Meeting the Evolving Needs of Health Care
# Table of Contents

Mission Statement .......................................................... 3  
Letter from CEO John Burke ............................................ 4  
Letter from Board Chair Karen McKellar ............................ 5  
Accredited by AAAHC .................................................... 6  
History of AAAHC .......................................................... 8  
Enhancing Our Standards ............................................... 9  
Meeting Evolving Needs ................................................ 10  
In the News ...................................................................... 12  
The AAAHC Institute for Quality Improvement ................. 14  
The AAAHC Accreditation Survey ................................ 16  
International Accreditation ........................................... 17  
New Resources from AAAHC ........................................... 18  
AAAHC Leadership and Member Organizations ............ 20  
Financial Summary ......................................................... 22  
AAAHC Executive Staff ................................................... 23
Our Mission

The mission of the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care is to promote its position as the preeminent leader in developing Standards to advance and promote patient safety, quality, and value and measurement of performance for ambulatory health care through peer-based accreditation processes, education and research.
Since the founding of the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC) in 1979, health care in the United States has undergone rapid and unprecedented change. And nowhere is that change more evident than in the steady evolution of health care delivery from inpatient to outpatient settings. Whether it be surgeries and other invasive procedures, diagnostic modalities such as lab tests and imaging scans, mental and behavioral health services, or holistic and coordinated cradle-to-grave care, the provision of health care in ambulatory settings has become the norm.

As ambulatory services grow, so too do the number and variety of outpatient care providers. The advent of office-based and ambulatory surgery centers, large medical and dental group practices, accountable care organizations, community health centers, Patient-Centered Medical Homes (PCMH), urgent care centers and new health plan models has made accreditation more vital than ever. As the nation’s largest ambulatory care accreditor, AAAHC also has evolved to meet new needs and new challenges facing outpatient providers.

In 2012, AAAHC launched or enhanced a number of important initiatives. We introduced the first-ever certification of PCMHs to include an on-site survey. Our accreditation program for managed care organizations completed its evolution, resulting in a handbook dedicated to health plan accreditation. New Standards that meet the specific needs of these organizations were developed for the handbook, including chapters on case management, care coordination, environment and safety, and dental and behavioral health. We also developed new educational resources for our constituents and introduced a new fee structure tailored to office-based surgery centers. We’ve enhanced our quality assessment and improvement tools, including those that address requirements of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, third-party payers and other public and private stakeholders. These and other 2012 AAAHC activities are detailed in this report.

Today, we offer accreditation programs for ambulatory surgery centers, office-based surgery centers, college student health centers, health plans, military health care clinics, community health centers, medical and dental practices, PCMHs and a full range of specialty care organizations. But the needs of these organizations and of ambulatory health care will continue to evolve and we can expect new ambulatory care models to emerge. AAAHC remains committed to keeping pace with this evolution and to fulfilling our mission to develop Standards that promote patient safety, quality, and value through peer-based accreditation processes, education and research.

For more than three decades, AAAHC accreditation has assured patients, regulators, third-party payers and others that an ambulatory health care organization is committed to delivering the highest quality care. We are more determined than ever to keep our Standards high and our accreditation programs state-of-the art so that “Accredited by AAAHC” endures as a symbol of quality, both now and in the future.

John Burke, PhD  
President and  
Chief Executive Officer
It has been both my privilege and my pleasure to serve as Chair of the AAAHC Board of Directors during this exciting time for health care and for our accreditation programs. The growth and evolution of AAAHC is reflected in the growing number and diversity of the Association Members represented on the Board. The constituencies of these associations comprise medical and dental professionals, health care administrators and others who, along with two public members, share our commitment to accreditation Standards that promote high quality care for patients in ambulatory settings. In 2012, the American Dental Association joined the AAAHC Board, bringing the total number of Association Members to 18.

Here are just a few of our accomplishments in 2012:

- The number of AAAHC accredited organizations increased to an all-time high of more than 5,400.
- AAAHC surveyors performed more than 1,650 accreditation surveys.
- The accreditation process was streamlined and the turnaround time from survey to accreditation has been significantly reduced.
- The AAAHC Survey Process Advisory Committee continued to address the effectiveness and efficiency of our policies and procedures, including hiring an external consultant to review AAAHC internal accreditation processes, and implementing new technologies to upgrade existing protocols.

- AAAHC International grew the number of accredited organizations in Costa Rica and Peru, and explored opportunities for expansion in India.

The Achieving Accreditation seminar in December set a new attendance record with 299 attendees. Throughout the year AAAHC committees and task forces continued their work to evolve our Standards, accreditation award programs, survey processes and training and education; and to enhance our accreditation programs for office-based surgery centers, medical homes and health plans.

