

for improvement, and collect information on the progress organizations are making in meeting NPSG 8. In 2009, The Joint Commission will evaluate and further refine NPSG 8. As part of this process, The Joint Commission will consult with health care organizations, physicians, pharmacists, nurses, surveyors, and other stakeholders. Through these discussions, an improved NPSG 8 will be crafted that both supports quality and safety of care and can be more practically implemented by the field in 2010. (Contact: Ann Blouin, [ablouin@jointcommission.org](mailto:ablouin@jointcommission.org))

### **Clarification of Universal Protocol compliance**

The Joint Commission would like to clarify compliance with the Universal Protocol in two areas:

- 1) In comparison with the World Health Organization (WHO) Safe Surgery Checklist
- 2) With recent modifications to the Universal Protocol

#### Compliance in comparison with the WHO Safe Surgery Checklist

Recently, the WHO released its Safe Surgery Checklist. There have been questions regarding whether this checklist can fulfill the requirements of The Joint Commission's Universal Protocol, which was updated based on feedback received at the Wrong Site Surgery Summit in 2007. The requirements of the Universal Protocol and the WHO Checklist do not conflict. However, they were created for different purposes, so there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the two documents.

- The intent of the Universal Protocol is to prevent wrong site, wrong procedure and wrong person surgeries, and it focuses on those issues in great detail.
- The intent of the WHO Safe Surgery Checklist is to promote safe surgery, and it addresses other aspects of surgery.
- Both the WHO Checklist and the Universal Protocol cover pre-procedure verification, marking the site, and conducting a time out before the procedure. However, the WHO Checklist includes unique issues such as post-procedure sign out while the Universal Protocol contains more details about the performance of the time out.

Therefore, while not in conflict, compliance with the WHO Safe Surgery Checklist does not ensure compliance with the Universal Protocol so accredited health care organizations are still required to meet the Universal Protocol requirements.

#### Compliance with recent modifications to the Universal Protocol

The Joint Commission has also received concerns from accredited organizations related to the practical implications of complying with the additional specificity of recent modifications to the Universal Protocol. In response to these comments, The Joint Commission is currently reviewing the Universal Protocol to determine if refinements are needed. During the first quarter of 2009, The Joint Commission is seeking input from professional organizations, health care providers and accredited organizations. Based on this input, modifications that are designed to protect patients and that are reasonable for health care organizations to achieve will be proposed and reviewed with the field. Until modifications are approved, Joint Commission accredited hospitals and ambulatory care facilities are still expected to comply with the requirements of the Universal Protocol in order to help protect patients from wrong site, wrong procedure and wrong person surgery. Please direct any questions to the Standards Interpretation Group at (630) 792-5900 or via the online form at <http://www.jointcommission.org/Standards/OnlineQuestionForm/>. (Contact: Carol Gilhooley, [cgilhooley@jointcommission.org](mailto:cgilhooley@jointcommission.org))

### **Field review of proposed standards changes for the laboratory program**

The Joint Commission is asking for comment on proposed revisions to the following standards for the laboratory accreditation program:

- The Quality System Assessment for Non-Waived Testing (QSA) chapter, currently named the Quality Control (QC) chapter. Individuals responsible for implementing the quality system assessment for non-waived testing standards are invited to review and comment on the proposed revisions. Comments will be gathered through March 23, 2009.
- The document and process control requirements, currently located in the Information Management (IM) and Quality Control (QC) chapters. Individuals responsible for implementing the document and process control requirements are invited to review and comment on the proposed revisions. Comments will be gathered through April 7, 2009.

The reviews are available at

[http://www.jointcommission.org/Standards/SII/sii\\_chapters\\_to\\_review.htm](http://www.jointcommission.org/Standards/SII/sii_chapters_to_review.htm) (Contact: Lauren Lentine, [llentine@jointcommission.org](mailto:llentine@jointcommission.org))