

- Ensuring reliable processes
- Decreasing variation and defects (waste)
- Focusing on achieving positive measurable outcomes
- Using evidence to ensure that a service is satisfactory

Patient safety emerges as a central aim of quality. *Patient safety*, as defined by the World Health Organization, is the prevention of errors and adverse effects to patients that are associated with health care. Safety (protection from harm) is what patients, families, staff, and the public expect from Joint Commission International–accredited organizations. Although patient safety events may not be eliminated, the goal is always zero harm. Joint Commission International–accredited organizations should be continually focused on eliminating systems failures and human errors that may cause harm to patients, families, and staff.

Goals of This Chapter

This “Patient Safety Systems” (PS) chapter provides health care organizations with a proactive approach to maintaining or redesigning a patient-centered system that aims to improve quality of care and patient safety, an approach that aligns with Joint Commission International’s mission and its standards.

JCI partners with accredited organizations to improve the ability of health care systems to protect patients. The first obligation of health care is to “do no harm.” Therefore, this chapter focuses on the following three guiding principles:

1. Aligning existing JCI standards with daily work to engage patients and staff throughout the health care system on reducing harm
2. Assisting health care organizations to become learning organizations by advancing knowledge, skills, and competence of staff and patients by recommending methods that will improve quality and safety processes
3. Encouraging and recommending proactive quality and patient safety methods that will increase accountability, trust, and knowledge while reducing the impact of fear and blame

It informs and educates hospitals about the importance and structure of an integrated patient safety system and helps staff understand the relationship between JCI accreditation and patient safety. It offers approaches and methods that may be adapted by any organization that aims to increase the reliability and transparency of its complex systems while removing the risk of patient harm.

The “Patient Safety” (PS) chapter cross-references specific Joint Commission International standards, describing how existing requirements can be applied to achieve improved patient safety. It does not contain any new requirements for accreditation, and the PS chapter is not intended as a stand-alone chapter for accreditation survey purposes. Standards referenced in this chapter are formatted with the standard number in boldface type (for example, “**Standard PCC.01.00**”) and are accompanied by language that summarizes the standard. For the full text of a standard and its measurable elements (MEs), please refer to the *Joint Commission International Accreditation Standards for Hospitals*, 8th Edition.

Throughout this chapter, we will do the following:

- Discuss how hospitals can develop into learning organizations.
- Identify the role of leaders to establish a safety culture and ensure staff accountability.
- Explain how hospitals can continually evaluate the status and progress of their patient safety systems.
- Describe how hospitals can work to prevent patient safety events with proactive risk assessments.
- Highlight the critical component of patient activation and engagement in a patient safety system.
- Provide a framework to guide hospital leaders as they work to improve patient safety in their hospitals.