As the nation’s health care system continues to evolve, the AAAHC Board of Directors, Association Members and staff continually rededicate our efforts to evaluate and revise our Standards, our accreditation processes and our education, research and quality improvement activities to keep pace with advances in evidence-based medical practice and the changing needs of ambulatory care providers and the patients they serve.

Karen McKellar
AAAHC Board Chair

“As the nation’s health care system continues to evolve, the AAAHC Board of Directors, Association Members and staff continually rededicate our efforts to keep pace with advances in evidence-based medical practice and the changing needs of ambulatory care providers and the patients they serve.”
Karen McKellar
Accredited Organizations

The Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care continually revises its Standards and expands its services to meet the evolving needs of ambulatory providers and the increasingly sophisticated and comprehensive services they provide. From freestanding surgery centers to medical and dental practices, from Medical Homes to health plans, AAAHC promotes excellence in all ambulatory care by offering accreditation programs for a wide variety of providers, including:

- Ambulatory Surgery Centers
- Behavioral Health Centers
- College and University Health Centers
- Community Health Centers
- Dental Group Practices
- Dental Homes
- Diagnostic Imaging Centers
- Endoscopy Centers
- Immediate/Urgent Care Centers
- International Organizations
- Indian Health Centers
- Lithotripsy Centers
- Health Plan/Managed Care Organizations
- Medicaid Plans
- Medical Homes
- Medical Group Practices
- Medicare Advantage Plans
- Military Health Care Clinics
- Occupational Health Clinics
- Office-Based Surgery Centers
- Specialty Services, such as radiology, dialysis and anesthesia
- Women’s Centers

Why Seek Accreditation?

In a 2012 survey, we asked our accredited organizations to tell us why they sought accreditation. The number one answer they gave was “to improve the quality of care.” They also valued the message that accreditation sends to patients and others that their organizations meet the Standards of AAAHC. These ambulatory service providers also know:

- States require or recognize the value of accreditation.
- Professional medical societies endorse it.
- The best and brightest professionals want to be part of it.
- Health advocacy and other groups list accredited centers on their websites.
- Consumers look to accreditation for assurance of high quality care.

AAAHC has accredited more ambulatory care centers than any other accrediting body in the United States.

Why did you choose AAAHC for your accreditation?

[Bar chart showing reasons for choosing AAAHC]

- AAAHC reputation
- Prior experience with AAAHC
- Recommended by industry colleague
- Survey is conducted by industry peers
- Price
- Dissatisfaction with previous accreditation organization
Recognition for AAAHC

AAAHC is widely recognized among private and public health care organizations, and state and federal regulatory bodies. In 2012, AAAHC:

- Received renewal of its Deemed Status for Ambulatory Surgery Centers (ASC) through 2018 from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).
- Received renewal of its Deemed Status for Medicare Advantage Plans through 2018 from CMS.
- Received renewal of its approval to accredit health maintenance organizations and prepaid health plans practice sites by the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA).
- Was awarded a contract by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to accredit Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs).

Meeting the Needs of Small and Rural Hospitals

Last year, AAAHC launched a new accreditation program focused on small rural hospitals, offered through the Accreditation Association for Hospital and Health Systems Inc. (AAHHS). AAHHS and AAAHC have separate governing boards and function independently of each other as separate operating entities of an umbrella organization, The Accreditation Association. AAHHS will focus on U.S. hospitals having fewer than 200 beds with an average daily census of less than 100, most of which are located in rural areas.

The staff of Jemez Health and Human Services (JHHS), of Pueblo Jemez, New Mexico, which was awarded AAAHC accreditation in 2012. Surveyors cited the clinic as a model Medical Home for its patient-centric holistic approach and its “seamless integration of culture with care.”

“The process toward earning this prestigious accreditation began 10 years ago. The real credit goes to all the JHHS staff who have worked so hard and professionally all these years to provide the best possible care to the people of Jemez Pueblo.”

David Tempest, MD
Medical Director
History of AAAHC

Since its founding, AAAHC has been the nation’s largest ambulatory health care accrediting organization, with more than 5,400 organizations now accredited worldwide. The history of AAAHC reflects the ongoing evolution and growth of the ambulatory health care industry, and a commitment to pursue ever-higher standards for quality patient care. AAAHC grew out of the efforts of several national organizations that recognized a need for accreditation specifically tailored to ambulatory care.

A Timeline of Progress

1979 – The Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care is founded by six charter members, including the American College Health Association; the Medical Group Management Association; the National Association of Community Health Centers; and the forerunners of the American Medical Group Association; the Ambulatory Surgery Center Association; and the American Association of Health Plans. Today, the AAAHC Board of Directors comprises representatives of 18 professional health care organizations.

1983 – AAAHC launches an accreditation program for health plans/managed care.


