



November 9, 2010

Dear Hospital Chief Executive Officer and President of the Medical Staff:

As you may know, The Joint Commission recently approved revisions to hospital accreditation Standard MS.01.01.01 (formerly MS.1.20), which will take effect April 1, 2011. The revisions were developed by an implementation task force convened by The Joint Commission that included representatives from the American College of Physicians, American College of Surgeons, American Dental Association, American Hospital Association (AHA), American Medical Association (AMA), Federation of American Hospitals and National Association of Medical Staff Services. All of the organizations involved support the new standard.

The purpose of this joint letter is to recognize that achieving compliance with the new standard will require that hospitals, their governing boards, and their medical staffs examine their current bylaws and related documents, determine if any changes need to be made, and work together to make those changes in a reasonable timeframe.

Feedback received from many hospitals and medical staffs during the public comment period preceding adoption of the new standard indicated that many believed that their current bylaws and related documents met the standard, while others found they would likely need to make modest modifications.

If your organization is among those that need to implement more substantive changes, it will be important for the medical staff to initiate the proposed changes soon so that they can be reviewed through the entire process and be in place the first time the hospital is surveyed by The Joint Commission after April 1, 2011. To help, The Joint Commission has made available through its website more information and a Frequently Asked Questions document to provide further detail.

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The Joint Commission's deadline is sufficiently close that it may put some pressure on both hospital and medical staff leadership to act expeditiously. Despite the need for quick action, this process and the quality and safety of care provided to our patients will benefit from clear expressions of mutual respect and an appreciation of the need for collaboration among your organization's leadership groups.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Umbdenstock President and CEO American Hospital Association Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA Executive Vice President, CEO American Medical Association