

The Joint Commission (TJC) is exploring current best practices to ensure appropriate follow-up of diagnostic tests and consults ordered as part of the diagnostic process.

The Joint Commission's National Patient Safety Goal 02.03.01 requires healthcare organizations to: "Report critical results of tests and diagnostic procedures on a timely basis". Because this NPSG is focused on critical results alone, TJC is now seeking input on how to ensure appropriate follow-up of all diagnostic test results and consults. This would include results that may not be critical but could lead to a different diagnosis or a change in management plans.

Specifically, TJC is interested in policies and procedures adopted or being considered that address appropriate follow-up of laboratory tests and pathology results, medical imaging studies and procedures (including follow-up of incidental findings), and specialty consults and second opinions. Diagnostic test results and consults pending at hospital discharge are particular concerns as are tests done at a third-party location, i.e. "send-outs". The goal is to identify best practices on how to designate the responsible parties, how to best document that results and consults are reviewed and acted upon, whether the patient is notified, and in general, how you ensure that the 'loop is closed', in all healthcare settings.

To participate in this data collection, the link to the questionnaire is provided below.

http://jointcommission.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9yRbsRtSdTSbJDD

Additionally, TJC welcomes submission of sample policies or procedures you've adopted or are considering to address these problems. Data on impact, process maps, publications, and other attachments are especially welcome.

If you wish to share current policies or procedures, data, and other attachments, please send them directly to Emma Czamanske at eczamanske@jointcommission.org