1999 – The AAAHC Institute for Quality Improvement is founded to provide opportunities for ambulatory health care organizations to participate in quality improvement and performance measurement studies and educational programs. Healthcare Consultants International (HCI) is formed to support accreditation preparation and provide consulting expertise in quality assessment/performance improvement, infection control, and regulatory compliance.

2004 – AAAHC begins to accredit U.S. Coast Guard ambulatory health care facilities.

2006 – The U.S. Air Force selects AAAHC as the accrediting organization for its ambulatory health care facilities worldwide.

2009 – AAAHC becomes first in the nation to offer an on-site accreditation for Medical Homes.

2010 – AAAHC International is launched.

2011 – AAAHC accredits its 5,000th organization. A three-year term is established for all AAAHC accreditations.

2012 – AAAHC establishes the Accreditation Association for Hospital and Health Systems Inc. (AHHHS) as an independent entity. AAAHC adds Medical Home On-Site Certification as an alternative to accreditation.
Enhancing Our Standards

Each year, AAAHC updates the Accreditation Handbook to be sure our Standards reflect the latest developments in ambulatory health care and in the requirements for Medicare deemed status. The AAAHC Standards revision process includes input from accredited organizations, individual health care providers, the public and others to ensure that the voices of all who have a stake in quality health care are heard.

New Standards for Health Plans

AAAHC has offered an accreditation tailored to fit the needs of managed care organizations (MCOs) since 1983. In 2012, AAAHC added new value to the program, beginning with a change in name from MCO to Health Plan, to more accurately reflect the growing diversity of health insurance options. The Standards also were updated to ensure that they remain relevant in today’s changing health care environment. This includes increased focus on Standards that address compliance with the quality reporting measures and other requirements of the Affordable Care Act. The result is the new AAAHC Accreditation Handbook for Health Plans, which became effective January 1, 2013. The Handbook addresses the accreditation needs of a variety of plans, including:

- HMOs
- Prepaid Health Centers (PHCs)
- Physician Sponsored Networks (PSNs)
- Dental Health Plans
- Behavioral Health Plans

New chapters also have been added, including Care Management and Care Coordination; Environment and Safety; and special services chapters for Dental and Behavioral Health.

“Under the provisions of the Affordable Care Act, qualified health plans will increasingly market their insurance products directly to consumers. Accreditation becomes a critical component of these new provisions and the process of accreditation is a clear signal to prospective members that an individual health plan has been independently evaluated against rigorous nationally recognized standards that are aimed at improving the quality of health care.”

Karen W. Connolly, RN, BSN
Chair, AAAHC Health Plan Advisory Committee, AAAHC surveyor, and CEO, KW Connolly & Associates, LLC
Meeting Evolving Needs

The trend from inpatient to outpatient care, the growth in the number and types of outpatient care providers, and today’s emphasis on evidence-based standards supported by performance measurement and quality improvement, make AAAHC accreditation more important than ever. New primary care models, such as the Patient-Centered Medical Home, promote coordination among a spectrum of providers, and move care delivery away from a focus on disease to a holistic approach that emphasizes prevention and wellness. Surgical procedures once performed in hospitals are now routinely performed in ambulatory or office-based surgery centers. The growth in urgent care facilities and employer-sponsored clinics and health plans; the growing trend toward accreditation for dentists, behavioral health and other specialty providers; and a host of new requirements and regulations governing these practices further add to the challenges for health providers. AAAHC, with its specific focus on and expertise in ambulatory care, is particularly well-suited to meet these needs.

The Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH)

For many primary care providers, such as medical and dental group practices, community health centers and health plan-sponsored clinics, the transition to a PCMH can be an important step toward improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of health care delivery. In 2009, AAAHC was the first organization to offer full ambulatory accreditation, including an on-site survey, for PCMHs. In 2012, AAAHC extended its offerings to this audience with the launch of a pilot for the first PCMH certification program that includes an on-site assessment. Unlike the AAAHC Medical Home accreditation process, which evaluates all the services offered by a facility, the certification program evaluates only those characteristics that are essential for meeting specific PCMH Standards. The new Medical Home On-Site Certification Handbook details the areas evaluated for certification, which include the patient-provider relationship; quality, continuity, comprehensiveness and accessibility of care; and the use of electronic data management as a tool to coordinate care that meets AAAHC PCMH Standards.

“Our on-site accreditation survey is the bedrock of the AAAHC commitment to quality ambulatory care, allowing us to see it in action. Questionnaires, checklists, statistics, charts and graphs do not go far enough. The best way to assess care is at the point of care. And nowhere is an on-site evaluation more crucial than in the Medical Home, which assumes responsibility for all medical care, patient education and disease prevention from cradle to grave.”

