



A MEASUREMENT OF

Rehabilitation Quality



By **Pawan Galhotra, LPT, ASQ CSSBB, CBIS Program Director**

The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), a private not-for-profit organization, celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2006. CARF is the premier internationally recognized organization for the accreditation of rehabilitation service providers – accrediting providers across the United States, Canada, Western Europe and South America. The organization is comprised of three sub-entities:

- CARF International in Tucson, Arizona
- CARF Canada in Edmonton, Alberta
- CARF-CCAC in Washington, D.C.

All three units work toward their mission, “to promote the quality, value, and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process that centers on enhancing the lives of the persons served.” They accomplish this task by reviewing organizational performance and compare it to established quality standards. These standards are developed with input from numerous stakeholders and are specific to the needs of the individuals served. With advances in rehabilitation medicine, CARF standards are reviewed and amended to meet evolving needs and therefore continuously improve the quality of accredited rehabilitation organizations.

Organizations accredited by CARF are committed to providing quality rehabilitation services. The comprehensive accreditation process focuses on the following areas of organizational performance:

- **Input from stakeholders** – *The organization’s primary focus is to meet and exceed the expectations/needs of the persons served and other stakeholders*
- **Accessibility** – *The removal of barriers to provide access to services*
- **Information management & performance improvement** – *Continuous improvement is an objective, data driven process*
- **Rights of persons served** – *The organization protects and promotes the rights of individuals*
- **Health and Safety** – *The organization provides services in an accessible, healthy, safe and clean environment accomplished by on-going internal and external safety audits as well as education of the persons served, personnel and other stakeholders*
- **Human Services** – *The success of the organization and clinical/financial outcomes are dependent on the efficient utilization of well-qualified, competent, licensed personnel*
- **Leadership** – *The organizational leadership is committed to diversity, corporate responsibility and compliance, and focused on the organization’s mission statement*
- **Legal Requirements** – *The organization is in compliance with all federal, state, provincial and local requirements*
- **Financial Planning & Management** – *The organization is financially responsible and solvent, operating in an effective and efficient manner while addressing organizational mission and values*
- **Rehabilitation Process for the Persons Served** – *The rehabilitation process is focused on achieving predicted outcomes and reintegration of the persons served into his or her community of choice in an efficient and effective manner*
- **Measurement of Organizational Performance as compared to the specific CARF standards of excellence** – *Specific areas covered under the medical rehabilitation standards include:*
 - Comprehensive Integrated Inpatient Rehabilitation Programs
 - Spinal Cord System of Care
 - Interdisciplinary Pain Rehabilitation Programs
 - Brain Injury Programs
 - Outpatient Medical Rehabilitation Programs
 - Home and Community-Based Rehabilitation Programs
 - Medical Rehabilitation Case Management
 - Health Enhancement Programs
 - Pediatric Family-Centered Rehabilitation Programs
 - Health Enhancement Programs
 - Occupational Rehabilitation Programs
 - Stroke Specialty Programs

The following brain injury programs at Rainbow Rehabilitation Centers are currently accredited under CARF's Medical Rehabilitation Standards (2004 manual):

- Outpatient Rehabilitation Programs (*Adults and Children*)
- Home and Community-Based Rehabilitation Programs (*Adults*)
- Residential Rehabilitation Programs (*Adults*)
- Long-Term Residential Services (*Adults*)
- Vocational Services
- Pediatric Family-Centered Residential Rehabilitation Programs
- Pediatric Family-Centered Long-Term Residential Services

The CARF "seal of quality" indicates that Rainbow has met the rigorous internationally recognized standards established and is considered to be consistent with the provision of quality rehabilitation services. Rainbow has consistently received a three-year accreditation outcome since 1989, indicating substantial conformance of the applicable standards – the highest level of outcome possible following a survey.

Rainbow employees were pleased to host the cadre of CARF medical surveyors in January of 2008. This was an excellent opportunity to underscore the wonderful programs Rainbow has to offer. The diverse team of six surveyors represented a wealth of expertise in rehabilitation medicine. Cumulatively, the team had completed over 100 CARF surveys. The surveyors acknowledged many areas of excellence and provided consultation in areas requiring enhancement. Look for more information about our CARF survey report in the next edition of Visions. ❖

As a consumer of products and services, we all search for quality and value. When it comes to seeking quality in the rehabilitation service arena, look for the recognized CARF seal of a quality.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR ...

Pawan Galhotra, LPT, ASQ CSSBB, CBIS

Education: Pawan Galhotra has a Bachelor of Science from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. He majored in physical therapy and is a licensed physical therapist.

Experience/Specialty: Pawan has extensive clinical experience in acute, sub-acute, long-term care and inpatient rehabilitation settings. His special interests include clinical education of students, staff, patients and family. Pawan also has significant experience in continuous quality improvement and program management at various facilities. In November of 2007, he officially received ASQ-Certified Six Sigma Black Belt Recognition (ASQ CSSBB), which is formal recognition of individuals who demonstrate a commitment to quality techniques in their career. Mr. Galhotra has been a CARF surveyor since 2004. He has had the privilege of surveying programs in the United States, Canada, and Europe.



Accreditation by CARF presents numerous benefits for both patients and providers.

CARF accredited organizations are recognized as:

- ✓ Experts in the programs or service units which are accredited
- ✓ Committed to seeking out and meeting the needs of their patients (or clients) as well as other stakeholders
- ✓ Providing a comprehensive rehabilitation experience from the time of intake to follow-up post discharge
- ✓ Providing services which are respectful of cultural differences
- ✓ Providing educational opportunities for the individuals they serve
- ✓ Treating patients with dignity in a clean, safe and accessible environment
- ✓ Constantly gathering and analyzing data to implement program improvements
- ✓ Making a positive impact in the lives of the people they serve
- ✓ Providing individualized options to meet specific rehabilitation needs
- ✓ An organization with an emphasis on providing quality care

Significant benefits to the organization/provider include:

- Direct positive impact on the bottom-line expenditures by improving efficiencies while achieving optimal outcomes
- Conformance to CARF standards assisting with risk management
- Continuous quality improvement of delivered services so they meet or exceed specific CARF standards
- Consultation services provided by CARF in numerous business practices and rehabilitation process refinement segments
- International recognition as a high-quality rehabilitation service provider
(an excellent marketing tool)
- A blueprint to building or improving rehabilitation services
- Data-driven program management and enhancement
- Development of a "lean enterprise" that is efficient and effective, providing the potential for significant growth
- Continuous growth and challenge of personnel
- Ongoing support and updates in the human services arena by CARF as well as peer networking