



July 17, 2009

Bryan McNally, MD, MPH
Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine
Emory University School of Medicine
531 Asbury Circle Annex
Suite N340
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Dr. McNally:

On behalf of the Joint Commission, I am writing to express support for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-sponsored CARES (Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival) surveillance registry.

The Joint Commission acknowledges value of this collaboration between Emory University, the CDC and the American Heart Association to tackle one of the leading causes of death in this country – sudden cardiac arrest. Linking clinical data collected in the field by emergency responders – with data collected during an inpatient stay – is an absolutely essential link by which data can be turned into opportunities for significant improvements in clinical care.

We understand the need to collect data at the community level to improve pre-hospital treatment and ultimately improve survival following out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest. We recognize the value and necessity for creating a standardized population-based surveillance system to identify and track all cases of a cardiac arrest within defined geographic areas. It is important to link Emergency Medical Service, dispatch and hospital data elements together in a secure manner so meaningful results can be derived and care improved. This will help communities improve health care quality and patient outcomes.

We encourage hospitals to participate in this voluntary program. The minimal information requirements (4 simple questions) and the fact that reporting is compliant with HIPAA should give hospital administrators the confidence they need to participate. Engagement with CARES at the local level is a simple but tangible way hospitals can support emergency medical services and help their community strengthen the “Chain of Survival”. The Joint Commission will continue to follow this effort with great interest. We look forward to learning more as the registry grows and key lessons are learned.

Sincerely,

Jerod M. Loeb, PhD
Executive Vice President
Division of Quality Measurement and Research
jloeb@jointcommission.org

www.jointcommission.org

Headquarters
One Renaissance Boulevard
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181
630 792 5000 Voice