BACKGROUND:
In July 2011, the American Heart Association (AHA) and The Joint Commission (TJC) launched its Advanced Certification in Heart Failure (ACHF). Certification is available only to those heart failure programs in Joint Commission-accredited acute care hospitals.

Advanced Certification in Heart Failure recognizes hospitals that have achieved high standards for treatment of heart failure patients, demonstrated by Bronze-level or higher performance in the Get With The Guidelines ®-Heart Failure program as well as compliance with The Joint Commission standards.

ADVANCED CERTIFICATION IN HEART FAILURE HOSPITALS must comply with Joint Commission standards for disease-specific care (manual available on The Joint Commission Resources website) and the appendix for Advanced Certification in Heart Failure. The heart failure program must include either a hospital-based and hospital-owned outpatient heart failure clinic, OR have a collaborative relationship with one or more attending cardiology practices.

ELIGIBILITY:
• Design and operation of a heart failure-focused program
• Staffing by qualified medical professionals
• Individualized care to meet patient needs
• Patient involvement in their hospital care
• Coordination of patient care after leaving the hospital
• Collection of hospital’s heart failure-treatment performance data
• Use of data to assess and continually improve quality of care for heart failure patients
• Participation in the Get With The Guidelines®-Heart Failure quality improvement program at an award-winning level of performance, with a minimum of GWTG- Heart Failure Bronze Achievement Award
• Both inpatient and outpatient treatment as well as support for the transition from the hospital to home

To learn more about eligibility, please visit www.heart.org/certification

To find a hospital that has achieved Advanced Certification in Heart Failure near you, please visit the American Heart Association’s quality consumer map at www.heart.org/myhealthcare.

CERTIFICATION BENEFITS
Advanced Certification in Heart Failure is important to hospitals because it:
• Improves the quality of care provided to patients

• Demonstrates commitment to a higher standard of service
• Provides a framework for organizational structure and management
• Provides a competitive edge in the marketplace
• Enhances staff recruitment and development
• Is recognized by insurers and other third parties

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS
On-site certification reviews are conducted by reviewers with expertise in heart failure care. The certification decision is based on the evaluation of the following three areas:

COMPLIANCE WITH CONSENSUS-BASED STANDARDS
Programs applying for Advanced Certification in Heart Failure are evaluated using the standards in the Disease-Specific Care Certification Manual. The Joint Commission's Disease Specific-Care Certification Manual chapters address:
• Program management
• Delivery or facilitation of clinical care
• Support for self-management
• Clinical information management
• Performance improvement and measurement

EFFECTIVE USE OF EVIDENCE-BASED CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES
The program must demonstrate conformity with clinical practice guidelines or evidence-based practice. This includes the Advanced Certification in Heart Failure-specific requirements outlined in The Joint Commission’s Disease-Specific Care manual in the section titled “Advanced Disease-Specific Care Certification Requirements for Heart Failure.”

AN ORGANIZED APPROACH TO PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES
Advanced Certification in Heart Failure measure set comprises six mandatory inpatient measures and seven optional outpatient measures to assist organizations with the care of the heart failure patient as they transition from inpatient to outpatient care. Although the seven outpatient measures are optional, organizations are
strongly encouraged to collect data if the data are available and accessible to the organization. These measures have been developed to better evaluate the care provided to the Heart Failure patient with an emphasis on transitions of care.

Organizations will be required to implement specifications and collect data for the six new mandatory inpatient measures beginning with discharges on and after January 1, 2014. Organizations will also still be required to collect data for the three existing Heart Failure core measures currently required for certification. Please visit The Joint Commission’s link to the ACHF performance measure implementation guides: http://www.jointcommission.org/adv_certification_heart_failure_standardized_performance_measures/.

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

Mandatory inpatient measures include:

- **ACHF-01** Beta-Blocker Therapy (i.e., Bisoprolol, Carvedilol, or Sustained-Release Metoprolol Succinate) for LVSD Prescribed at Discharge
- **ACHF-02** Post-Discharge Appointment for Heart Failure Patients
- **ACHF-03** Care Transition Record Transmitted
- **ACHF-04** Discussion of Advance Directives/Advance Care Planning
- **ACHF-05** Advance Directive Executed
- **ACHF-06** Post-Discharge Evaluation for Heart Failure Patients

Optional outpatient measures include:

- **ACHFOP-01** Hospital Outpatient Beta-Blocker Therapy (i.e., Bisoprolol, Carvedilol, or Sustained-release Metoprolol Succinate) for LVSD
- **ACHFOP-02** Hospital Outpatient ACEI or ARB Prescribed for LVSD
- **ACHFOP-03** Hospital Outpatient Aldosterone Receptor Antagonists Prescribed for LVSD
- **ACHFOP-04** Hospital Outpatient New York Heart Association (NYHA) Classification Assessment
- **ACHFOP-05** Hospital Outpatient Activity Recommendations
- **ACHFOP-06** Hospital Outpatient Discussion of Advance Directives/Advance Care Planning

Advanced Certification in Heart Failure hospitals that successfully demonstrate compliance in all three areas are awarded certification for a two-year period. Learn more about the certification process at http://www.jointcommission.org/certification/heart_failure.aspx.

**ACCREDITING ORGANIZATIONS**

The American Heart Association and The Joint Commission collaboration provides hospitals with additional and enhanced services. The Joint Commission will continue to manage the certification process, and the AHA will be responsible for the science framework.

Advanced Certification in Heart Failure hospitals will be highlighted on the American Heart Association’s quality map website (heart.org/myhealthcare) to assist the general public with locating stroke centers certified by the American Heart Association and The Joint Commission. Quality reports for Advanced Certification in Heart Failure available to the public are available on the Quality Check™ website.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

To learn more about the AHA and TJC’s Advanced Certification in Heart Failure, please visit heart.org/certification or contact us at accreditation@heart.org.