



**AAAHC**  
ACCREDITATION ASSOCIATION  
for AMBULATORY HEALTH CARE, INC.



## CONNECTION



### Never Events and Always Events

At a time when enormous energy (not to mention serious money) is expended on developing and reporting metrics and measures across health care settings, adverse events are top of mind and top the list of “things we need to track.” Creating metrics for success is also important. Defining “always events” alongside “never events” can be a low- to no-cost way to build a culture of patient safety and satisfaction while enhancing organizational effectiveness.

#### Never Events: Preventing the Preventable

Most health care providers are familiar with the term “never events.” These are serious adverse events that are largely preventable. The risk of such an occurrence is significantly influenced by the policies and procedures of the health care organization—risk increases with weak policies and/or poor adherence to them. To emphasize the level of concern that these events should generate, regulatory bodies may require reporting should one occur, and payers may withhold reimbursement in such cases.

AAAHC specifically addresses adverse events within our

January 2015

#### AAAHC on the road

If you're attending any of these upcoming conferences, please stop by our exhibit booth and say hello.

#### American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery

January 14-17  
New Orleans, LA

#### 12th Congress on On-Site Employee Health Clinics

January 22-23  
Las Vegas, NV

#### American Academy of Dental Group Practice

February 11-14  
Las Vegas, NV

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Standards for Risk Management in the *Accreditation Handbook* chapter on Quality Management and Improvement. We require that each accredited organization formally define and contrast an incident and an adverse incident (Std. 5.II.D\*), as well as a process for identifying, reporting, and analyzing these (including corrective actions) so as to minimize the probability of recurrence (Std. 5.II.F\*).

As an accrediting body, we emphasize the need for policies and procedures that safeguard patient safety and facilitate quality care. We establish requirements for *what* an accreditable organization must do, while allowing for considerable flexibility in *how* these requirements are achieved. The Standards translate ideals of organizational operations and patient care into actionable goals. Standards heighten the ability of providers to anticipate the unplanned and proactively replace it with pre-determined best practice.

Another way to look at this would be to describe every Standard that includes a documentation requirement as promoting a culture that diminishes the likelihood of “never events” by supporting the development of “always events.”

### **Always Events: Promoting the Positive**

The first set of AAAHC Standards addresses Patient Rights and Responsibilities. Standard 1.A, *Patients are treated with respect, consideration, and dignity*, aligns quite naturally with an “always events” approach.

Does the phrase “always events” have a familiar ring? Originally an initiative of the Picker Institute to promote its mission of patient-centered care, the [Always Events® program](#) is now shepherded by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. In the context of this program, Always Events® define experiences that *every* patient should have at *every* encounter within the health care environment. These events are deliberately designed using criteria that emphasize the significant, the evidence-based, the measurable, and the affordable, in planning patient-provider interactions.

This notion of patient-centered care is not new, but it does seem to be experiencing a renaissance in the era of the Medical Home (think Marcus Welby, MD, not Gregory House, MD). And as patient-centeredness and “always events” gain momentum in primary care (and as ACOs continue to be established and grow), episodic and acute care organizations are speaking the language of patient-centeredness, too. AAAHC-accredited organizations embrace this commitment to an overall culture of safe practices and quality improvement.

***Always events are happening in your organization.*** Consider what they are and make sure they’re planned and intentional.

\*Standards referenced reflect the 2015 edition of the *Accreditation Handbook for Ambulatory Health Care*.

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