



Jane Smith, RN CCM PAHM

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Graduating from nursing school 40 years ago, Jane Smith never would have predicted the breadth of professional opportunities available to her in healthcare. She worked as a nurse in a variety of clinical settings before moving into managed care. "I've been a quality management supervisor for the past 10 years and I really enjoy it, mostly because my work is different every day," she says.

Smith's day-to-day responsibilities extend across her entire company, allowing her to learn about virtually every aspect of the healthcare industry. "There is no normal day in quality. New challenges come up all the time, and that's a good thing because I'm always learning."

As a regulatory and accreditation professional, Smith focuses on improving how data are analyzed and processes improve outcomes. "Everyone on our Health Plan Team is assigned specific standards and is considered a subject-matter expert in accreditation," she says. "At the end of each survey or accreditation, we review lessons learned to assess what went well and how we could do better next time. We conduct monthly compliance reviews to ensure that we're continually meeting all standards. These reviews identify trends or correct problems before they become a significant issue. Once the root cause is identified, we follow up with education, training, and ongoing monitoring."

HEALTH PLANS AND HEALTHCARE QUALITY

Smith joined NAHQ's Regulatory and Accreditation competencies work group to share her insights and expertise in health plans. "The work group members work in diverse setting across the continuum of care, and the experience opened our eyes to the similarities and differences in our settings," she says.

The health plan environment is very different from the clinical environment," she says. "I work in a document review environment, looking at policies, procedures, and outcomes rather than the number of post-op infections at a facility."

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"Health plans contribute a lot from a clinical aspect," she says. "We're always looking to improve our members' health, perform outreach, and provide education. Even though quality professionals work in different settings, we're all trying to do the right thing for our members."

The bar continues to be raised as outcome measures are added to accreditation modules," Smith says. "We see more plans being rated by NCQA as 'commendable' rather than 'excellent' because we've been doing this longer and are getting better at it. More is expected of us."

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As the profession of healthcare quality evolves, Smith stresses the importance of NAHQ membership. "It gives you a chance to network with other people and share resources," she explains. "When you see what your colleagues are doing, it validates your work and provides an opportunity to learn best practices."

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**REGULATORY &
ACCREDITATION**