

# The Joint Commission



## **Mission**

To continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value.

## **Organization**

The Joint Commission is an independent, not-for-profit organization, established more than 50 years ago. The Joint Commission is governed by a board that includes physicians, nurses, and consumers. The Joint Commission sets the standards by which health care quality is measured in America and around the world.

## **Duties**

The Joint Commission evaluates the quality and safety of care for more than 17,000 health care organizations. To maintain and earn accreditation, organizations must have an extensive on-site review by a team of Joint Commission health care professionals, at least once every three years. The purpose of the review is to evaluate the organization's performance in areas that affect your care. Accreditation may then be awarded based on how well the organizations met Joint Commission standards.

You can search for a health care organization on the [Quality Check](#) section of the Joint Commission website. Joint Commission-accredited organizations are identified by the Gold Seal of Approval. You can also call Joint Commission's Customer Service Department directly at (630) 792-5800 for additional information.

## Reporting a complaint about a Health Care Organization

Do you have a complaint about the quality of care at a Joint Commission-accredited health care organization? The Joint Commission wants to know about it. Submit your complaint online or send it to us by mail, fax, or e-mail. Summarize the issues in one to two pages and include the name, street address, city, and state of the health care organization.

The Joint Commission encourages anyone who has concerns or complaints about the safety and quality of care to bring those concerns or complaints first to the attention of the health care organization's leaders, which will often lead to more immediate resolution of the matter. Matters concerning billing, insurance, payment disputes, individual personnel or labor relations issues are not within The Joint Commission's scope. Also, The Joint Commission does not review complaints of any kind in unaccredited organizations.

When submitting a complaint to The Joint Commission about an accredited organization, you may either provide your name and contact information or submit your complaint anonymously. Providing your name and contact information enables The Joint Commission to inform you about the actions taken in response to your complaint, and also to contact you should additional information be needed.

It is our policy to treat your name as confidential information and not to disclose it to any other party. However, it may be necessary to share the complaint with the subject organization in the course of a complaint investigation.

The Joint Commission policy forbids accredited organizations from taking retaliatory actions against employees for having reported quality of care concerns to The Joint Commission.

**E-Mail:**

[complaint@jointcommission.org](mailto:complaint@jointcommission.org)

**Fax:**

Office of Quality Monitoring  
(630) 792-5636

**Mail:**

Office of Quality Monitoring  
The Joint Commission  
One Renaissance Boulevard  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

If you have questions about how to file your complaint, you may contact the Joint Commission at this toll free U.S. telephone number, 8:30 to 5 p.m., Central Time, weekdays.

(800) 994-6610

## Scope of Complaint Evaluations

Complaint information is used to strengthen the oversight activities of the Joint Commission and improve the quality of care in accredited facilities. The Joint Commission addresses all complaints that relate to quality of care issues within the scope of our standards. These include issues such as patient rights, care of patients, safety, infection control, medication use and security.

The Joint Commission does not address individual billing issues and payment disputes. Also, we do not have jurisdiction in labor relations issues or the individual clinical management of a patient. The Joint Commission does not review complaints of any kind in unaccredited organizations.

## How the Joint Commission responds to complaints

The Joint Commission encourages you to first bring your complaint to the attention of the health care organization's leaders. If this does not lead to resolution, bring your complaint to us for review. The Joint Commission's response to a complaint begins with a review of past complaints about the organization, if any, and the organization's accreditation survey report. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Joint Commission will take one or more of the following actions:

- Where serious concerns have been raised about patient safety or standards compliance, the Joint Commission will conduct an unannounced, on-site evaluation of the organization.
- The Joint Commission may ask the health care organization to provide a written response to the complaint.
- The Joint Commission may incorporate the complaint in the quality monitoring database that is used to continuously track the performance of health care organizations over time.
- The Joint Commission may review the complaint at the time of the health care organization's next scheduled accreditation survey if it is scheduled in the near future.
- For more information about how the Joint Commission analyzes and follows up on complaints, see the [Quality Incident Review Criteria](#).

## Release of Complaint-Related Information

Upon request, the Office of Quality Monitoring provides the number of complaints an organization has had and the category by contacting (800) 994-6610. In addition, if an on-site review of an organization results in a change of accreditation status to conditional or preliminary denial of accreditation, these changes will be reflected in the organization's Quality Report, available in Quality Check on this website or by calling the Customer Service Center at (630) 792-5800.

After the Joint Commission completes its review of a complaint, we inform the complainant of the actions we have taken if contact information has been provided.