

QA



# Expert Guidance During Challenging Times

A large east coast hospital faced a challenge in that their triennial survey was scheduled to take place after the turmoil of the COVID pandemic had just started to settle down.

The Director of Regulatory Affairs & Accreditation spoke with us about how Joint Commission Resources' (JCR) Interim Services helped the organization prepare for re-accreditation after an almost two-year disruption.

A senior leader describes how Joint Commission Resources Interim Services helped her organization address medical record system challenges and prepare for their triennial survey.

## Q. What drove you to seek out JCR Interim Services?

Less than six months before COVID, we changed our medical record system from our old platform to a new electronic medical record (EMR) system. So, we were already facing the challenge of navigating a new system when the pandemic hit. Then, after more than a year of dealing with COVID, we were scheduled for our triennial accreditation survey in less than six months.

I had used JCR Interim Services, as well as some of their other consulting services, in my past roles and always found them to be a great help. So, when I came to this organization, I knew that I had to bring JCR in to become immersed in our culture and our workflow and get all the help we could.

After a GAP analysis of our state of readiness, we decided it was in our best interest to utilize JCR's expertise to help us identify other areas of vulnerability and opportunities for improvement, coach staff, and assist with overall survey readiness.

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### **Q. What was the experience like?**

It was amazing. Our JCR consultant had a wealth of knowledge. From his first visit to our facility, he really made a point of cultivating relationships with staff and leadership across all disciplines. With his help we spent many hours doing mock surveys and tracers in every unit of the hospital and identified issues.

He was also a guru on our new medical record system. He spent a lot of time coaching staff on how to navigate the system, and his expertise and knowledge of what The Joint Commission looks for while conducting tracers smoothed the process for everyone—staff and leadership, which was great because we only had about six months to prepare.



### **Q. Did he work with you onsite or remote?**

We were contracted for about 40 days, and we started off with him being here once a month. Then, as we got close to our survey, that became three days a week, twice a month. However, he was always available, so if he was not onsite or we didn't have him scheduled to be here for tracers, or services, we were able to call if a question or concern popped up. His response to calls, emails, or texts was almost immediate.

Sometimes, if we had a policy and needed him to look at the verbiage, or even just a couple of sentences, I could shoot it over to him and he would help us out. He even helped us through a weekend, once. He went above and beyond in making himself available to us, anytime, any day.

### **Q. How did Interim Services help with your medical record system challenges?**

We understood that during surveys, The Joint Commission performs open chart reviews while in the units. We realized early on that some of our nurses, physicians and residents had difficulty navigating the new medical record system. When our consultant observed that he would step in and help.

For instance, he would show them how to go into different segments of the medical record to locate information about education, moderate sedation, and other important topics. That helped us identify holes in the records, then fill them so that we had complete comprehensive documentation.

The post-survey assistance was helpful, too. We were able to sit with our teams and create corrective action plans, new policies, protocols, procedures, and guidelines. After we did that, he reviewed them, which was a great help. Sometimes hospitals have to go back and resubmit their corrective actions but everything we did was approved during the initial submission.

**Q. What were the biggest advantages to using JCR Interim Services, versus someone else?**

The greatest advantage to using JCR Interim Services was having real-time access to industry knowledge and clarification on Joint Commission and CMS standards. The access to standardized tools and policy templates really helped our team identify issues, too.

We knew we needed JCR Interim Services to collaborate with us, which simplified the process and contributed to the success of the survey.

**Q. What would you tell someone who asked you about using JCR Interim Services?**

I would say do it! It's worth every single penny! Regulatory surveys are meant to drive patient safety, which is our mission here but survey readiness can be extremely tedious. It takes a great deal of time and resources and can be stressful. So, having JCR to collaborate with eases that process.

In fact, we are contracting with JCR for the Continuous Service Readiness Program, which we are really excited about. Having an external coach/teacher come in and work with the staff is such a valuable asset, and I highly recommend it.

**For more information about JCR Accreditation Preparation Advisory Services, including Interim Services, visit <https://www.jcrinc.com/products-and-services/advisory-services/accreditation-preparation>**



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