

ProPeller

Model for Accreditation Cycle

Something is always changing in our industry. One change many of us are struggling with is how the Joint Commission will be conducting future accreditation surveys. How we manage this change will influence our productivity and accreditation outcome. To be successful, we need to understand it.

The new accreditation process is based, in part, on systems theory. Systems and processes are developed to work under certain circumstances. Most have no flexibility or resiliency to deal with change. Demands on our systems and processes in health care rise in response to growth, demographic shifts or technology. Increased demand often requires change and when one part of a system changes, every process it is connected to is impacted. If we fail to adapt or modify processes in response to these changes, our level of effectiveness fails. Quick fixes may alleviate the problem in the short run and lull us into thinking the issue is resolved. However, due to the interconnected nature of health care processes, we will eventually experience a breakdown. In the best-case scenario, a missed step may stop progression, producing delays in treatment or erosion of service satisfaction. In the worst-case scenario, a missed step or broken link may not stop the process from proceeding, resulting in errors and devastating outcomes.

It is reasonable to apply these concepts to accreditation. Systems either undergo continual adaptive change or cease to function effectively. Everything we do is interconnected so if we change one process or even a step in a process, we can easily fall out of compliance with something we thought we had sustained.

Joint Commission's new survey approach goes directly to the heart of care delivery and ferrets out system failures. Surveyors do this by applying new accreditation tools known as the priority focus process, tracer methodology and the periodic performance review. The premise is that we cannot really tell whether a system is working effectively by looking at the system in isolation. We need to look at the function the system plays in the organization and how it interacts with other systems. Rather than taking the system apart in isolation, as in the old "functional" approach to surveying, the new survey methodology strives to test various components of different systems and see how effectively they fit and function together.

The "systems" approach to accreditation alters the relationship between Joint Commission standards and the hospital.

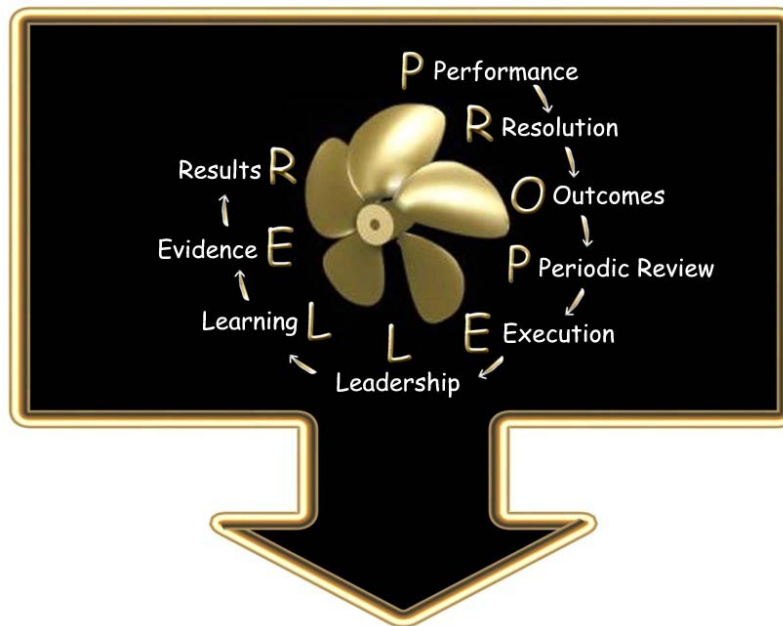
The usual "lull" between onsite surveys is being replaced with constant vigilance and improvement. What this means for the organization is that there is no standing still, no ramp up for a survey, and no last minute prep. Instead, the organization must have strategies in place to respond to the ever-changing environment and achieve stable patterns of incremental improvement. As a byproduct, the organization propels itself into continuous standards compliance.

The ProPell Consulting Group uses a systems approach, known as the *Propeller* model, to assist clients with continuous standards compliance. The ProPeller helps our clients reach internally-defined quality goals while at the same time meeting JCAHO standards!



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PROPELLER

<u>Propeller Step</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Timeline (in months)</u>
P Performance	Perform standards assessment to identify compliance failures	(0 - 6)
R Resolution	Remedy compliance failures by developing and implementing action plans and establishing measures of success	(6 - 12)
O Outcomes	Obtain stable outcomes and sustained improvements.	(13 - 14)
P Periodic Review	Perform Periodic Performance Review.	(15 - 18)
E Execution	Execute plans of action. Correct any remaining compliance variants.	(19 - 24)
L Leadership	Lead efforts to sustain improvements	(24- 35)
L Learning	Learn from the onsite survey process and findings	(36)
E Evidence	Establish evidence of compliance and measures of success for variants identified in the onsite survey. <i>Return to P at start of process</i>	(37.5- 39)
R Results	Review measurement results and submit to JCAHO	(44)

Look for upcoming ProPell newsletter articles describing each step of the Propeller model!