Sam JW Romeo, MD, MBA
Medical Director, AAAHC
Chair, AAAHC Medical Home Task Force

“AHAAC Medical Home On-Site Certification is far more than a checklist of policies, procedures and processes required for a facility to call itself a medical home. The on-site certification survey is unique in measuring intangibles that can’t be expressed on paper, such as the relationship between patients and providers. For the children who rely on our in-school clinic, AAAHC Medical Home Certification is an assurance to them and their families that accessible, continuous and coordinated health care will be delivered in an environment that addresses health problems and also promotes wellness and preventive care.”

Charles J. Barone II, MD, FAAP
Medical Director, Pioneer Health Center
Henry Ford Health Systems
The Dental Home

In 2012, AAAHC granted its first Dental Home accreditation to the Kaiser Permanente Dental Care Program of Portland, Oregon. The program is one of the largest in the nation, with 17 dental offices that serve more than 200,000 members. It has been continuously accredited as a dental practice by AAAHC since 1990, attaining the additional dental home accreditation in 2011.

“This further confirms and validates that our model of patient-centered, coordinated, evidence-based care meets the highest Standards as defined by AAAHC.”

Ken Wright, DMD, MPH
Vice President, Dental Care Services
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Office-Based Surgery

The AAAHC accreditation program for office-based surgery (OBS) recognizes that more and more surgical procedures are now performed in doctors’ offices. The Accreditation Handbook for Office-Based Surgery with Review Guidelines is a tool that gives OBS centers a clearer understanding of how compliance with each of the Standards will be assessed. AAAHC also has tailored its accreditation fees to reflect the smaller size of OBS organizations, which are defined as having four or fewer physicians/dentists and no more than two operating/procedure rooms.

“Our colleagues appreciate that we take that extra step to become accredited, and our patients are reassured to know that we voluntarily undergo a thorough and independent review and evaluation of our services based on nationally recognized standards of care.”

Scott Trimas, MD, FACS
Director, Beaches Facial Plastic and Nasal Surgery Center, Jacksonville, Florida; and Surveyor, AAAHC

Workplace-Based Health Centers

Walgreens and AAAHC recently announced that half of the primary care worksite health centers managed by Walgreens Employer Solutions Group have received Medical Home accreditation, with plans to have all of the company’s employer-based primary care centers accredited in the first half of 2013. The accreditation recognizes that each worksite health center meets AAAHC requirements to be considered a PCMH, embodying best practices and operating in compliance with nationally recognized standards of care. AAAHC representatives visited worksite health centers at a number of Walgreens client sites, including Toyota, Southwire and Fieldale Farms. At each of these locations, on-site surveys were conducted to evaluate whether the Walgreens facilities meet AAAHC criteria as a Medical Home.

“We’re proud to have received accreditation from AAAHC, an organization that shares our commitment to ensuring health care delivery meets the highest quality standards and is coordinated across the health care spectrum, benefiting both employers and employees.”

Trent Riley
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AAAHC media coverage for 2012 included stories by some of the most respected and well-read outlets in the health care industry, including *Modern Healthcare*, *Outpatient Surgery*, *OR Today* and *Healthcare Finance News*. Noteworthy articles, both in print and online, highlighted new AAAHC programs and initiatives, including:

- The launch of AAHHS
- The 5,000th accredited organization
- New AAAHC officers and staff
- Expert opinions on the Patient-Centered Medical Home
- A new accreditation option for smaller medical and dental practices that perform office-based surgery
- The public comment period for the Standards, including the newly revised Standards for Health Plans
- Results of new performance measurement and benchmarking studies from the AAAHC Institute, including studies of colonoscopy, cataract, low-back injection and arthroscopy.
- Winners of the 2012 Bernard A. Kershner Innovations in QI Awards
- The standardization of the accreditation term to three years
- On-Site Medical Home Certification
- Walgreens worksite Health Centers receiving accreditation as Patient-Centered Medical Homes
- New AAAHC Institute Toolkit on Sleep Apnea
- AAAHC Medicare And Medicaid Deeming Authority renewal by CMS
Rise of ACOs leads to AAAHC reorganization

By Andis Doboziene
Posted April 24, 2012 - 3:10 pm ET
Tags: Accountable Care Organizations, Accreditation, Ambulatory Care, Community, Hospitals, Parent Care, Physician Services

The rise of accountable care organizations and continued healthcare consolidation have led to a plan to reorganize the Shoreline, Ill.-based Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Healthcare, which includes splitting the organization into two parts and launching a pilot program to accredit small hospitals.

The movement to accountable care organizations and other recent trends has led to more health systems coordinating primary-care physicians and specialty care with the goal of improving care with better outcomes and lower costs. AAHC President John Daye says "There is a growing demand from payors and providers for a more integrated system of care." AAHC is working with the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC) to launch a pilot program to accredit small hospitals.

"In the past, we have focused on accreditation programs that support the larger hospitals that are part of health systems," says Daye. "Now, we are seeing a shift in demand for accreditation programs that support smaller hospitals in smaller systems."

AAAHC has recently launched a new accreditation program for smaller hospitals. The Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC) has released its proposed health plan standards released for public comment.

Proposed revisions to AAAHC health plan standards released for public comment

The Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Healthcare (AAAHC) released its 2013 Health Plan Standards for public comment September 20 through October 20. The Standards describe the qualifications that AAAHC believes managed care organizations must have to be accredited and against which organizations are measured when they seek AAAHC accreditation.

The managed care community is invited to provide feedback and evidence-based information and examples that support comments are especially welcome. Individuals may only respond once to the Standards that they believe warrant revision; they are not required to respond to every proposed standard.

The AAAHC Health Plan survey process reviews both administrative office functions and a selection of medical care providers to judge managed care organizations. A new feature under consideration is an amendment to the proposed Standards that would add information on how they are serving both healthcare providers and patients.

Interested parties, such as AAAHC accredited organizations, employers, medical societies, regulatory agencies and the public at large, are invited to provide comments to the proposed Standards revision on the AAAHC website: www.aaahc.org.

In addition, AAAHC will hold a free webinar, proposed in this 2013 Health Plan Standards, October 25. The one hour webinar will offer a look at the new Standards due to take effect January 1, 2013. The new Standards will include reducing the public comment period. A one and a half day meeting of the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care Health Plan Standards Council will be held to review the Standards draft for 2013 and the guidelines for meeting them.

AAAHC is an independent, nonprofit association representing more than 5,000 ambulatory healthcare organizations in the United States. For more information, visit www.aaahc.org.

AAAHC Accreditation Standards Draft for Public Comment

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### OUR MISSION

The AAAHC Institute for Quality Improvement is a nonprofit organization founded by AAAHC in 1999 to offer ambulatory health care organizations opportunities to learn about and become involved in performance measurement, benchmarking and quality improvement.

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**Letter from Lorraine Jordan and Naomi Kuznets**

Since its founding as a nonprofit subsidiary of AAAHC in 1999, the Institute for Quality Improvement has worked to fulfill its mission to help AAAHC and other constituents address the quality assurance and improvement requirements of AAAHC accreditation. In 2012, we added new services and resources to further aid ambulatory care organizations in that effort.

Excellence in health care quality reflects the ability to identify and adapt proven practice and procedural efficiencies. The mission of the AAAHC Institute is to help organizations be successful in this process. Our ongoing benchmarking studies give providers the opportunity to assess their own performance in key areas, compare them with those of similar organizations and design QI activities to improve performance. Our recent studies have focused primarily on the processes and outcomes of ambulatory surgeries/procedures and, in 2012, we added a new study for primary care providers.

We also continue to be an educational resource for ambulatory care. Our workbooks provide guidance for achieving and maintaining accreditation, and the AAAHC Institute QI Toolkit of publications offers expert guidance for assessment and improvement, and real-life examples of how organizations have improved the quality of their care through QI activities. In 2012 we began development of a series of Patient Safety Toolkits that provide brief, evidence-based information on specific topics affecting the quality and safety of care. The first in the series focuses on obstructive sleep apnea. Other topics in development include venous thromboembolism and patient falls in ambulatory surgery settings.

Also in 2012 we began an important internal review to ensure the continual improvement of AAAHC and its services. The AAAHC Data Warehouse is a collaboration between the Institute and AAAHC IT experts to collect and analyze data from accreditation surveys conducted since 2007. The data are important resources for AAAHC quality improvement and assessment activities, such as determining which Standards are the most challenging for organizations to meet, and which types of organizations have the most difficulty in meeting them. With this information, we can better design educational programs for organizations seeking accreditation, and better prepare our surveyors to work with providers to help them remain compliant with AAAHC Standards.

In the years to come, the AAAHC Institute will further develop and refine its services to meet the needs of ambulatory care providers. And we will continue to seek input from those providers to help us design the resources they need.

**Lorraine Jordan, CRNA, PhD, FAAN**  
Chair, Board of Trustees  
AAAHC Institute for Quality Improvement

**Naomi Kuznets, PhD**  
Senior Director and General Manager  
AAAHC Institute for Quality Improvement
Tools for Learning and Improving

Benchmarking Studies. Each year, the AAAHC Institute releases the results from its ongoing series of benchmarking and best practices studies. Four studies were completed in 2012, focusing on cataract surgery, colonoscopy, arthroscopy and low back injection. The reports include data such as pre-procedure, procedure and discharge time comparisons; operative techniques; complications; anesthesia; and patient outcomes.

