

Premier Consulting Solutions Joint Commission Readiness Team helps N.C. medical center be ever-ready for Joint Commission survey teams

Alamance Regional Medical Center (ARMC) in Burlington, NC, underwent a successful survey by The Joint Commission in June and officials at the long-time Premier owner give a lot of the credit to help they receive on an ongoing basis from the Premier Consulting Solutions Joint Commission Readiness Team led by Principal Howard Nussman.

“We don’t like to cram and do things at the last minute, said Senior Vice President, Patient Care Carol Hudson. “We want to make these processes a part of how we do business. Howard and his team help us to do that. We believed in continuous readiness before the Joint Commission made it mandatory. Premier definitely helped us make that evolution in thinking. It fits with our culture. We have built it into the way we do business – an integral part of our processes for guaranteeing quality and safety. There is absolutely no need to go through a fire drill every three years.”

Alamance has had a long-standing relationship with Premier for Joint Commission readiness services going all the way back to 1980 when the hospital was managed by Carolinas Hospital and Health Services, Inc., predecessor to SunHealth, one of three organizations that merged in 1996 to form Premier.

“Alamance is one of our very first clients. They have been with us a long time and use our team for evaluations, preparation and training,” Nussman noted.

Risk Management and Medical Staff Services Director Kathy McKeown said, “We take full advantage of Premier’s services in our continuous preparation. We’ve had a preparation team for 10 years that meets monthly to track our progress and highlight problems. About 18 months out, we have Premier do a ‘mock audit,’ that may or may not be announced widely. We then work on the focus areas from the mock audit. As we get closer to survey time, the preparation team may even meet weekly if needed.”

Vicki Moran, Joint Commission coordinator, said there are three areas where Premier has been “particularly helpful:”

- Web-based training,
- New information provided in monthly e-mail updates; “there’s just too much happening for us to keep up with it.”
- Networking with other hospitals through Premier on the breadth and scope of Joint Commission-related activities and the opportunity to learn from others about their experiences. This is very helpful.”

Alamance uses Premier’s QualityAdvisor™ the leading clinical efficiency and quality performance benchmarking application in the healthcare industry, to benchmark against top performers, to prioritize quality improvement efforts and to handle core measures and other required reporting. QualityAdvisor reports were used successfully during the most recent survey to satisfy Joint Commission surveyors for both ongoing and focused professional practice evaluation of the Alamance medical staff.

Physician performance information is gathered primarily from ClinicalAdvisor by our director of quality who formerly served us as a Premier Performance Engineer,” Moran said. “Howard meets with our medical staff annually to bring them up to speed about changes. “They’ve come to expect it. They appreciate his knowledge, experience and his succinct way of expressing it.”

“Alamance has been well-served by Premier over the years as our partner in ongoing readiness for Joint Commission surveys,” Hudson said. “Howard has put together a tremendous team that is very knowledgeable of all aspects of preparation for a Joint Commission survey. Each year Howard knows the new standards and how they will be reviewed, and he willingly shares that information with us. We feel like Howard and his team are part of our team here at Alamance.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Call the Solution Center at 877.777.1552 or e-mail solutioncenter@premierinc.com

© 2010 Premier Inc. All rights reserved



Alamance Regional Medical Center is a not-for-profit healthcare system serving Burlington, NC, and surrounding areas with a 238-bed medical center, 81-bed nursing home, continuing care retirement community, pediatric rehabilitation clinic, and a sports rehabilitation center. Mebane Medical Park has general practitioners and rehabilitation and cancer centers; the West End Medical Park provides primary care. www.armc.com

Premier Consulting Solutions has been helping healthcare leadership teams prepare for surveys and maintain continuous survey readiness for more than 20 years.

2009 results

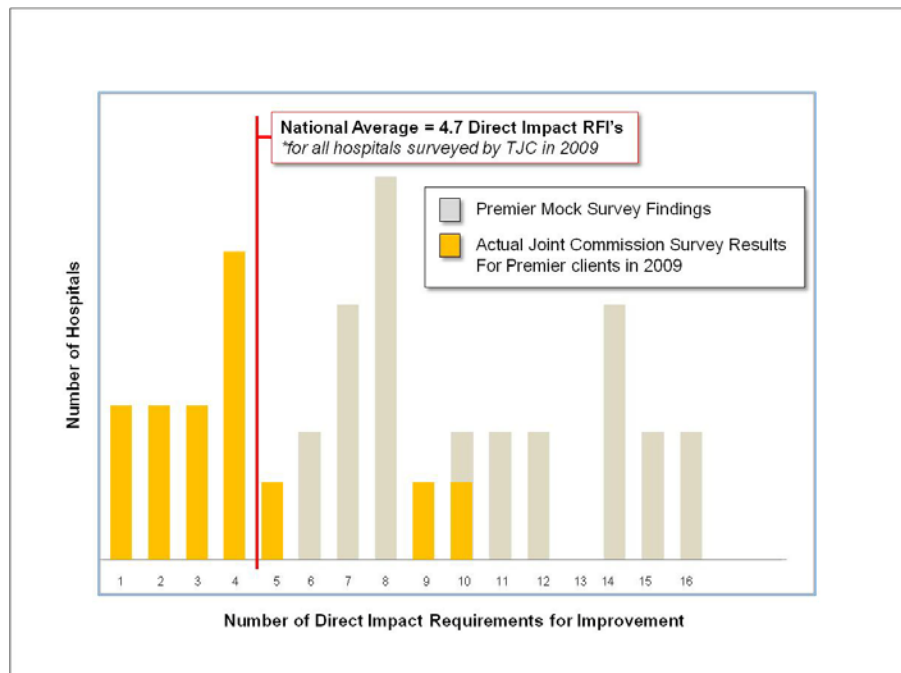
- Premier clients fared better during Joint Commission surveys than their peers nationwide.
- Premier clients received fewer Requirements for Improvement during surveys than the national average for all surveys published by The Joint Commission for the same time period.
- Premier clients received fewer Direct Impact Requirements for Improvement than their counterparts (as shown in the chart below), and they made significant improvements in performance with thorough assessment of improvement opportunities and clear guidance on how to close the performance gaps.

Resources

The Premier Consulting Solutions team of experts includes specialists in all Joint Commission programs (hospital, home care, ambulatory, behavioral, laboratory, long-term care) and CMS Conditions of Participation. Mock surveys include at least one day of a Life Safety Specialist. Offerings include on-site engagements as well as Internet-based training and e-mail alerts to changes in requirements or other new developments.

Service offerings include:

- Mock surveys for all programs
- Consultation in preparation for intensive reviews by CMS
- Ongoing, Web-based training to support continuous survey readiness
- Tailored support to address significant improvement opportunities in all areas of Joint Commission standards



- Implementation of Focused Professional Practice Evaluation (FPPE) and Ongoing Professional Practice Evaluation (OPPE)
- Statement of Conditions preparation