



Understanding the Complete Value of Accreditation for Urgent Care Centers

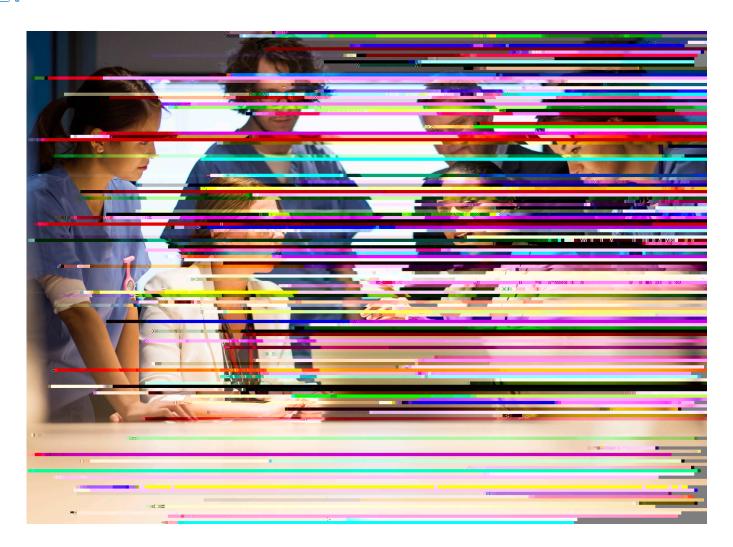




- | \rangle | In the urgent care setting, pursuing voluntary accreditation is one way to demonstrate that your center goes above and beyond in providing quality care for patients.
- Accreditation through an organization like The Joint Commission of ers a quality-focused market distinction that is achieved only by those centers that demonstrate excellent performance against the best industry standards.
- Achieving this distinction requires urgent care centers to invest both time and resources into an accreditation process that can take six months or more to complete. But the resulting accreditation is more than just a seal of approval.
- Approached from a holistic perspective, accreditation not only boosts reputation and market perception it



When choosing an accreditor, consider how each program's approach is structured to measure excellence as it applies to the urgent care setting. Here are three ways that The Joint Commission's accreditation process provides this value.



In addition to on-the-job experience, surveyors at The Joint Commission also receive robust internal training and complete between 30 and 120 onsite reviews each year. This uniquely positions surveyors as valuable sources of consultation and education when they are on the ground in your facility.

When it comes to accreditation reviews, many people have a mental image of a buttoned-up surveyor with a clipboard marking down every minor infraction they see. This image of a one-sided, punitive survey process is one that The Joint Commission actively works to update.

The Joint Commission philosophy holds that a collaborative and educational review process can be a source of enormous value for participating urgent care centers.

Reviewers with subject matter expertise are uniquely positioned to provide leading practices that improve and grow the programs they review. Surveyors are there to focus on the standards, but they can also engage with and inspire staf to create environments of quality patient care.

Paired with supportive educational resources, the review process can be a great way to learn and implement new strategies to improve day-to-day operations across an organization.



The Joint Commission's tracer methodology of onsite review follows an individual patient who is receiving care, treatment or services at the urgent care facility. With the patient's consent, the reviewer will trace the patient's movement through the center and evaluate how the patient's experience aligns with the procedures and policies put in place by the center.

The intent is not for the reviewer to question a provider's clinical care, but they are available to point



The dashboard organizes requirements for improvement according to the likelihood to cause harm and the prevalence of that possibility across the organization. This visualization allows leaders to easily identify trends and patterns in both current and historical data. The SAFER dashboard also benchmarks standards performance against national data to help leaders understand how they compare to similar organizations across the United States.

With robust standards data at their f ngertips, organizations can prioritize areas of potential improvement to maximize positive impact and plan for long-term sustainability as health care needs change over time.

The Joint Commission's exclusive suite of analytics dashboards are based on the SAFER Matrix, a tool that helps organizations understand their survey fndings based on scope of risk and potential for patient harm.

Any immediate threats to life are identifed at the top of the matrix and color-coded in dark red, indicating the urgent need for attention. The remaining requirements for improvement (RFIs) are sorted according to:



Is the fnding a unique occurrence that is not representative of routine practice, with the potential to impact a very limited number of people? Or is the deficiency pervasive across the facility, with the potential to impact most or all of the patients, staff or visitors present?

If there is a potential for harm, is it rare, occasional or likely to happen at any time?

The SAFER Matrix is color-coded from yellow to orange to red as the scope and potential for harm increase. This color-coding is extended throughout the dashboard tools for ease of comprehension as organizations use the tools to prioritize resources and pinpoint corrective action plans.

Convenient access to digital insights further strengthens the business systems of high-performing urgent care centers by increasing efficiency in receiving interpreting and operationalizing survey findings—allowing leaders to make the best use of time and resources within the center.



Tools like the SAFER Dashboard eliminate the need for manually entering accreditation data into third-party electronic tools for analysis and comparison. The organization and visualization aspects of the SAFER Matrix enable rapid reporting of data and equip urgent care organizations with the necessary metrics to make impactful decisions.

Ultimately, urgent care leaders are able to take a step back from daily management functions to look at a holistic picture of operations. With this big-picture view, they are better able to make data-driven decisions about how best to allocate resources in service of patient experience and quality care.

Another way that accreditation adds value to your urgent care center — beyond the foundational safety and quality aspects — is by expanding reimbursement options.





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Take a look at a typical accreditation timeline:

- Preparation: The Joint Commission provides unmatched customer support and valuable resources beginning as soon as an organization reaches out to express interest in accreditation. Urgent care centers can take all the time they need to review the applicable standards, ask questions, explore the available resources and begin to prepare for the onsite review.
- Application: We recommend organizations formally apply about four months before their survey-ready date.
 A business development representative will walk the organization through the simple application process.
 Leaders have the option to choose the earliest possible survey date allowing organizations to thoroughly prepare before surveyors arrive onsite.
- Onsite survey: During the survey period, reviewers will visit the facility for an average of two days. For centers with multiple sites, surveyors will visit a representative sample of facilities, which will vary by

 $^{\rm I}$ - $^{\rm I}$ Joint Commission Connect is your all-in-one accreditation management portal.

About The Joint Commission:

