

# You Have a Choice in Accreditation Organizations Who Knew?

Many healthcare executives don't realize they have choices when selecting an accreditation program. It's true that the Joint Commission has sweeping brand recognition, so much so the brand has become synonymous with the service. But for the service of accreditation, Joint Commission is not the only game in town. An alternative accreditor is the Healthcare Facilities Accreditation Program (HFAP).



BY MICHAEL J. ZARSKI, JD

HFAP is that the survey process is "user friendly and non-punitive." Standards are realistic, understandable, measurable, beneficial and achievable. Costly consultants are not required to interpret the standards or prepare for an HFAP survey. The HFAP standards are conducive to consistent, predictable application thereby reducing the stress level and frustration of the staff during the survey process.

HFAP is educationally focused, and its surveyors are experienced health care professionals who understand the many aspects of a health care facility and help make the survey process more realistic and educational. If a deficiency is identified, HFAP's surveyors are able to draw from their experience and offer feasible solutions, usually on the spot. Also, successful accreditation is based on the facility's ability to correct deficiencies, so there is no downside to discovery of issues during the survey process.

As a smaller more nimble organization, HFAP is able to respond to the needs of its accredited facilities expediently. For example, discharge planning/continuity of care is being addressed as part of an overall drive to add value to the accreditation process by enhancing patient safety.

HFAP accreditation is recognized by the federal government, state departments of public health, insurance carriers and managed care organizations. It is also recognized by National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

More information on the program may be found at [www.hfap.org](http://www.hfap.org). Michael J. Zarski, CEO of HFAP, can be reached at (312) 202-8258 or [info@hfap.org](mailto:info@hfap.org).

HFAP, with headquarters in Chicago, is not a new kid on the block by any means. It was founded in 1943 and began surveying hospitals in 1945.

Before there was a Joint Commission, HFAP was conducting objective reviews of services provided by osteopathic hospitals. In 1965, when Congress decided that accredited hospitals would be deemed to meet the Conditions of Participation for the newly established Medicare and Medicaid programs, HFAP applied for and was granted deeming authority.

Maintaining its deeming authority continuously since the inception of Medicare, HFAP meets or exceeds the standards required by CMS/Medicare to provide accreditation to all hospitals, clinical laboratories, ambulatory surgical centers, and critical access hospitals. In addition, HFAP accredits mental health and physical rehabilitation facilities and provides certification for primary stroke centers.

HFAP program manuals have the industry's tightest crosswalks to Medicare Conditions, as applicable for each category of accreditation. The program offers all healthcare facilities the tools to assess and demonstrate their commitment to providing quality care to their patients.

Why would a hospital use HFAP instead of the alternatives? What we hear over and over from leaders of hospitals accredited by



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