

Achieving—and sustaining— CARF accreditation

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The road to accreditation is filled with opportunities for quality improvement. Although the journey requires organizational focus and teamwork, CARF has carefully mapped the accreditation route with easy-to-follow directions. It need not seem like a bewildering maze.

Success in attaining accreditation is not only possible; CARF wants to help you succeed! That is why we urge you to take advantage of our many resources to energize your organization’s efforts to achieve accreditation. These resources can also help your organization sustain the momentum of achievement throughout your accreditation term as you prepare for resurvey.

CARF STANDARDS ARE EASY TO UNDERSTAND, CLEAR TO APPLY

Although CARF’s standards are rigorous, they are written in clear and direct language. Each standard is unidimensional, meaning that it conveys a single concept in service quality or organizational practice, permitting you to concentrate on one aspect of the standards at a time.

However, the unidimensional approach does not mean each standard has a single “right” way for your organization to demonstrate conformance. We recognize that each provider’s practices and policies serve the unique needs of a market or community of persons served. Your organization may demonstrate conformance to the survey team in ways that best reflect its particular business environment.

To help you fully understand each standard, the CARF and CARF–CCAC standards manuals provide two additional tools: intent statements and examples of ways to demonstrate conformance to individual standards.

The standards themselves are field-driven, crafted with the help of many interested stakeholders, including providers; payers; regulators; and, of course, persons served and their families. Before the release of a new or revised set of standards, the proposed standards are posted on our website for a field review during which public comment is invited and then reviewed by CARF again to refine the standards’ language.

To further align the standards to the field, next year CARF will restructure its set of business practices standards, which are applied on all surveys, to the ASPIRE to Excellence™ framework. Although the standards themselves will essentially remain the same, they will be framed in the 2008 CARF editions of the standards manuals as a method for quality improvement that integrates all organizational functions.

“Achievement is largely the product of steadily raising one’s levels of aspiration and expectation.”
—Professional golfer Jack Nicklaus in *My Story*

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The ASPIRE name is derived from six organizational actions: Assess the environment, Set strategy, Persons served and other stakeholders—obtain input, Implement the plan, Review results, and Effect change. In the ASPIRE framework, the standards provide a logical, seamless, and action-oriented approach to continuous improvement for your organization.

We encourage you to annually obtain the newest edition of the standards manual, either in printed or CD format, to remain current with trends in the field and changes in the standards. You may order a standards manual online through the eCatalog at www.carf.org/catalog. If you provide services in Canada, please order a standards manual at www.carf.org/catalogue.

STANDARDS MANAGER™ HELPS YOU ORGANIZE SURVEY PREPARATION

Although the standards are clear and unidimensional, everyone agrees there are lots of them! Between 600 and 1,100 standards are applied during an average CARF survey. Demonstrating conformance to each standard challenges your organization to carefully organize and manage its survey preparation.

To assist you, CARF has introduced Standards Manager software created by Morning Sun Software Development Corporation, which has provided information solutions in the human service field for more than a decade. Whether preparing for its first CARF survey or applying for reaccreditation, your organization can benefit by using this electronic project management tool.

Using Standards Manager, a user identifies the standards that will be applied on a CARF survey and can assign specific tasks to other staff members. Fields for each standard capture responses and notations, including files that may be attached or copied directly into the software to demonstrate standards conformance. A reader mode allows other staff members within the organization to view the standards and progress of tasks. A status area shows open and closed tasks and the percentage of completion. When satisfied that the survey preparation questions are completed and supporting evidence of conformance is linked within Standards Manager, the user marks the standard or section of standards closed.

Adding to the flexibility and accessibility of the software, Standards Manager's reporting options can be viewed on-screen or exported in a variety of formats. The program also equips users with lists of accessibility keys, keyboard shortcuts, and a usage guide.

A separate Standards Manager is available for each CARF standards manual and can be updated as revised editions of the manuals are released each year. The updates allow you to readily see changes or additions to the standards and help in assessing ongoing conformance to CARF standards between surveys.

