

With the quickly approaching January 1, 2012, deadline of the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) accreditation mandate for nonhospital providers of advanced diagnostic imaging (defined by CMS as nuclear medicine, MRI, CT, and PET), ICANL has made several enhancements to ensure that applicant facilities experience a beneficial and efficient pathway to accreditation.

The *ICANL Standards* are the foundation of the accreditation process, providing specific guidelines and requirements for the performance and interpretation of quality patient imaging studies in nuclear medicine, nuclear cardiology, and PET. The current standards became effective July 1, 2010, and are available for download from the ICANL Web site (www.icanl.org). Although most of the revisions reflect clarifications and in some cases more relaxed guidelines, significant revisions can be found in 4 specific areas: technical director qualifications, stress test supervision, imaging and nonimaging equipment quality control, and appropriate-use criteria.

In mid September, an upgrade to the format of the ICANL online accreditation application became available. The upgrade includes streamlined application questions and improved case study calculations and entry. In addition, direct links to the *ICANL Standards* within most questions provide easy access to the related requirements and recommendations. The



capability to upload the required protocols and attachments results in timely, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly submissions.

Of particular relevance to imaging facilities needing to comply with reimbursement mandates on firm deadlines is ICANL's elimination of predecision site visits and audits from the application process, allowing accreditation decisions to be rendered within 8 weeks of receipt of an application.

The ICANL Web site has always offered a wealth of detailed information on the process, but following a dramatic redesign that took place in late summer, visitors are now offered the information they need in a well-organized design with intuitive navigation. Three distinct pathways now exist to guide facilities seeking ICANL accreditation for the first time, facilities currently accredited by the

ICANL, and facilities applying for reaccreditation. The new site design offers numerous resources to assist facilities with complying with the *ICANL Standards*, including sample documents and access to free, on-demand webcasts. For those interested in payment issues, summaries and direct links to both CMS and private-payer policies requiring accreditation as a condition for reimbursement are posted and regularly updated. A patient information section linked to the published listing of accredited facilities explains the basics of the examinations in lay terms and emphasizes the importance of having imaging studies performed within accredited physicians' offices, imaging centers, or hospital departments. Newly developed sections include details to help accredited facilities maintain compliance during their 3-year accreditation cycles and tips for promoting a facility's accreditation status to referring physicians, patients, and payers.

These program enhancements, along with the experienced clinical and administrative staff of ICANL, will guide applicant facilities through the process of accreditation—a means of demonstrating their commitment to quality patient care. For more information on the ICANL accreditation process, visit the ICANL Web site or call 800-838-2110 today.

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 Commission*