Benchmarking for Primary Care. Over the years, the Institute has varied its studies to meet the needs of its audiences, from student health services to ambulatory surgery centers; from community health centers to office-based surgeries. In 2012, a new performance measurement and benchmarking study for primary care opened for enrollment, focusing on recent developments in primary care, such as requirements for preventive services and the attributes of the Patient-Centered Medical Home.

Patient Safety Toolkits. Ambulatory Surgery and Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) was created to enhance safety for surgical patients who have OSA. It is the latest addition to a series of tools developed to improve patient safety in ambulatory settings and provides resources such as clinical decision-making algorithms and patient assessments.

Getting Started with a Free AAAHC Institute Study

The AAAHC Institute now offers each of its accredited organizations the opportunity to take part free-of-charge in a Benchmarking and Quality Assessment Study of its choice. We hope organizations will take advantage of this offer to participate in and learn more about these effective performance measurement and benchmarking activities.

The Bernard A. Kershner Innovations in Quality Improvement Awards

2012 Winners of the AAAHC Institute Annual Awards are:

In the Primary Care category, a quality improvement activity that reduced mammography result wait times to less than one day for more than 90 percent of patients earned the Award for 355 Medical Group Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Arizona.

In the Surgical category, the Award went to Siouxland Surgery Center in Dakota Dunes, South Dakota, for efforts that reduced to zero surgical site infections for knee and hip arthroplasty and lumbar spine fusions.
The AAAHC Accreditation Survey

“We have always appreciated the instructive and collaborative evaluation method that AAAHC employs. The surveyors are real industry professionals who fully understand our business along with its challenges and opportunities. The AAAHC seal of approval gives our center the credibility that our patients look for and gives us a certainty that our environment is the best it can be.”

Melody Winter-Jabeck, Administrator
Illinois Bone & Joint Institute, Glenview, Illinois

The Right Survey for Changing Times
Two distinguishing characteristics of the AAAHC survey process set it apart from others and make it uniquely suited to meeting the challenges facing health care providers today.

- AAAHC surveyors are themselves experts in providing ambulatory care. They are physicians, nurses, dentists, podiatrists, pharmacists, administrators and others who have the hands-on experience needed to tackle the real-world issues faced by the facilities they survey.

- The AAAHC survey model is one of cooperation and education. The process is both evaluative and consultative. As our health care landscape evolves, the AAAHC accreditation survey is an increasingly valuable resource for ambulatory care organizations. Surveyors not only assess whether an organization meets current AAAHC Standards, they also provide insight and experience to help organizations maintain high standards; share their knowledge of the latest changes in standards of care and regulations; and take a proactive role in promoting continual advances in quality patient care.

AAAHC Surveyors Must...
...have experience as practicing health care professionals employed or privileged by an ambulatory health care organization that is accredited by AAAHC or by another nationally recognized accrediting organization.

Preparing Our Surveyors
AAAHC surveyors complete a rigorous education process, including a period of self-instruction; two days of in-depth classroom sessions; and on-site training during an actual accreditation survey. After each survey, all AAAHC surveyors are evaluated by the peers with whom they conducted the survey and by the organization that was surveyed. Surveyors also receive ongoing education through webinars, newsletters and required attendance at a bi-annual refresher training program. Accredited organizations can be confident that AAAHC surveyors will keep them up-to-date with the latest in evidence-based best practices, evolving regulations and other developments that affect the delivery of quality ambulatory care.

“I believe strongly in the AAAHC accreditation process. When an organization chooses to participate, it signals a willingness to be evaluated by one’s peers and a commitment to excellence. As a surveyor, I can be sure I stay on the cutting edge of knowledge about the latest guidelines and regulations. As a physician, it also helps me stay on top of what’s best for my own practice.”

Arnaldo Valedon, MD
AAAHC Surveyor and Managing Partner,
First Colonies Anesthesia Consultants, Baltimore

“Preparing for the survey is a great exercise to review policy and procedures and to get the entire staff involved in a positive and productive QA/QI initiative. The surveyors are approachable. They are very good educators and excellent people to learn from.”

2012 AAAHC Customer Satisfaction Survey
International Accreditation

In 2010 AAAHC saw an opportunity to assure local patients as well as medical tourists that ambulatory medical services in other countries operate at a level consistent with AAAHC-accredited U.S. organizations. AAAHC International was formed as a subsidiary of AAAHC, and its first accreditations were awarded to organizations in Costa Rica. In 2012, AAAHC International extended its reach with the accreditation of two organizations in Lima, Peru. By seeking accreditation, Oncocare S.R.L., a cancer care center, and Clinica Santa Isabel, which offers maternity, obstetric and pediatric care, distinguish themselves by undergoing an independent and objective external evaluation by AAAHC International and demonstrate their commitment to care that meets internationally recognized standards.