You may order Standards Manager online through the eCatalog at www.carf.org/catalog by selecting the Standards Manager link. Each order includes free technical support provided by Morning Sun.

WEBCASTS SUPPLEMENT CLASSROOM LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Webcasts are an increasingly popular and economical way to learn about applying selected standards in certain accreditation areas. Webcasts offer a one- to two-hour visual learning experience from the convenience of the participant's computer with an Internet and audio hookup. Providers increasingly download the webcasts to their conference rooms so many staff members can participate at the same time.



Webcasts supplement, but do not replace, in-person seminars and conferences that address conformance to the standards. Many people prefer to learn in a classroom setting, and CARF continues to offer many face-to-face seminars and conferences across the country that address standards conformance and service quality. These educational opportunities typically last one to three days.

Please read about and register online for webcasts, seminars, and conferences at www.carf.org/events. Canadian educational opportunities are posted at www.carf.org/education.

PUBLICATIONS ADDRESS SPECIFIC AREAS OF ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

In addition to the CARF and CARF–CCAC standards manuals, which are generally revised and published each January, CARF produces timely publications that target various aspects of the standards. Providers embarking on the accreditation path for the first time tell us the *Accreditation Sourcebook* is an especially useful resource about what to expect before, during, and after a CARF survey. The *Introduction to Corporate Compliance* and *CARF Guide to Accessibility* monographs also apply to all areas CARF accredits.

You can read more about and order these titles online in the eCatalog at www.carf.org/catalog by selecting the General Interest product category. Canadian organizations can also order publications online at www.carf.org/catalogue.

In addition, monographs are available for specific accreditation areas through the eCatalog, including *Introduction to Behavioral Health Outcomes* and *Treatment Planning for Person-Centered Care: The Road to Mental Health and Addiction Recovery*, both titles for Behavioral Health programs.

In the Employment and Community Services product category, monographs include *Using Individual-Centered Planning for Self-Directed Services*, *Designing and Delivering Quality Assistive Technology Services*, *The Self-Employment Option: An Introductory Guide to Microenterprise for Individuals with Disabilities*, and *Strategic Positioning and Planning for the 21st Century*.

Financial Ratios and Trend Analysis of CARF–CCAC-Accredited Communities is available in the Continuing Care Retirement Communities product category.

CARF also produces two e-newsletters that you can read or download at no charge. In addition to the *CARF Connection*, the *Promising Practices* newsletter features success stories of organizations in the Employment and Community Services field that have developed innovative practices. The articles highlight barriers, solutions, and continuous quality improvement of organizations working to support self-directed choices of persons served. Visit www.carf.org/newsletter to read both newsletters in either text or PDF format.

STAY LINKED WITH CUSTOMER CONNECT

Managing your relationship and communications with CARF is essential before a CARF survey and equally vital to maintain between surveys. CARF offers a free benefit to your organization through a secure, online customer web portal called Customer Connect. Designated persons in accredited organizations or organizations seeking accreditation may log on at any time at customerconnect.carf.org. With Customer Connect, you can:

- Manage your individual contact information.
- View up-to-date information about surveys, including programs and locations to be surveyed, survey dates, and Annual Conformance to Quality Report status.

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Contacting CARF

We welcome your questions and comments as you prepare for your organization's survey and throughout your accreditation term. Call our CARF International office in Tucson, Arizona, toll free at 888.281.6531 (voice/TTY) Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. MST. Aging Services providers may call our CARF-CCAC office in Washington, D.C., toll free at 866.888.1122. Providers in Western Canada may call our CARF Canada office in Edmonton, Alberta, toll free at 877.434.5444 or, in Eastern Canada, our office in Ottawa, Ontario, at 613.726.7922.

