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New Laboratory Survey Approaches Are in Effect

The Center for Laboratories introduced two new survey approaches in 1996. Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA) surveyors began using a performance-based survey process, the Alternate Quality Assessment Survey (AQAS), in February 1996. An outcome-oriented onsite survey process was implemented in May 1996.

The AQAS process is used in lieu of an onsite survey for laboratories that demonstrate exceptional performance and satisfactory proficiency testing. It is a questionnaire that reflects an outcome-oriented quality-improvement type of self assessment. The survey is completed by the laboratory and may be used for alternate survey cycles. Every laboratory will have an onsite assessment within a 4-year period.

An outcome-oriented process is used for laboratories that receive an onsite survey. The focus of this type of survey is on the quality of laboratory performance. The objective is to assist laboratories in developing and improving their own monitoring systems. This process may reduce onsite survey time, because surveyors will only address issues that affect quality of patient test results for the specific laboratory being surveyed. Surveyors review laboratory performance from an effect-on-patient-care perspective as opposed to line-by-line regulatory performance.

For more information, contact Virginia Wanamaker at (410) 786-3384.

Program Developed to Increase Effectiveness of Postpartum Care

Recognizing that mothers and newborns need special care in the period following childbirth, Johnson & Johnson has teamed up with nurses—the professionals who are on the front lines delivering this care—to ensure that the estimated 4 million women who give birth each year get optimal attention and treatment.

In collaboration with the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN), Johnson & Johnson has developed the *Compendium of Postpartum Care* to equip nursing professionals with the most up-to-date guidance and patient information regarding the postpartum period, including the physical and emotional health of new mothers and the basic care of newborns. Produced under the guidance of AWHONN specialists and a panel of eight experts in maternal and infant health, the compendium will be used by registered nurses in a variety of settings where these professionals routinely provide postpartum care: in the hospital immediately after birth, during home visits, in outpatient clinics, and in consultation with lactation specialists.

The need for such a program is especially important in light of the trend since the 1970s to reduce the time that mothers and their newborns stay in the hospital after delivery. Because the period surrounding childbirth represents a time of significant transition for most families, nurses skilled in perinatal care are playing an increasing role in delivering care during pregnancy, delivery, initial recovery in a hospital or birth center, and through outpatient and home care during the postpartum recovery period. Accordingly, the *Compendium*

of Postpartum Care is designed to help nurses focus on the needs of mothers and infants by providing the resources that are specifically related to time sequences from birth to 3 months.

The *Compendium of Postpartum Care* is designed to educate and support nurses who frequently evaluate the health status of the mother and infant and are charged with identifying potential physical or emotional problems early. Toward this end, the program combines continuing education for nursing professionals with a guidance on postpartum care and new patient materials that can be put directly into the hands of mothers.

Under the program, AWHONN members will receive a reference manual that charts the physical, emotional, and social changes in the postpartum period from birth to 3 months. Additionally, nurses are provided with patient handouts on such issues as breastfeeding, postpartum blues, physical changes in the mother, self-care for the mother, and infant care to provide support and guidance to new parents.

Working with AWHONN, the new program also features a continuing education module for nurses to complete by correspondence. The module includes a pre-test to evaluate the level of knowledge, an independent study program, a post-test, and an evaluation. Participating nurses will receive continuing education credit from AWHONN after completing this study program.

AWHONN is a non-profit association comprised of nearly 25,000 professionals who are committed to ensuring that women and newborns receive quality health care. For more information, contact Katherine Armstrong of Johnson & Johnson at (908) 524-1929, or Michelle Hoeft of AWHONN at (202) 662-1600.

AWARDS

Foundation to Provide Investigator Awards in Health Policy Research

The fifth grant cycle of the Investigator Awards in Health Policy Research Program, established in 1992 by RWJF, will be announced in January 1997. The program challenges investigators from a variety of fields to tackle critical health policy issues, think creatively about the most important problems affecting the health and health care of Americans, and explore innovative ideas and perspectives that may contribute to the theoretical underpinnings and knowledge base of future health policy.

The program provides grants of between \$100,000 and \$250,000, primarily for project salary support for the principal investigator, for up to 3 years. Up to 10 awards will be made annually over the course of this 8-year, \$18-million program.

For further information and a copy of the Call for Applications, which will announce the deadline for the 1997 grant cycle and describe what is needed in the letter of intent, contact Robin Osborn at the Association for Health Services Research (AHSR), which serves as the national program office for the Investigator Awards program, at (202) 223-2477.

RECENT RELEASES

Guide Addresses Quality in Home and Community-Based Waiver Programs

The Division of Medicaid in HCFA's Boston Regional Office, with the support of consumer, provider, advocate, and academic participation, has released a guide booklet entitled, *Building a Quality*