

# Medical Home

## NEWS

## Keep Calm and Become a Medical Home

By Mona Sweeney, RN, BSN

**NOTE:** Medical Home News has invited each of the five national organizations offering recognition/accreditation for medical homes – the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care, the Joint Commission, NCQA, Planetree, Inc., and URAC -- to provide a feature article describing their programs. This is the second in the series. Ed.

**K** *Keep Calm and Carry On* was a slogan created by the British government at the beginning of World War II, intended to raise the public morale in the aftermath of widely predicted mass air attacks on major cities.<sup>1,2</sup> More recently, this slogan has been revived and liberally adapted to an array of actual or imagined stressors.

The Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC) understands that transforming a health care organization to the Medical Home practice model can produce anxiety. Will our providers embrace a team-based model of care? How will we engage our patient population? Will payers reward our success? Choosing the right organization to assist you in the process, validate the quality of care you deliver, and provide formal recognition of your efforts is a critical piece of the transformation.

At AAAHC, we work as your partner throughout the process rather than as inspector of a final product. We believe our relationship with you is as important as your relationship with your patients. Our relationship-based programs rest on the training and expertise of our professional staff, and the doctors, nurses, medical directors, and administrators who are our surveyors. AAAHC surveyors bring their hands-on experience with the daily issues you face to their work in this partnership. Through them, AAAHC programs emphasize high touch rather than high tech to provide your organization with a consultative and collaborative experience.

Support for your organization begins at first contact with AAAHC. We will describe the process, and provide resources and consultation to prepare you for your survey. You can choose either of two paths to Medical Home recognition: accreditation or on-site certification.

### AAAHC Medical Home On-Site Certification.

Medical Home On-Site Certification results from an in-depth look at your Medical Home program. The Certification Standards, focused on provider-patient relationship, accessibility, comprehensiveness and continuity of care, clinical records and quality, define the characteristics and measure how you provide care as a *Medical Home*.

Once your application has been submitted, we will schedule a pre-survey conference call with your surveyor. We recognize that no two organizations are identical, and this call provides an opportunity for you to provide background about your organization and ask questions as you get to know your surveyor (and vice-versa). We want each organization to feel fully prepared for the on-site survey.

The survey is scheduled at a mutually agreeable time. This avoids the “gotcha” feeling that an unannounced visit might elicit, allows your key stakeholders to be present, and maximizes the benefit from the experience. Remember our theme: Keep calm and carry on!

The on-site survey concludes with a summation conference for your team, at which your surveyor presents his/her findings, provides consultative comments, and invites discussion. AAAHC surveyors act as fact finders; they do not render the final decision, but your decision letter will arrive within thirty days.



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**Keep Calm and Carry On...continued****AAAHC Medical Home Accreditation.**

AAAHC accreditation is a comprehensive review of your organization's entire operation including your ability to provide care against AAAHC Medical Home accreditation Standards that are based on the *Joint Principles of the Patient-Centered Medical Home*.<sup>3</sup> This program reviews how you have integrated the Medical Home program into the overall functioning of your organization.

AAAHC accreditation Standards are divided into chapters that form a system of connected principles, rather than a list of discrete requirements. These nationally recognized standards are reviewed annually to ensure that your primary care center adopts the most current best practices. Accreditation from AAAHC represents the highest level of recognition from a leading accreditor of ambulatory health care organizations with over 30 years of experience.

AAAHC awards a three-year term of certification or accreditation to organizations that are in substantial current compliance with the relevant Standards when we have no reservation about an organization's commitment to continue to provide high quality care as a Medical Home. A detailed report of the survey findings and consultative comments provides an action plan for your ongoing transformation journey.

But our support doesn't end here.

The AAAHC Institute for Quality Improvement offers studies to help organizations compare their processes and outcomes with similar organizations and meet AAAHC Standards for quality improvement and benchmarking. Accredited organizations may participate in one study per term of accreditation free of charge. We will also provide a free copy of the updated Standards each year that your certification or accreditation is in effect.

We are a not-for-profit with a mission focused on quality of care and patient safety across ambulatory settings. As such, our fees are structured to cover the costs of on-site visits, taking into consideration the size, complexity and scope of your practice. The application fee is \$775. There are no membership fees or additional hidden expenses. Estimates can be provided upon request.

The trend from inpatient to outpatient care, the growth in the number and types of outpatient care providers, and today's emphasis on evidenced-based practice supported by performance measurement and quality improvement, makes AAAHC programs more relevant than ever. With our specific focus on and expertise in ambulatory care we are well-suited to meet the needs of primary care organizations including community health centers, student health centers, Indian health centers, workplace health centers, and military health.

More and more, the patient-centered Medical Home model of care is proving that it delivers on the promise of high quality care at reduced cost with increased patient and provider satisfaction. Nonetheless, it takes time, commitment and resources to achieve. Let us help you to KEEP CALM AND BECOME A MEDICAL HOME.

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<sup>1</sup> "Keep Calm and Carry On Poster". *IWM Shop*. Imperial War Museum. 2011. Retrieved 28 May 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis, Rebecca, Ph. D. (5 April 2009). "1939: The Three Posters (PhD Extract)". *Keep Calm and Carry On and other Second World War Posters: British Home Front Propaganda Posters of the Second World War*.

<sup>3</sup> American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American College of Physicians (ACP), and American Osteopathic Association (AOA): *Joint Principles of the Patient-Centered Medical Home*, February 2007