E-mail is increasingly preferred by many because it can provide a written response to concerns and circumvent phone tag. You may use the Customer Connect web portal to contact your organization's resource specialist electronically or send an e-mail message to the customer service unit or office that best matches your organization's services:

- Aging Services (includes CARF-CCAC), as@carf.org
- Behavioral Health, bh@carf.org
- Child and Youth Services, cys@carf.org
- Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies, dmepos@carf.org
- Employment and Community Services, ecs@carf.org
- Medical Rehabilitation, medical@carf.org
- Opioid Treatment Program, otp@carf.org
- CARF Canada, info@carfcanada.ca

- Access information about accreditation and the survey process.
- View or download documents specific to your organization.
- Read the latest CARF news and announcements.

In the future, Customer Connect's capabilities will expand significantly. You will be able to:

- View, edit, print, and submit the Intent to Survey (the survey application) online.
- Upload electronic files when submitting the online Intent.
- Pay accreditation fees online.
- View or download documents specific to a survey.

ON-SITE CONSULTATION CAN IMPROVE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S FUTURE

A hallmark of a CARF or CARF-CCAC survey is the consultation provided by the survey team. The surveyors are professionals in the field, just like you, whom CARF has selected to conduct your survey because of their experience and expertise.

Although survey team members will spend much of their time on site confirming your organization's conformance to the standards, they will also spend time consulting and advising your organization about service quality. Overwhelming numbers of our customers tell us the on-site survey is a beneficial process. Ninety-one percent say they appreciate the survey team's approach of being consultative rather than inspective.

MEDIA KIT'S PROMOTIONAL TIPS KEEP ACCREDITATION ENERGY ALIVE

Ah, the sweet smell of success! When your organization has achieved accreditation, CARF provides a free media kit to help you celebrate it and share the news with the press and in your community. You can also access the media kit through the Customer Connect portal or download a free PDF version at www.carf.org/pdf/mediakit.pdf.

USPEQ® PRODUCTS HELP YOU LISTEN TO AND ACT ON STAKEHOLDERS' OPINIONS

You speak. People listen and act on your words. Everyone gains when a service provider hears its stakeholders' voices. That is why CARF developed uSPEQ (pronounced *you speak*) questionnaires and reporting services. Using the advice of its input groups and advisory



NEWS FROM CARF



CARF'S INTEGRATED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH/PRIMARY CARE STANDARDS OPEN NEW DOORS TO CARE

Standards for integrated behavioral health/primary care programs ensure wider access to care for persons who, in the past, may not have had their medical and behavioral needs met in an integrated manner.

Before their publication next year in the *2008 CARF Behavioral Health Standards Manual*, the integrated behavioral health/primary care standards can be downloaded at no charge from www.carf.org/Providers.aspx?content=content/providers/Integrated.htm.

The integrated behavioral health/primary care standards were envisioned in response to a need identified by federally qualified health centers; the Veterans Health Administration; industry associations, such as the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare; and a CARF leadership panel of national experts. Representatives from the International Standards Review Committee, including persons served, CARF International Advisory Council members, national association representatives, service providers, state and federal funding authorities, and other concerned stakeholders, crafted these standards. The proposed standards were posted on the CARF website for widespread comment before their adoption.

As their name implies, integrated behavioral health/primary care programs allow for choice and are capable of assessing the various medical and behavioral needs of persons served.

For information about integrated behavioral health/primary care accreditation, please contact the CARF Behavioral Health customer service unit toll free at 888.281.6531 (voice/TTY) or bh@carf.org. ■■

NEW CARF STANDARDS COVER SCOPE OF SERVICES TO SUPPORT PERSONS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AND THEIR FAMILIES

With the introduction of CARF International's standards for supports for persons with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), community service providers have new blueprints for providing quality support services for teens and adults with ASD and their families.

During the ASD standards' introductory period, they are posted on CARF's website and can be downloaded as a PDF file at no charge from www.carf.org/pdf/AutismStds.pdf. The standards will also be published in the next edition of CARF's *Employment and Community Services Standards Manual* in January 2008.

CARF initiated field-based input for standards of service quality in ASD in response to requests from the Autism Society of America and several government ministries in Canada. With input from parents, schools, funding sources, adult service providers, and concerned professionals, CARF crafted service standards for community service providers to provide blueprints for developing quality organizations; related community supports and networks; planning for funding; and creating a vision for enhanced success for school curricula, outcomes, and quality of life.

