

Answering the wake-up call

At Valley Health System, being prepared for accreditation is about doing what's right for the patient

Valley Health System

Ridgewood, New Jersey

Valley Health System is a regional health care system serving more than 500,000 residents in northern New Jersey and southern New York. It includes The Valley Hospital, a 451-bed, not-for-profit, regional acute-care hospital that is consistently recognized for quality care and patient satisfaction; Valley Home Care, a home care and hospice agency; and Valley Medical Group, a multispecialty group practice of more than 200 physicians representing over 40 medical and surgical specialties.

A highly productive partnership

Valley Health and Vizient™ have been working together since 1986, and the leaders at the health care system fully understand the value that Vizient brings to the table. In just the last few years, the organization saved millions of dollars through Vizient solutions, from product standardization to a pharmacy distribution initiative composed of Vizient members.

“Aside from the supply chain end, the other area where Vizient was really able to help us was with our Joint Commission preparations,” said Peter Diestel, chief operating officer at The Valley Hospital. “The accreditation services and the consulting were a huge help, and remain a big help today.”

Mock survey, real results

A key part of Vizient Accreditation Services is the mock survey, where expert consultants perform tracers, competence assessments, and other activities—just like an actual survey from The Joint Commission. The outside perspective gives hospitals an idea of where they will stand when the real survey happens, and what to correct.

“When they did the mock survey, it was sort of a wake-up call,” Diestel said. “I think we’ve always done very well with The Joint Commission, but the mock survey showed some degree of complacency throughout the organization.”

Diestel huddled with other senior leaders and agreed that the organization’s goal should be a constant state of preparedness for accreditation.

“We started talking about the fact that we never want to have to prepare for a survey,” he said. “We need to get to the point where this is what we do all the time, because it’s in the best interest of the patient.”

Creating a culture change

Now, leaders do regular rounds throughout the hospital and communicate the results to the entire management staff. This clearly delivers the message that compliance is everyone's responsibility. Valley Health employees also take a mandatory annual course related to The Joint Commission regulations and surveys.

"Everybody has to be aware that these aren't Joint Commission standards that we're trying to comply with. These are patient safety standards that should be part of our day-to-day operation," said Diestel.

He feels that Vizient has been instrumental in the organization's continuing commitment to better patient safety and clinical performance.

"Vizient is tremendously helpful as a partner when we're preparing for the survey. I don't care who walks in—the State Department of Health, The Joint Commission, CMS—we'll welcome them anytime, because what they're going to see is how we operate," he said.

As the nation's largest member-owned health care services company, Vizient provides network-powered insights in the critical areas of clinical, operational, and supply chain performance and empowers members to deliver exceptional, cost-effective care.



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