Organizations seeking accreditation by AAAHC International undergo an extensive self-assessment and rigorous on-site survey by AAAHC surveyors who are actively involved in ambulatory health care. The survey is consultative and educational, presenting best practices to help an organization improve its care and services.

“After implementing robust quality improvement and patient safety initiatives and adopting evidence-based practices to guide patient care, Oncocare and Clinica Santa Isabel have earned the first international health care accreditations in Peruvian history. Peruvian consumers have a clear choice when they require oncology or mother and child health services. Our team is very proud of this significant accomplishment.”

Dr. Patrick Albert Palmieri
Chief Quality and Safety Officer, Pacifico Salud

Representatives of AAAHC International meet with administrators of Clinica Santa Isabel in Lima, Peru. The organization earned a three-year accreditation from AAAHC International.

From left to right: Patrick Palmieri (Director of Quality for Pacifico), Jim Pavletich (VP & COO, AAAHC), Jack Egnatinsky (Medical Director, AAAHC), Miguel Ramirez (Administrator, Clinica Santa Isabel), and John Olsen (Chair, AAAHC International).
New Resources from AAAHC

As the leader in ambulatory care accreditation, AAAHC has a responsibility to keep our accredited organizations up-to-date on the latest standards of care, regulations and guidelines, and other issues that affect ambulatory care providers and their patients. We continually refine our educational programs and other resources to meet changing needs. Most recently, AAAHC has significantly expanded its offering of webinars on a range of topics of interest to our accredited organizations, organizations seeking accreditation and to our accreditation surveyors.

Achieving Accreditation Seminars:
Expert Guidance for Surgery Centers, Primary Care and Health Plans

Our interactive Achieving Accreditation seminars for ambulatory surgery centers and primary care providers are the centerpiece of AAAHC efforts to help organizations prepare for and get the most out of the accreditation survey. The two-day meetings – held quarterly in various regions of the country – are led by AAAHC expert surveyors who have in-depth knowledge of the AAAHC Standards and real-world experience in meeting those Standards.

The seminars also offer participants elective programs that address their specific needs. ASCs, for example, can elect to participate in small-group, interactive workshops such as Understanding Medicare Deemed Status and Life Safety Code Requirements, while primary care providers participate in workshops that detail the AAAHC Medical Home Standards and offer guidance in implementing them.

“Especially loved the small group sessions. Very helpful to have an intimate…group to network with and ask questions in a casual setting.”

Val Charley, RN
Surgery Center of Southern Oregon
A National Voice for Ambulatory Care Accreditation

In addition to providing educational resources for its accredited organizations, AAAHC remains a strong voice for ambulatory care quality in the broader health care arena. AAAHC Board members, surveyors and staff share their expertise with the ambulatory care community-at-large, through webinars and presentations at national and regional meetings. From a webinar introducing our new health plan Standards to the payer community, to participation in the Policy and Issues Forum of the National Association of Community Health Centers, to presentations at the National Medical Home Summit – AAAHC is a nationally recognized advocate for accreditation and continual quality assessment and improvement.

Other activities in 2012 included presentations at the Ambulatory Surgery Center Association, American Dental Society for Anesthesiology, American Academy of Dental Group Practice, Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, Association of periOperative Registered Nurses, MGMA-ACMPE, American College Health Association, National Association of Community Health Centers, and many others.

New in 2012

Achieving Accreditation for Health Plans. In 2012, a new seminar was added that focuses on Achieving Accreditation for Health Plans and the new AAAHC health plan/managed care Standards that became effective in 2013. The program is offered in conjunction with the Achieving Accreditation seminar.

Consumer Brochure. When we surveyed our accredited organizations, they told us that the number one reason they chose accreditation was to improve the quality of care. The number two reason was the importance of accreditation as a symbol of high quality care that can be trusted by their patients, staff and community. The new AAAHC consumer brochure, designed for display in patient care areas, reinforces this message and reassures current and prospective patients that they are in good hands. It explains why it’s important to know that a health provider has voluntarily undergone an independent assessment of its services, and the high Standards an organization must meet before it can become accredited by AAAHC. Since the brochure was introduced last year, AAAHC has responded to requests for more than 32,000 copies.

The AAAHC Website Has a New Look.

