

Facts about Primary Stroke Center Certification

The Joint Commission's Primary Stroke Center Certification Program, launched in December 2003, was developed in collaboration with the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association (AHA/ASA). Currently, there are more than 1,000 certified primary stroke centers in all 50 states plus Puerto Rico. Certification is available only to programs in Joint Commission-accredited acute care hospitals.

The Certificate of Distinction for Primary Stroke Centers recognizes centers that follow the best practices for stroke care. Programs applying for advanced certification must meet the requirements for Disease-Specific Care Certification plus additional, clinically specific requirements and expectations. Certified primary stroke centers:

- Use a standardized method of delivering care based on the Brain Attack Coalition's "Recommendations for Establishment of Primary Stroke Centers"
- Support patient self-management activities
- Tailor treatment and intervention to individual needs
- Promote the flow of patient information across settings and providers, while protecting patient rights, security and privacy
- Analyze and use standardized performance measure data to continually improve treatment plans
- Demonstrate their application of and compliance with clinical practice guidelines published by the [AHA/ASA](#) or equivalent evidence-based guidelines

Certification process

On-site certification reviews are conducted by reviewers with expertise in stroke care. The certification decision is based on the evaluation of standards, implementation of clinical practice guidelines and performance measurement activities. Primary Stroke Centers that successfully demonstrate compliance in all three areas are awarded certification for a two-year period. At the end of the first year, the organization is required to participate in a conference call to attest to its continued compliance with the standards and to review performance improvement activities.

Standards

The standards are published in the *Disease-Specific Care Certification Manual*. They incorporate the "Recommendations for the Establishment of Primary Stroke Centers" developed by the Brain Attack Coalition. The chapters address:

- Program management
- Delivering or facilitating clinical care
- Supporting self-management
- Clinical information management
- Performance improvement and measurement

Performance measurement

Certified primary stroke centers must collect and report on eight stroke core measures. Data can be self-submitted quarterly to The Joint Commission through a secure extranet site, or data can be submitted through a vendor. The eight stroke core measures are:

- Venous thromboembolism (VTE) prophylaxis
- Discharged on antithrombotic therapy
- Anticoagulation therapy for atrial fibrillation/flutter
- Thrombolytic therapy
- Antithrombotic therapy by end of hospital day two
- Discharged on statin medication
- Stroke education
- Assessed for rehabilitation

Measure information and data element definitions are detailed in the [Specifications Manual for National Hospital Inpatient Quality Measures](#). Certified programs must use the **current** version of the manual. Future versions of the manual are posted six months prior to the effective date. Revisions called “Release Notes” show all the changes made to a particular version. The measures are also approved as a core measure set for use in the Joint Commission’s ORYX program and collected by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for the Hospital Inpatient Reporting Program (HIRP). Questions about core measure specifications can be submitted to the [Performance Measurement Q&A Forum](#).

Government recognition

Currently, 19 states require or recognize The Joint Commission’s Primary Stroke Center or Comprehensive Stroke Center Certifications for designation as a primary stroke center. These include Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Missouri, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and Washington. For more information about government recognition, contact [Jen Hoppe](#), associate director, State Relations, 630-792-5261.

Information available to the public

Quality Reports for Joint Commission certified Primary Stroke Centers are available on the [Quality Check™](#) website.

For more information about Primary Stroke Center certification, please visit the [website](#), contact the [Disease-Specific Care Certification Program](#), or call 630-792-5291.