



NEWS RELEASE

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Joint Commission Joins White House Effort to Reduce Antibiotic Overuse

(OAKBROOK TERRACE, Ill. – June 2, 2015) As part of the White House Forum on Antibiotic Stewardship today, The Joint Commission announced its commitment today to increase its efforts to promote effective antibiotic stewardship within health care facilities.

The Joint Commission joined representatives from more than 150 major health care organizations, food companies, retailers, and animal health organizations at the forum to announce their commitment to implementing changes over the next five years to slow the emergence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, detect resistant strains, preserve the efficacy of existing antibiotics, and prevent the spread of resistant infections.

As part of its commitment, The Joint Commission will begin by reviewing its current standards and work with accredited organizations and others to identify where new standards may be needed to promote effective antibiotic stewardship. The Joint Commission will develop any new standards as rapidly as possible and simultaneously provide new tools to help providers use antibiotics judiciously. This issue is a high priority for The Joint Commission because the rise of antibiotic-resistant bacteria represents a serious threat to public health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates at least 2 million illnesses and 23,000 deaths in the United States each year are caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and 20 to 50 percent of all antibiotics prescribed in acute care hospitals in the United States are either unnecessary or inappropriate. Inappropriate use of antibiotics includes, but is not limited to:

- Prescribing antibiotics for viral infections
- Using broad-spectrum antibiotics instead of narrow-spectrum antibiotics
- Prescribing antibiotics in response to pressure from patients/family

“The Joint Commission knows that antibiotic stewardship is a proven method of reducing the inappropriate use of antibiotics and improving patient safety,” said Mark R. Chassin, MD, FACP,

MPP, MPH, president and CEO, The Joint Commission. “We are committed to helping health care providers improve their ability to practice effective stewardship in order that the nation can both optimize the treatment of infections and reduce adverse events associated with antibiotic use.”

The Joint Commission currently has 16 standards and one National Patient Safety Goal that have a relationship to antimicrobial stewardship.

In order to ensure alignment with stewardship initiatives at the federal level, The Joint Commission will seek the input of government entities charged under President Obama’s September 18, 2014, Executive Order focusing on combating antibiotic resistant bacteria. That order requires the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop requirements for antibiotic stewardship programs. These and other federal agencies and stakeholder groups will have input into the research associated with the development process for any changes in accreditation standards.

In addition to evaluating its standards, The Joint Commission has committed to develop several publications to raise the level of awareness of providers to the benefit of engaging in stewardship practices, create patient-based materials to engage consumers in this important area, and update its tool kit to support organizations with implementing stewardship programs. More information is available at www.jointcommission.org.

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The Joint Commission

Founded in 1951, The Joint Commission seeks to continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value. The Joint Commission accredits and certifies nearly 21,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States. An independent, nonprofit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation’s oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care. Learn more about The Joint Commission at www.jointcommission.org.