Our website has been redesigned to make it more user-friendly and intuitive; and AAAHC is launching a special version that will speed downloads and enhance the website’s display on smartphones.
2012/2013 Officers
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Margaret Spear, MD, Vice Chair
W. Patrick Davey, MD, MBA, Treasurer
Timothy Peterson, MD, Secretary
Jack Egnatinsky, MD, Immediate Past Board President
John E. Burke, PhD, President and CEO

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Edward Bentley, MD, 2006
W. Dore Binder, MD, 2010
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Jan Davidson, MSN, RN, CNOR, 2011
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Meena Desai, MD, 2009
Richard Dolsky, MD, 2004
Richard Gentile, MD, 2006
Sandra Jones, CASC, LHRM, CHCQM, 2012
Girish Joshi, MD, 2006
Lawrence Kim, MD, 2004
Gerard Koorbusch, DDS, MBA, 2008
Melanie Lang, DDS, MD, 2012
Ross Levy, MD, 2012
W. Elwyn Lyles, MD, 2011
S. Teri McGillis, MD, 2006
Beverly Philip, MD, 2000
Jerome Potozkin, MD, 2009
Kenneth Sadler, DDS, MPA, FACP, 2005
James E. Schall, DDS, 2011
Dennis Schultz, MD, 1994-2003, 2010
Edwin Slade, DMD, JD, 2004
Scott Tenner, MD, 2007
Arnaldo Valedon, MD, 2010
Mary Ann Vann, MD, 2008
Christopher J. Vesy, MD, 2011

Dates indicate beginning year of service
AAAHC Association Members

Ambulatory Surgery Foundation (ASF)
William M. Prentice, JD, Executive Director

American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery (AACS)
Jennie Ward-Robinson, PhD, Executive Director

American Academy of Dental Group Practice (AADGP)
Robert A. Hankin, PhD, Executive Director

American Academy of Dermatology (AAD)
Elaine Weiss, JD, Executive Director & CEO

American Academy of Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS)
Stephen C. Duffy, Executive Vice President

American Association of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS)
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American College Health Association (ACHA)
Doyle E. Randol, MS, Col USA (Retired), Executive Director

American College of Mohs Surgery (ACMS)
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American Dental Association (ADA)
Sheila A. Strock, DMD, MPH, Senior Manager of Interprofessional Relations

American Gastroenterological Association (AGA)
Jennifer Conte, CGCS, Vice President, Innovation and Health

American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA)
Paul Pomerantz, MBA, CEO

American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association (ASDSA)
Katherine J. Duerdoth, CAE, Executive Director

American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE)
Patricia Blake, CAE, CEO

Association for periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN)
Linda Groah, MSN, RN, CNOR, NEA-BC, FAAN, CEO/Executive Director

MGMA-ACMPE
Susan Turney, MD, President & CEO

Society for Ambulatory Anesthesia (SAMBA)
Nicole Bradle, MA, CMP, Executive Director

Standing Committees

Accreditation
Audit and Finance
Bylaws
Executive
Governing Council
Nominating
Surveyor Training and Education
Standards and Survey Procedures

Accredited Organizations by Category

- Ambulatory Surgery Centers 63%
- Office-Based Surgery Centers 12%
- Medical Group 9%
- Student Health 5%
- Military Medical Centers 4%
- Dental Practices 4%
- Indian Health 3%
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AAAHC Executive Staff

John Burke, PhD  President and CEO
Geoffrey Charlton-Perrin  Director, Marketing and Communications
Meg Gravesmill, MBA  Vice President, Education
Ray Grundman, MSN, MPA  Senior Director, External Relations
Meg Kerr  Director, Education and Surveyor Credentialing
Carolyn Kurtz, JD  General Counsel and Vice President, Government/Public Affairs
Naomi Kuznets, PhD  Senior Director and General Manager, AAAHC Institute
Jim Pavletich, MHA, CAE  Vice President, Chief Operating Officer and General Manager, Ambulatory Operations
Janice Plack, CAE  Director, Information Technology
Sergio Tumang  Chief Financial Officer and Senior Director Administration
Michon Villanueva, MHA  Director, Accreditation Services

Healthcare Consultants International, Inc. (HCI), a for-profit subsidiary of AAAHC, provides consulting expertise and educational programs for a range of ambulatory health care settings. The primary focus of HCI is assisting ambulatory health care organizations in preparing for accreditation, licensure and certification (including Medicare), as well as providing expertise in quality assessment/performance improvement, infection control and regulatory compliance. HCI consultants and instructors are experienced clinical practitioners and accreditation surveyors with a wide range of expertise in the development, administration and accreditation of ambulatory surgery centers and office-based surgery practices. Kristine Mighion, MD, MBA, Managing Director and CEO of HCI and others on the organization’s consulting team are continually expanding their services to meet the changing needs of their clients.

HCI consulting services are separate and independent from the accreditation services of AAAHC. All accreditation decisions by AAAHC are made without regard as to whether consulting services have been provided by HCI or another organization.