Post-Acute Care Heart Failure

Certification Eligibility Guide
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Post-Acute Care Heart Failure Certification Mission Statement
The mission of the American Heart Association (AHA) Post-Acute Heart Failure Certification program is to improve the outcomes of patients with chronic heart failure while partnering with acute-care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, rehabilitation facilities, and other post-acute care providers.

Post-Acute Care Heart Failure Certification Overview
The overarching goals of the certified Post-Acute Care Heart Failure Center encompasses the patient, 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.

The goals of the program are to:

- Ensure standardized care is driving decision making at all levels represented in the post-acute environment including Long Term Acute Care hospitals (LTACHs), SNFs, clinics, pharmacies, assisted living, home care, EMS, insurance payers, healthcare networks, etc.
- 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 co-morbidities
- Provide patients with confidence that the centers can provide the most effective heart failure treatment strategies
- 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 Post-Acute Care Heart Failure facilities 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

Insurance Provider and Payment Engagement
• Establishes collaborative and educational liaison with payors
• Provides standardized criteria for a Post-Acute Care Heart Failure program
• Provides information on effective treatment strategies and protocols

Certification Term
Post-Acute Care Heart Failure facilities are each certified for a term of one year.

Certification Standards
Contact certification@heart.org or complete the information form on our website to request a copy of the detailed Post-Acute Care Heart Failure Certification standards.

Fees
• The annual fee for Post-Acute Care Heart Failure Certification is $2,000

Invoices are sent to the applicant once the Participating Agreement is fully executed. Payment must be remitted for the review process to begin. Follow the instructions on the invoice to submit payment.

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

Post-Acute Care Heart Failure 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.

Certification Process
1. Eligibility Information and Requirements: Review the eligibility information and requirements contained in this document.
2. Request Standards: From the AHA webpage at http://www.heart.org/postacute, select the Online Hospital Portal link and complete the requested information. Then click submit. You will receive an email from the web administrator notifying you that we received your request. If the online portal is unavailable, please use the standards request form at the bottom of the webpage. After your request is received, an AHA representative will provide an electronic copy of the certification standards.
3. Application: The organization completes and submits the application located at the end of this document and submits via email to certification@heart.org. Applications will expire one year from the date received.
4. Participating Agreement: The facility reviews, signs, and submits the agreement.
5. **Payment:** Once payment is received, you will be contacted by an AHA Representative to begin the certification review.

6. **Desk Review:** The AHA Reviewer evaluates the facilities’ application and supporting documentation for adherence to the Requirements. If there are any questions, the AHA Reviewer schedules calls with the facility to resolve documentation questions. Supporting documentation may be sent via email to [docsubmission@heart.org](mailto:docsubmission@heart.org).

7. **Committee Review:** The AHA Reviewer makes the recommendation for certification and submits a detailed report to the expert panel for consensus agreement.

8. **On-Site Review:** Scheduled only if the AHA Reviewer and Committee determine a need to validate documentation submitted during the Desk Review. Reviewer contacts the facility's primary contact to schedule a mutually agreed upon review date.