For information about ASD accreditation, please contact the CARF Employment and Community Services customer service unit toll free at 888.281.6531 (voice/TTY) or ecs@carf.org. ■■

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NEW CARF STANDARDS ANSWER SELF-DIRECTED SERVICES MOVEMENT NEEDS

With the rise of the self-directed services movement, a new service delivery model emerged, giving persons with disabilities control over governmental funds allocated for their services. Rooted in the conviction that people's lives should not be controlled by others, the model (sometimes called self-determination, consumer direction, or individualized funding) shifted entitlement-use decision making from service providers to persons served.

Freedom to choose services brought new responsibilities: Beneficiaries of Medicaid home- and community-based services became responsible for paying service providers and spending within their budgets. In turn, agencies began contracting with beneficiaries to assist with their service planning, check writing, and governmental reporting.

CARF has answered the needs of this new service delivery model by introducing self-directed community supports and services (SDCSS) standards. The SDCSS standards are posted on CARF's website during an introductory period and can be downloaded as a PDF file at no charge from www.carf.org/pdf/SDCSS_standards.pdf. The standards will also be published in CARF's *2008 Employment and Community Services Standards Manual*.

Agencies may seek CARF accreditation of SDCSS for:

- Flexible supports planning, which provides information and assistance for persons served in planning and directing their individual budgets for services and supports.
- Employer of record for support services, in which persons served are responsible for hiring, firing, and managing details surrounding employment of their support workers. A person served may choose to contract with or hire a fiscal agent to be responsible for payroll processing and related governmental reporting.

For information about SDCSS accreditation, please contact the CARF Employment and Community Services customer service unit toll free at 888.281.6531 (voice/TTY) or ecs@carf.org. ■■

CARF'S AMPUTATION SPECIALTY PROGRAMS STANDARDS ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH LIMB LOSS

Providers may now apply CARF International standards to seek accreditation for their amputation specialty programs. The new standards focus on a holistic, interdisciplinary team approach to address the individual needs of persons served with limb loss and their families and/or support systems.

Before publication early next year in *the 2008 Medical Rehabilitation Standards Manual*, the amputation specialty programs standards can be downloaded at no charge from CARF's website at www.carf.org/Providers.aspx?content=content/providers/amputation.htm.

In addition to the separate set of standards for amputation specialty programs, providers that serve any person with limb loss and are also CARF-accredited for their comprehensive integrated inpatient rehabilitation, outpatient medical rehabilitation, or home- and community-based rehabilitation programs



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EOE

CARF is committed to providing equal opportunity in all its employment practices, including selection, hiring, promotion, transfer, and compensation, to all qualified applicants and employees without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, ancestry, marital status, gender identity, religion, and familial and/or any other status protected by law. CARF promotes the full realization of this policy through its employment practices.

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councils, CARF developed survey tools to help your organization solicit, anonymously collect, and analyze your stakeholders' experiences and opinions.

usPEQ first introduced the Consumer Experience Survey that measures the satisfaction of persons served in your organization—an important step toward performance improvement. The newest usPEQ product, usPEQ Employee Climate Survey, measures how employees perceive and experience organizational culture. Knowing how satisfied your employees are provides important insight into the health and climate of your organization.

Although using usPEQ products is not required as part of the CARF or CARF-CCAC accreditation process, they address many of the areas covered in the standards, including your organization's constant focus on the expectations of persons served and using collected information from stakeholders to manage and improve service quality.

For more information about usPEQ products, please visit www.uspeq.org.

RESOURCE SPECIALISTS PROVIDE FREE CONSULTATION

We agree there's no substitute for person-to-person consultation, so that's why we're here to offer our support and guidance on your road to accreditation. CARF's resource specialists provide personalized guidance and can answer your many questions as you prepare for a survey. Resource specialists can also help you maintain conformance to the standards throughout the accreditation term. We encourage you to contact a resource specialist by telephone, e-mail, or through the Customer Connect portal. ■■

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