Heart Failure Centers for health care provider access.
- Establish a pathway for appropriate reimbursement for those health care professionals treating patients with heart failure and its co-morbidities.
- Provide direct access to AHA-sponsored live and online educational activities.

### Benefits for Hospitals

- The care a patient receives impacts readmission rates (+ or -), PACHF certification program can help reduce unnecessary readmissions and save substantial amount of money
- Improves care coordination and communication between the Hospital and SNF(s), in turn enhancing the continuum of care for the patient for improved outcomes
- Gives the hospital assurance that the patient will have strong continuity of care
- Gives the patient piece of mind that the hospital has developed a program that provides excellent care throughout their treatment
- The hospital can have confidence that the SNF(s) have been highly vetted by AHA experts

### Insurance Providers and Payment Engagement

- Establishes collaborative and educational liaison with payors.
- Provides standardized criteria for a Skilled Nursing Facility Heart Failure Center program.
- Provides information on effective treatment strategies and protocols.

### Skilled Nursing Facility Heart Failure Center Certification Criteria

- The skilled nursing facility is in the United States or operated by the US government or operated under a charter of the US Congress.
- The skilled nursing facility heart failure program uses a standardized method of delivering clinical care based on current evidence-based guidelines.
- The program uses heart failure performance measurement to improve its performance over time.
- The skilled nursing facility's heart failure program committee has documented six-months of meeting minutes in preparation for certification.

### Certification Term & Fees

Facilities are certified for a term of three - years with annual payments of \$2,000.

The facility will be required to complete payment upon execution of the Agreement. The fees for the first year will be pro-rated based on the Effective Date of the Agreement. Thereafter, the billing cycle for this Certification Program shall be January 1 - December 31, and the facility is responsible for remitting payment within 30-days of issuance.

Invoices are sent to the facility once the Participating Agreement is fully executed. Payment must be remitted before the review process begins.

Facilities have one year from payment date to complete the certification process. All payments are non-refundable.

### Certification Process

1. **Eligibility Information:** Review the eligibility information contained in this document, determine your organizations commitment to pursuing certification.

2. **Request Information:** Complete the information request form available at [www.Heart.org/CertifiedCare](http://www.Heart.org/CertifiedCare) to begin your journey to certification.
3. **Overview and Readiness Assessment:** Once the information request form has been received, an AHA representative will confirm its receipt and will schedule an introductory phone call to review the standards with the Primary Contact listed on the information request form.
4. **Certification Agreement:** Once the facility has expressed commitment to pursue certification, the contracting process will begin. The AHA representative will provide instructions for submitting the signed certification agreement.
5. **Payment:** When the agreement is fully executed, the facility will be responsible for payment. Please remit payment within 30-days of receipt.
6. **Pre-Certification Prep Phase:** During this time (typically ranging in time from 3–9 months) sites will begin developing their heart failure program, formulating policies and processes and creating their supporting documents in preparation for their desk review. AHA staff will be available during this time to support sites in conducting a gap analysis (i.e., help assess sites readiness for desk review); hold check-in calls. identify additional resources and to help as needed in prep for desk review.
7. **Desk Review:** The desk review begins after the Certification Agreement has been signed, invoice has been paid, and all the documentation has been submitted. It is a comprehensive and detailed evaluation of supporting documents submitted to meet the heart failure certification requirements.
8. **Heart Failure Measures and Metrics:** Facilities seeking certification are required to collect performance measure data for a minimum of 3 months (one calendar quarter) prior to the initial certification review. Data is reported quarterly throughout the three-year certification cycle.
9. **Virtual Review:** The desk review will culminate with a 90-minute virtual presentation of your program. This is an opportunity for the reviewer to have a complete understanding of your program. The facility will present the heart failure program in its entirety through a virtual demonstration via video conference and a PowerPoint.
10. **Certification Evaluation Workgroup Review:** The AHA Reviewer makes the recommendation for certification and submits a detailed report to the expert panel for consensus agreement.
11. **Annual Review:** An annual review will be required for maintenance of certification. The certified facility will provide updates on progress from recommended opportunities for improvement from previous review along with ongoing reporting and assessment of standardized quality measures.